

The international marketing magazine for fresh produce buyers in Europe



By Mike Knowles

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## 'Protect your people', urges Blue Skies



Hugh Pile at FPJ Live 2019

With a strong focus on CSR and adding value at source across seven countries, Blue Skies is now working to establish operations in Benin

"To nourish and cherish an industry, you've got to protect its people." That was the rallying cry issued by Hugh Pile, chief marketing and sales officer of fresh-cut produce specialist Blue Skies, during his interview at FPJ Live last month.

Since its foundation more than two decades ago, the company has pioneered a model of supply centred around packhouses that are close to where fruit is grown and ready-to-eat products that can be flown to market quickly by air.

With 11 operations in seven countries, including Ghana,

Egypt, South Africa, Ivory Coast and Senegal, the company is now working to establish a similar platform in Benin, Pile revealed.

The son of founder and chairman Anthony Pile, he said the group was sure that closeness to the source would underpin its future growth. He also argued that this commitment made the company an exciting prospect for those who want to work in a business that is forward thinking when it comes to ethical sourcing and corporate responsibility.

"Provocative to say, there

is absolutely no way I would have joined the produce industry if it wasn't a family business, but it was a call to action," said Pile.

"Since we started branding, we've created pride and started attracting talent. But you have to pump money in at the advertising and promotion level to make it a success. You can tell great stories through branding, but this is just one route and clearly not right for everyone. It's not just a case of convincing retailers, but doing what's right for that retail partner."