



PELICAN NEWS

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Blue Skies hosts launch of Dutch grower financing programme

Blue Skies Ghana hosted the launch of a new Exporter-Outgrower financial initiative as part of the HortiFresh programme which is supported by the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Accra.

The initiative aims to improve access-to-finance for smallholder farmers and export companies in the fruit and vegetable sector.

At the launch the Netherlands Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality, H.E. Ms Carola Schouten, and the Netherlands Ambassador to Ghana, H.E. Mr. Ron Strikker witnessed the signing of the Exporter-Outgrower financial Cooperation Agreement. The delegation are pictured below with



Students pitch their ideas to Blue Skies

Six groups of students pitched their ideas to a panel of judges for potential future products for Blue Skies.

The event, called the FBL (Faculty of Business and Law) Challenge was devised by the University of Northampton in partnership with Blue Skies.

Representing Blue Skies were Group Technical Manager, Stephan Morris, HR Manager, Susan Brightwell, New Product Development Manager, Sarah Bircham, Global Brand Manager, Brian Bircham and Head of Corporate Communications, Simon Derrick.

The winning team, 'Team Sun', pitched an idea for Thai style 'Fruit Fritters', a popular snack in Thailand which is rarely available in the UK.



**FUTURE
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South Africa seeks new business partnership



At the end of January, Blue Skies South Africa were host to two important guests: TK Nkosi (MD of TK Funding) and Vuyelwa Nyakaza (MD of Sukume Consulting). The meeting aimed to showcase the Blue Skies business in a bid to secure a partnership whereby TK's business could help source new business for us: including hotels, caterers and restaurants. The morning went exceptionally well, with the visitors touring the site, meeting our leadership team, and enjoying a tasting of some of our products. Waydu Nhlapo also share a powerful summary of the impact that Blue Skies has on the local community, both through our 'value-add-at-source' approach, but also through our Foundation commitments. Every element impressed the guests, and they left keen to start the partnership as soon as possible. Vuyelwa ended by saying, "The thing that I've seen today is your heart. You just can't manufacture that. It's huge. It's seriously transformational." High praise indeed for what the team in South Africa are achieving every day! *By Hugh Pile.*

Blue Skies holds first Conference in France



This month we held our first Blue Skies Conference in France at Excess International, our official sponsor for the event. We are very grateful to Excess for allowing us to use their meeting rooms and providing us with a site tour and food and beverages for our conference. The aim of the conference was to bring our team together to understand our needs and expectations and put together a plan. The meeting was a great success and we left with a long list of actions, goals and a real big motivation! Pictured above (left to right) are Diame, Henri, Arnaud, Jacques, Franck, Stéphanie, Nadège. *By Henri Glaizot.*

Brian makes first visit to South Africa



By Brian Bircham. Hugh and I visited South Africa, one of our key markets, to develop sales and marketing strategy with the local team (Andre and Riana). It was a very useful visit, where we achieved success in agreeing a comprehensive action plan. We laid down the foundations for 2019, including entering new, exciting categories. It was my first visit to South Africa, I found the team very hospitable and the greenery of South Africa amazing to see. Not to mention, so much warmer than the UK! My message to the team is to keep making things happen. The brand has lots of potential in RSA.... let's get our fantastic products out there!

Introducing Godwyn



A warm welcome to Godwyn Manful who has joined Blue Skies as Head of Sales and Marketing in Ghana. Godwyn will be driving the growth of our Blue Skies branded products in Ghana, through establishing winning sales and marketing strategies for the local market. Godwyn joins the company with great FMCG experience, having led on category and channel deployment at Mondelez and Nestle.



Foundation Focus

AN UPDATE ON OUR LATEST PROJECTS



2019 School Farm Competition gets under way in Ghana

The 2019 School Farm Project is underway. Applications have been assessed and short-listed, and two teacher training days have been held, one in Koforidua and one in Somanya. Well done to Victoria and Eunice who organised these well attended training days. Seeds will be delivered to the participating schools over the coming weeks. Meanwhile the computers, laptops and tablets have been received and awarded to the 2018 winners at a special presentation held at Blue Skies.

Gerald Valkema visits Nsawam Fire Station



Gerald Valkema of Blue Skies Netherlands and Adam Sitek of Blue Skies UK recently visited Blue Skies Ghana. As a volunteer Fire Fighter, Gerald was keen to pay a visit to the local Fire Station which the Foundation supported by providing a mechanised bore hole and water dispensing facility. Gerald is pictured above with the crew from Nsawam Fire Station.

Blue Skies supports fight against AIDS in France



Blue Skies in France recently supported a charity event in Paris aimed at raising money for LINK which works to fight against AIDS. Blue Skies participated by providing fresh-cut fruit for all the guests.

Our sales manager in France, Henri Glaizot is pictured with his wife Céline and Frédéric Maquair from Cojean.

South Africa displays its netball skills



Pictured above: members of the Blue Skies SA netball team reach for the skies at their new multi-use games area, which was provided by the Foundation in 2018. Thank you to Waydu Nhlapo for the photograph.

PEOPLE OF BLUE SKIES

Meet Beata Szoltysik



Beata Szoltysik works on our Security Gate here at Blue Skies UK in Corby. She has been with Blue Skies UK for two years.

Beata has a daughter Maja who will be three this year.

Her interests include playing volley ball and spending as much time as possible with her little princess. Beata is a very much valued member of the team, and very highly thought of by all.

*By Angela Johnston,
Blue Skies UK*



Do you have an idea that can help us improve?

Send us your Big Ideas!

It could be an idea for a new product, ways to become more environmentally friendly, ways to enhance how we work together or ways to become more efficient. Send us your ideas by completing the online form at:

<http://www.blueskies.com/ideas/>

Volunteers needed for FutureFresh



Following a successful collaboration with the University of Northampton to run the FBL Student Challenge (see front page), Blue Skies is seeking to initiate similar activities through its new FutureFresh Programme. The FutureFresh Programme aims to support the next generation of 'fresh-makers' by facilitating the provision of learning aids for schools, colleges and youth groups, and participating in talks, seminars and educational programmes that can enrich the curriculum and support in career development.

It aims to achieve this by pooling interest among staff and partners across the business to carry out fund raising activities and volunteer their time to make a difference. Find out more about how you can get involved at www.blueskies.com/futurefresh

Introducing Asare Alfred Brako



Asare Alfred Brako (pictured above) is a Quality Assurance Office in Ghana. He joined Blue Skies six years ago as a factory-hand and through hard work has become a permanent member of the team. Through humility and dedication, he soon became a member of our internal union, the Blue Skies Staff Association where he is now the Deputy Organiser.



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