



# PELICAN NEWS

Blue Skies Newsletter | February 2020 | Issue 162 | [www.blueskies.com](http://www.blueskies.com)

## Blue Skies launches new state-of-the-art facility in Benin

**Blue Skies have launched a brand new fresh-cut facility in the West African country of Benin.**

The Republic of Benin is a French speaking country of 11 million people and is situated between Togo and Nigeria. The new facility incorporates a host of pioneering and new technologies that will increase efficiency, reduce energy, water, plastic and chemical use, and recycle over 90% of water consumed.

Training of over new 100 staff started at the beginning of February and coincided with a visit from the President of the Republic of Benin, Patrice Talon.

The first consignment of fresh-cut fruit was flown from the international airport at Cotonou to Paris Charles de Gaulle on February 25th, one day before the anniversary of Blue Skies first ever production in Ghana on the 26th of February 1998!

This new facility marks a new era for Blue Skies, as it seeks to expand the capacity and reach of its 'fresh from harvest' products and reduce its environmental impact on the planet.

**Turn to our special report on page 4 for more photos and information...**



Above: The new factory in Benin (top). President Talon is shown inside the factory (bottom, left) and Anthony briefs the new in take of staff (bottom, right)



## Blue Skies weathers February storms

On Sunday 9th of February the UK prepared for storm Ciara. It was forecasted to be a big storm and the country was on warning for high winds, but few were prepared for what was to come. Winds of nearly 100 miles per hour were recorded, with flooding destroying homes and business up and down the country. This caused major disruption on the transport network. Major roads were shut (some for several days) and flights were cancelled (one even landing in Barcelona on its way to Heathrow from Brazil!)

The central and site operations teams swung into action as quick as Storm Ciara, putting contingencies in place. If flights were cancelled there were plans in place for other sites to cover.

We can confidently say that with all the cancellations on flights, road closures, flooding and high winds we had minimal disruptions and this was due to the hard work to our operations teams.

From the rest of the business we would like to say a massive thank you for your hard work and dedication to our customers.

*Report by Carrie Starkings*

## INSIDE THIS MONTH:

- P2** Blue Skies launches a new innovations process
- P3** It's Diversity & Equality month in our Blueprint monthly campaign
- P4** A special report on our new factory in Benin

# Training in Egypt enhances morale

Following on from January's 'Training and Education Month', Blues Skies Egypt have initiated a raft of training activities to support people, optimise performance and enhance health and safety. Subjects included Lean Manufacturing, food safety, machine operation and physical fitness. General Manager, Mohamed Bahgat said that the physical education has helped to significantly strengthen morale among people within the factory.



Pictured: training sessions (top) and physical fitness (bottom)

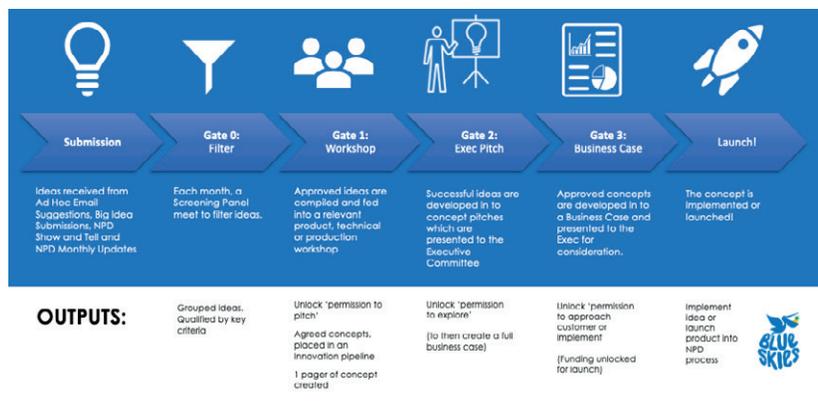
# The Audit Report

The first couple of months of 2020 have been a very busy time for audits. The team in Ghana have just completed a GlobalGap renewal audit and achieved zero non-conformances in this and the Tesco Nurture farm audit scheme. A perfect result! A massive congratulation to the whole team in Ghana with a particular well done to the Agronomy Department (see picture below - top). Additionally, in January, a number of our sites undertook a series of audits for one of our newest customers. All audits were passed successfully. The team in Egypt are pictured below (bottom) following one of the audits that took place in January. Once again, a huge congratulations to everyone involved in ensuring a successful result for this new set of audits.



# New Innovations process launched

Blue Skies have launched a new innovations process designed to bring together all ideas, suggestions, insights, trends and opportunities, to enable the business to develop new products and initiatives that can help solve problems and stay ahead of the competition. You can find out about our process and suggest your ideas at [www.blueskies.com/ideas](http://www.blueskies.com/ideas)



# Blue Skies UK hosts very special visitor



Following the successful visit of Baroness Sugg in January, Blue Skies UK received another VIP in February. This time Jacob, the son of Technical Manager Marta Gozdzik visited our factory in Corby to meet the team and find out more about the business. Jacob is pictured above watching a presentation on the new innovations process.

# BLUEPRINT 2020

## MONTHLY CAMPAIGN UPDATE

### Our February theme is...

## Diversity and Equality

### The Facts

- Harvard have shown that diversity can help businesses to drive innovation and growth.
- Diversity is the 'Joint' in the Joint Effort Enterprise and is one of the defining elements of our model. It reflects our commitment to breaking down the barriers that divide us and embracing the qualities that make us different.

### Blueprint Commitment

We are committed to ensuring our people are treated equally no matter what their age, gender, race, sexuality or background.

### What we've been doing

- Brazil provided an opportunity for one of its female staff to undertake a predominantly male role within the business (see page 5 for more).
- The team in Brazil also put Diversity as the theme of their Weekly Health and Safety meeting.
- Ghana held a lecture on Diversity and Equality for staff to celebrate the things that unite us. They also dressed in traditional outfits to show the diverse traditions they have among all their people.

For more information, visit our Blueprint 2020 special reports at: [www.blueskies.com/blueprint2020](http://www.blueskies.com/blueprint2020)



## Brazil introduces support group for women

Blue Skies Brazil have started a support group for women who have suffered from domestic violence. The World Health Organisation have ranked Brazil as the seventh most violent nation for women in the world out of 83 countries.

The Blue Skies support group will help to raise awareness of the issue among staff, and provide counselling and medical assistance for women who have experienced domestic violence.

## Ghana technical team go paperless



The Blue Skies Ghana technical team have introduced a new paperless system to help reduce the amount of paper used by the business. The new system will make better use of digital technologies to ensure documents are only printed when necessary.

## How can we do better?

Send us your ideas for how we can do ever better to meet our Blueprint Commitments.

You can submit them at:  
<http://www.blueskies.com/ideas/>



## Protecting the soil with the Macuna



Pictured above: Eric Paintsill at Zulu Farm in a crop of Macuna plants. Mucuna pruriens is a tropical legume native to Africa and tropical Asia and widely naturalized and cultivated. Macuna naturally captures nitrogen and helps enhance soil quality and fertility. It is used as part of our pineapple farm crop fallow and rotation programme in Ghana.

# MAKING HISTORY

A SPECIAL PHOTO REPORT ON BLUE SKIES BENIN



## Turning a vision into reality...

Blue Skies Benin has come a long way since the plans were presented at our conference in November 2018. Back then, all we had was a plot of land in Benin and a vision to build the world's most efficient and environmentally sustainable fresh-cut factory (see artist's impression above).

Fast forward to February 2020, and that vision has been brought to life. Thanks to monumental hard work and planning from Anthony, our BDM team of Lana and Hilario, our support teams across every department in the business and an army of architects, builders, scientists and engineers, Blue Skies have managed to achieve what many have said could not be done!

Blue Skies Benin has been born, and it is once again testament to the entrepreneurial spirit and 'never say die' approach that has made Blue Skies what it is today.

## Benin in Photos



1. The rear of the new factory, showing meeting rooms and the future clinic
2. Inside the new High Care area
3. The water treatment system with biotank and reverse-osmosis
4. Sampson coaching a keep-fit session for the new staff at the beginning of the day
5. Anthony conducting training in one of the summerhuts
6. Anthony introducing the management team to the new intake of staff
7. Wisdom, Gloria and Sampson conducting training on Health and Safety
8. Sorting through the first delivery of pineapple during a test production run
9. Staff learn how to pack products into cases during the test run
10. Trainees are taught about production during a tour of High Care
11. The team test the loading of a trailer in the despach area of the factory.





# Pelican News Special Feature

## DIVERSITY & EQUALITY



### Blueprint photo of the month...

This month we held a mini competition to find the best photo that represents diversity and equality in Blue Skies. The winning photo goes to Fernanda Castro from Blue Skies Brazil for this picture of Jackeline Kedja Nascimento Pereira!

Jackeline has worked at Blue Skies Brazil since May 2017 in the production area. She appreciates the maintenance area and takes courses in order to increase her knowledge. In view of a recent need in our maintenance sector, we talked with Flávia (GM), and Rúbens (Maintenance Coordinator) about the possibility of transferring Jackeline to the maintenance team. This idea was gladly accepted by everyone, including Jackie and all the maintenance team.

Congratulations to Fernanda who receives a Blue Skies polo-shirt for the winning photo.

### Other Photos...

Thank you to everyone who sent in photos for our mini photo competition! Below are a selection of the photos we received.

1. Staff in Ghana dress in traditional outfits (photo from Alistair Djimatey, Ghana)
2. Adam shares a bowl of Tuo Zaafi with Nathaniel Tetteh in Ghana (photo from Adam Littlehales)
3. Laurence Egboyo from Pitsford Ops receiving her masters degree at the University of Northampton (Photo from Laurence Egboyo)
4. Maslyk Maria from Blue Skies Corby celebrates Polish Doughnuts Day (photo from, Indre Vaitkeviciute)
5. A group of our new staff in Benin (photo from Anthony Pile)



### Blue Skies at Food & Drink Expo

Blue Skies will be exhibiting its ice-cream at the Food and Drink Expo at the NEC in Birmingham on the 30 March to the 1st of April. Come and see us at stand CC261!



### NEXT MONTH...

- It's Water month in our Blueprint monthly campaign.
- Anthony Pile picks up a special award!