



PELICAN NEWS

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Lockdown easing gives hope for better days ahead

Chairman and Founder Anthony Pile gives an update on the business

It's been quite a turbulent few months for the world. When the coronavirus was first discovered in China, no one could have predicted how it would so quickly lead to more than 300,000 deaths and cause over 20% of the world's 7.6 billion people to be confined to their homes. But that is exactly what has happened.

For Blue Skies, we have had to react fast. With borders closing and lockdowns kicking in, we faced an immediate challenge from declining sales and a collapse of airfreight capacity. But thanks to the ingenuity and the incredible hard work of all our teams, we've managed to transform our business so that we can adapt to this vastly changed world. However, these measures have not come without significant cost, and across the business we have had to endure salary cuts, provisional factory closures, a reduction of temporary staff and the furloughing of some members of our UK team.

It has undoubtedly been extraordinarily tough, but there is now some light beginning to emerge at the end of the tunnel. Lockdowns in some countries are beginning to ease so we're seeing more people return to the stores to buy our products, airfreight capacity is also improving and some of the airlines are making plans to resume their services soon. We have also received assistance from organisations such as USAID who have been keen to support agricultural development in West Africa and see Blue Skies as key to unlocking this growth in the years ahead.

It's as if some of the towering storm clouds are slowly beginning to dissipate.

Alas, it is not over yet and there will still be difficult times ahead, including for Brazil which has sadly become the new epicentre of the coronavirus crisis. But while we continue to change and adapt, we can all feel a sense of pride in how we have acted so quickly and effectively to keep our people and our business safe. We have always believed in autonomous operations run by local experts from the host countries. How fortunate we are that this is what we've done because our business is in the hands of experienced and battle-hardened leaders who are doing a great job at the subsidiaries.

And so I want to thank every single person who has gone above and beyond the call of duty over the past few months. From those who have taken salary cuts or been furloughed, to those who continue coming into our factories to meet orders, or who have worked long hours from their homes. You have all made a huge difference which will always be remembered in the history of Blue Skies. We celebrate the pioneers who started Blue Skies, but you are the heroes that kept us alive at a time when we needed you most.

We are not used to failure in Blue Skies and we have a way of winning. I'm absolutely certain that we shall get through to the other side and what's more we will be stronger and the better for it.



Blue Skies calls for road safety measures to protect staff

Blue Skies Ghana has appealed to the government of Ghana to ensure road safety measures are introduced when a new six lane motorway is constructed near its factory this year. The highway is a major trunk road to the north of the country and passes right by the entrance of the Blue Skies factory in Dobro. For Blue Skies staff, the daily task of having to cross the current four lane carriageway has been a constant concern, and over the years there have been many accidents. When Blue Skies contributed to installing a pedestrian crossing in 2019, the company was dismayed to find it was demolished after complaints from road users that it was causing congestion. Blue Skies has been assured that the plans for the new motorway will include pedestrian bridges and upgraded paths that will greatly improve safety for our people travelling to and from work.

INSIDE THIS MONTH:

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- P4** An update on Foundation projects

Adjusting to COVID-19 measures: how the Ivory Coast have coped

Amel Sabeh (Bunny) provides an insight in to how the Ivory Coast team have adapted to COVID-19 measures.

Having to implement covid-19 safety measures at our mango packing operation in Ivory Coast during the peak season and with outside temperatures exceeding 37 °C, has very uncomfortable. The climate alone is usually challenging enough, but having to now also wear a nose mask makes the conditions even more difficult.

The introduction of mandatory nose masks and social distancing measures has had a big impact on our way of life here in the Ivory Coast. Not being able to sit and eat together is unbearable for the people of Ouolo but we understand why these preventive control actions must be followed.

In past years, after a hard day's work, we would often sit together in groups and eat and drink while discussing various issues. It would be a great way of relieving stress. But we can't do this anymore. Life they say has come to a standstill. We hope and pray this will pass in the shortest possible time so we can go back to our way of living before.

Here at the pack house, trying to persuade each other to adhere to the stipulated preventive protocols has not been an easy task. People here are not used to these measures. We have had to cancel lunch that we normally provide because of social distancing. We now finish early enough so we can go and have lunch at home.

Things have changed outside too. Before no one noticed or minded if you sneezed or coughed in public, just as long as you covered your mouth. But now, sneezing could attract a stern look, and even a slight clearing of the throat can turn heads and lead to people teasingly calling out "Corona"!

The Ghanaian team here have always looked forward to going back home after the job has been completed. This year however we are not sure of how or when this will happen since borders have been shut. It's quite worrying for us. We are of course trying to stay as positive as we can, but deep down we really want to see our children, family and colleagues in our home countries. As it stands today, we are not sure when this is going to happen.

Covid-19 has not only shaken the very foundation of the world, it has also changed the lifestyle and livelihoods of people everywhere. Despite all these hindrances and restrictions, life must still go on and our work has to be done!



Pictured: Amel (left) with Gloria (right) inside the Packhouse in the Ivory Coast



THE FRUITY HUB

Wheeling the tastiest news on fruits to you

This month our Technical Manager in Ghana, Charles Adu, starts a new column revealing fun fruit facts. This month it's coconut!

If you have ever enjoyed the crunchy, milky coconut all this while, the fruity hub will be driving to interest you with some more news.

- In the Maldives the coconut is in the nation's coat of arms, and is the national tree.
- It is believed that it got introduced into Ghana in the 16th century by Portuguese missionaries though it had earlier been seen in Egypt ten centuries before that time. This made Marco Polo describe it as "Pharaoh's nut"
- At the time Portuguese sailors thought the 3 small holes on the coconut shell resembled the human face and so dubbed the fruit "coco" meaning "grinning face". The addition of the nut came from English later on. Be mindful that...though it is a fruit (drupe), it is also a seed and not a nut.
- The maximum age of the coconut palm is between 100 and 120 years. It has been branded a "three-generational tree".

Blue Skies are proud producers of coconut in different food matrices such as chunks in ready-to-eat fresh cut fruits from mature coconut, coconut milk for our dairy-free ice-cream or frozen dessert and coconut water for some fresh appetizing juices. Which of these products have you not tried?

By Charles K. Adu
Blue Skies, Ghana

BLUEPRINT 2020

MONTHLY CAMPAIGN UPDATE



Our May theme is...

Emissions Reduction

The Facts:

- According to the UN, emissions must fall by 25% before 2030 to keep global temperature increases within 2°C by 2100
- Global emissions are still increasing. With current policies we are heading for a 3.7 degree Celsius increase by 2100.

Blueprint Commitment

We are committed to minimising the emissions produced in the way we grow, manufacture and distribute our products.

What we've been doing

- We are working with the Carbon Trust to map out our supply chain and create a calculator with which we can continuously measure our emissions.
- We are looking at developing a range of new longer-life products that don't rely on airfreight. This will help us to reduce both emissions and waste.
- We are forming task forces to look at ways we can reduce our emissions by saving energy and maximising the efficiency of our factories.
- We are exploring exciting new technologies that could change how we transport our products to market in the future.

For more information, visit our Blueprint special reports at:
www.blueskies.com/blueprint



OPINION

The RRP of Sustainability

Should a business set out to care for people and the environment primarily because doing so can protect its reputation, enhance its profile and avoid negative publicity? No. Should a business adopt sustainability principles and implement efficiency measures first and foremost so it can reduce costs and boost its bottom line? No.

Managing reputational risk and optimising efficiencies are so often used as justifications for doing what is right, but they shouldn't be.

Businesses should be doing the right thing because it is their responsibility to do so. This should always be the number one reason. If it also helps to protect or enhance our reputation and make a profit, then great, but these factors alone should not be what drives us. If we felt that people didn't really care about how businesses behaved and there were no more efficiencies to be gained from reducing our consumption of resources, then does that mean we should stop striving to do what is right? Of course it doesn't. We should always strive to do what it is right, because it is our inherent responsibility to do so. And if we don't believe that, then we can never truly claim to be sustainable.

So, whenever we're asked 'why' we should do something that is 'sustainable', the answer should almost always be 'because it is our responsibility'. Responsibility first, then Reputation and Profit. The RRP of Sustainability.

By Simon Derrick

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/>



Zero waste. Zero emissions.



When we think of greenhouse gas emissions, CO₂ from transport is quite often what first comes to mind, however methane from waste, particularly food waste that goes to landfill, is often overlooked and yet it is one of the major contributors to global emissions. According to the Organic Research Agency, methane has a global warming potential that is 21 times greater than carbon dioxide, and methane from landfill represents 40% of all the UK's methane. Therefore, one of the single biggest things we can do to reduce our emissions is to avoid food waste to landfill. In Ghana, we do this with compost! While any leftover fruit is used to make products such as juice or ice-cream, all our non-edible organic material goes straight to our composting operation, where it takes just eight weeks to break down into nutrient rich soil.



FOUNDATION FOCUS

AN UPDATE ON OUR LATEST PROJECTS

Foundation projects near completion

Good progress continues to be made on many of our 2020 Foundation projects. A new accommodation block for nurses in the community of Timiabu in Ghana is almost complete, and the finishing touches are being added to project to renovate a victim support facility at Nsawam Police Station. Additionally, we have recently implemented a project with the Waitrose & Partners Foundation to help staff and local communities address some of the impacts of coronavirus. Hygiene kits have been provided for staff and their households and a hardship fund has been made available for people on the lowest incomes. Communications materials have also been produced to help raise awareness of hygiene measures and social distancing requirements within remote rural areas.



Pictured (left), the new accommodation block for nurses at Timiabu and (right), the renovated victim support centre at Nsawam Police station.

FutureFresh Update

It's been quite a while since our last FutureFresh update. With COVID-19 shutting schools across the world, we have not been able to proceed with most of the activities we had planned for the first quarter of the year. Never-the-less, our School Farm Competition continues in Ghana (albeit with the introduction of social distancing) and over the coming months we are aiming to make a number of learning materials available online, including our School Farm Competition toolkit and a series of worksheets designed to help students design projects that help meet the real needs faced by our business and the wider world. Find out more at www.blueskies.com/futurefresh



Baby News!



Congratulations to CEO Hugh Pile and his wife Aneta on the birth of their first child. Felicity was born on the 19th of May at 13.30 weighing 3.27 kilos. Hugh, Felicity and Aneta are all doing very well.

Happy Birthday



Happy birthday to Metolo Foyet of Blue Skies Benin who celebrates her birthday on the 29th of May. Happy Birthday Metolo and Happy Birthday to everyone who celebrates a birthday this month.

NEXT MONTH...

- An update on our Blueprint campaign for the month of June: Community Support.