

# USAID'S FOOD AND ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM FOR LIBERIA (FED)

**BI-WEEKLY REPORT: APRIL 1-15, 2013**



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**COVER PHOTO:** Goats in their new home, pictured is the newly constructed shelter at Zoelay Memorial Farm, Nimba.

### **DISCLAIMER**

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## Executive Summary

During the period April 1- 15 FED activities ranged from finalizing memorandum of understanding's with a further seven lead goat farmers, interactive forums with hundreds of farmers in Lofa and trainings for key staff.

As demonstrated in the cover photograph the goat shelter construction process is progressing with further structures scheduled to be erected the remaining two weeks in April. MOU's have now been signed with lead farmers in Grand Bassa, targets for agreements with 20 farmers have been exceeded with two extra MOUs being agreed in addition to the five that were forecast for Grand Bassa.

Interactive forums were conducted in Lofa County between April 3-6<sup>th</sup> which involved 437 number of farmers from 6 districts, Foya, Kolahun, Voinjama, Quanda Gboni, Zor Zor and Salayea. These forum's served as community outreach events addressing the questions of current and prospective farmers, partners, NGOs. FED's extension officers from Lofa addressed the audiences on various issues pertaining to their county, these included; what FED stands for, who USAID are, provision of technical agriculture best practice tips for not only farming but farming as a business. Live interactive talk shows were also conducted at three community radio stations in Lofa to tie in with the event and serve as further means of educating farmers how USAID's FED program can help them and how the FtF initiative is different from NGO based support. Jingles were also distributed to local community radio stations to reinforce messages provided in the forums. All jingles include women's voices and there was a strong emphasis placed on getting female representation at the forum.

The Enterprise Development Team have been making arrangements for the forthcoming MoCI conference where FED will be hosting a breakout session. The ED team have also been involved in organizational strengthening training.

Studies were undertaken by Dr. Edward Rhodes who was working with component three in soil testing, Jim Correll investigated plant diseases that are a threat in Liberia and Dr. Eric Wailes has been updating rice policy issues and data analysis concerning upland vs. lowland rice commercialization feasibility.

Trainings took place in best practice pesticide use for the PUA team, rice value chain have been rolling out fabrication and demonstration of parboiling drum, tanks in addition to the construction and demonstration of the benefits of concrete drying floors, this has initially been rolled out to six farming groups in Lofa, Nimba, and Bong counties

FED welcomed Component One lead David Benafel who joined the team on April 15<sup>th</sup>.

## April 1-15 Activities

### Component One: Increased Agriculture Productivity

#### Value Chain Activities

##### Goats

MOU's with 7 Goat Pass-on Scheme lead farmers finalized and signed in Grand Bassa. Procurement completed and construction has commenced for 13 goat shelters in Lofa, Nimba and Bong. These latest seven lead farmers represent 120 goat farmers in Grand Bassa. Construction of a pilot feeder completed, to better improve animal husbandry, it ensures that goats in shelters are being fed sufficiently and reduces waste of feed in confined quarters.

##### Cassava

- Liberia Renaissance Education Complex (LREC) 1 site inspection took place.
- Land preparation is continuing at 119 sites across all six counties of operation.
- Field layouts have commenced at two sites in Grand Bassa.
- Cassava extension materials finalized and will be used the Training of Trainers (ToT)
- Meeting held with Jeremiah Gardee Town group and Philip Robert Town Group (farmer organizations representing over 100 FED farmers)

##### Rice

- The rice value chain team from April 1–15, 2013 carried out the fabrication and demonstration of 10 parboiling drums, tanks and six concrete drying floors for six farming groups in Lofa, Nimba, and Bong counties.
- Preparations are underway for Urea Deep Placement (UDP) field trials in Bong, Lofa and Nimba. April 9 – 12, 2013 selected farmers in Lofa, Bong, Margibi, Nimba counties received farming inputs to begin process of planting.

##### Peri-Urban Vegetables

- Sections have been demarcated at 51 demonstration sites across the six counties to enable close monitoring of yields, group members record harvest information for the rest of the field.
- On 15 April, 2013 training of three extension officers, one environmental officer was facilitated by Dermot Cassidy and Noorie Dudle on pesticide use and guidelines for the effective application of pesticides as per USAID regulation.
- A visit was made to the Deaf Agricultural and Development project in Virginia, April 11, 2013, as recommended by USAID to assess whether their activities are in accordance with FED objectives and recommend ways that we can work with them where possible. They are cultivating 8 acres of land with Cassava, vegetables and poultry and have a total membership of 50 persons. We are looking to work with these farmers to provide technical assistance to support their cultivation of 6 hectares for vegetables and cassava.
- STTA Jim Correll (Plant pathologist from University of Arkansas) presented his findings having worked closely with the PUA team, has added 30 diseases on PUA crops in Liberia. Follow up actions are already underway including developing a set of fact sheets, looking at additions to the PERSUAP and developing capacity in Liberia to continue this work.

- Extension material specialist STTA Doe Adovor has so far developed four PUA manuals, three pamphlets and one manual. And for rice; five brochures and one post-harvest pamphlet.

## **Component Two: Stimulate Private Enterprise**

- Financial Management training conducted by AEDE continued during this period in Nimba for 25 participants of the Melekonyea group.
- Rapid Market Assessments were conducted by the ED marketing team in Bong, Nimba, and Lofa to determine appropriate participant groups for the rice business incubation pilot projects from April 8 to April 11. Seven groups have been identified.
- Ongoing preparation for MoCI Conference and organization of USAID FED breakout session on agriculture policies took place April 1- 15.
- ED Assistants in the counties working with 5 groups in Bong, Nimba and Lofa that were part of the first Organizational Strengthening training to develop constitutions and by-laws (some groups already had these.)
- Several update meetings were held with New Generational Women (NGW), AEDE, and Chevron. The group will register as a corporation with 100 shares of stock for group participants the week of April 22. This project supports 74 farmers (51 women, 23 men) in developing cassava and vegetable production and processing on 17 hectares in Upper Clay Ashland of Montserrado.
- Eric Wailes, Rice Policy Expert (STTA) is in country April 1 to 17 to work with the Enterprise Development and Rice Value Chain team on updates to rice policy issues and data analysis concerning upland vs. lowland rice commercialization feasibility. A final presentation will take place April 16 at the USAID FED office.

## **Component Three: Build Human Capacity**

- April 1–15, 2013 STTA Dr. Edward Rhodes worked with an independent contractor at the University Liberia to carry out soil testing at Booker T. Washington Institute (BWI), Nimba Community College (NCC), and Grand Bassa Community college (GBCC).
- Preparation is ongoing for workshop taking place with 57 interns in the latter half of April.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

- Margibi Vegetable production sites field measurement was done on April 1, 2013;
- April 1, 2013 - Completed feeder road map for possible rehabilitation for Bong, Nimba, Grand Bassa and Lofa Counties;
- April 2–6, 2013 - Field visits were made to verify Indicator numbers for Quarterly Report;
- Designed, built and tested rice farmer household survey tool on mobile phones (PDAs) in Grand Bassa County from April 5–6, 2013;
- The process for contracting a firm to conduct the implementation of the Individual Rice Farmer Household survey was completed on April 11, 2013.

## **Cross Cutting Initiatives**

- STTA ICT Specialist presented her recommendations for ICT on April 11<sup>th</sup> supporting the use of mobile money in access to finance activity. She recommends that we work with established groups in identifying data and communication needs and potential market for services and focus on databases.
- Between April 8-11 the Environmental Team visited AED Cassava project in Arthington, Montserrado County to assess the water quality. Concerns were highlighted regarding quality and availability of water. Irrigation setting for vegetables production in USAID's FED remains guided by the provision of potable water for crop production.

## April 15-31<sup>st</sup> Planned Activities

### COMPONENT ONE: INCREASED AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY

#### Value Chain Activities

##### Goats

- Further roll out of goat shelters in Lofa, Nimba, Bong. Procurement for shelter building equipment for the newly signed MOU's, provision of four prototype feeders to serve as models for construction in all four counties where goat value chain activity is taking place.
- Trainings on prevention of kid mortality and mother postpartum care to ensure a higher survival rate.

##### Cassava

- Information sharing meetings will continue with farmer groups as required.
- ToT training in Bong County involving all implementing staff involved in the cassava value chain (extension officers, county managers, NGOs, community based facilitators and lead farmers) approximately 120 people will attend these trainings to help understand the new technologies being introduced, rolling out 22<sup>nd</sup> April.
- Land preparation for cassava plant material propagation at MOA demonstration site at Kakata taking place April 15-30.

##### Rice

- April 16–20, 2013 a training of trainer workshop is scheduled for 25 rice technicians from five local NGOs from Bong, Nimba, Lofa, and Grand Bassa counties. The training will focus on capacity building on rice production and best practices.
- April 17–24, 2013 a post-harvest training on the fabrication of parboiling drum, tank, and construction of drying floor is scheduled for lead farmers in Bong, Nimba, Lofa, Grand Bassa Counties.

## Peri-Urban Vegetables

- Completion of seedling and nursery planning for rainy season production.
- Training of New Generation of Women on the use of vetiver in erosion prevention will take place on April 18<sup>th</sup>.
- At MOA site in Kakata Complete land use/rotation plan, complete soil conservation plan, field marking and plant cover crop demonstrations.
- PUA extension materials validation workshop being facilitated by Doe Adovor (Extension Material Specialist STTA) on April 16<sup>th</sup>.
- STTA Robert Black will be carrying out a two week review of plant health policy, legislation (trade in plants and plant products, agrochemicals and biological control products) and speaking during a breakout session at the forthcoming MoCI conference.

## Component Two: Stimulate Private Enterprise

- Organizational Strengthening training will continue with Rights & Rice in Bong, Nimba and Grand Bassa for six farming groups (160 persons, 70 male, 90 female) from April 27 through June 25.
- Pace Management will meet with ED staff to present their experience and final report for Financial Management training conducted in Nimba and Lofa on April 22.
- The draft FaaB curriculum developed by USAID FED and the LAUNCH project will be presented to MoA at the FED office in Monrovia on April 15 with the anticipation of a more in depth validation exercise to take place at a later date; pilot testing of curriculum will take place in late May to early June; a TOT for FED staff will take place in late May and for selected BSPs in late June.
- The Village Savings and Loan Association TOT and Training RFPs will be released week of April 22.
- The Cassava Value Chain Study RFP, in partnership with the EU and ZOA will be released by April 19; the target date for study to begin is beginning of June.
- Beverly Ott, Consultant, Co-founder ECHOPPE and Consultant, US Department of State, African Regional Services will be conducting a one-day seminar on April 22- 23 in Bong County with 60 women from Palala Rural Women and War Affected Women. Beverly will also participate as a panel speaker at the MoCI Conference on April 25.
- The MoCI MSME Conference will take place in Monrovia from April 24 to 26. FED has invited 54 farming organizations and SMEs to participate. A special break-out session concerning agricultural policies will be held at the conference on April 25, from 2:30- 5pm.
- A site visit to the HANDS processing facility in Zwedru, Grand Gedeh will be held on April 19 with five USAID FED staff and 19 cassava processors from Bong and Nimba counties.
- Agri-Impact (PO) will arrive in country April 27. The two consultants will be conducting Value Chain Training and competitiveness consultancy for FED staff between April 29 and May 7.



### **Component Three : Build Human Capacity**

- USAID's Food and Enterprise Development in collaboration the Ministry of Education through its Bureau of Science, Technology, Vocational and Special Education (BSTVSE) commenced the rollout of the new TVET curriculum from April 15-19, 2013.
- The drip irrigation demonstration site at BWI is nearing completion with planting of Blabla beans, tomatoes, eggplants, bitter balls, pepper, and squash. This is an internship project that provides students the opportunity for practical participation.
- April 16 – 19, 2013 a capacity building workshop is scheduled for 56 interns from Bong, Nimba, and Lofa counties. This workshop complements what interns are learning at their job sites and will enhance their ability for a more competitive position on the job market.