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# FOOD AND ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT (FED) PROGRAM FOR LIBERIA

**MONTHLY REPORT: AUGUST 2015**



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**Photo Caption:** *A side view and front view of the tuk-tuks procured by USAID FED for youth entrepreneurs.*

## **DISCLAIMER**

The authors' views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

## Acronyms

ACC	Agriculture Coordination Committee
AEDE	Agency for Economic Development and Empowerment
APDRA	Association Pisciculture et Développement Rural en Afrique
AVTP	Accelerated Vocational Training Program
AYP	Advancing Youth Project
BSTVSE	Bureau of Science, Technical, Vocational and Special Education
BWI	Booker Washington Institute
CARI	Center of Agriculture Research Institute
CAHW	Community Animal Health Worker
CBF	County Based Facilitator
CBL	Central Bank of Liberia
CGCWYEP	Chosen General Church Women and Youth Empowerment Project
CILSS	Permanent Interstates Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel
CoE	Center of Excellence
CYNP	Community Youth Network Program
DAI	Development Alternatives Inc.
DCOP	Deputy Chief of Party
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ECREP	Evangelical Children Rehabilitation Program
EMMP	Environmental Mitigation and Monitoring Plan
ENA	Essential Nutrition Action
EO	Extension Officer
FtF	Feed the Future
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FUN	Farmer Union Network
GAP	Good Agriculture Practices
GBCC	Grand Bassa Community College
G-CAP	Green Coast Agricultural Program
GoL	Government of Liberia
GPS	Global Positioning Systems
IBEX	Investing in Business Expansion Liberia
IFAD	International Foundation for Agriculture Development
IFDC	International Fertilizer Developmental Center
IITA	International Institute for Tropical Agriculture
IP	Implementing Partner

IPM	Integrated Pests Management
IQC	Indefinite Quantity Contract
ISFM	Integrated Soil Fertility Management
IREX	International Research and Exchanges Board
KRTTI	Kakata Rural Teachers Training Institute
LABEE IPG	Liberia Agriculture Business Enabling Environment Inter-Agency Policy Group
LAUNCH	Liberia Agriculture, Upgrading Nutrition & Child Health
LEAD	Liberia Entrepreneurial & Asset Development
LCCC	Lofa County Community College
LIFE	Livelihood Improvement for Farming Enterprises
LIPAS	Liberia Integrated Professional Agriculture Service
LISGIS	Liberia Institute of Statistics & Geo-Information Services (LISGIS)
LMEP	Liberia Monitoring and Evaluation Program
LNGO	Local Non-Governmental Organization
MFI	Micro Finance Institution
MIS	Market Information Systems
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
MoCI	Ministry of Commerce and Industry
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoHSW	Ministry of Health and Social Welfare
MoP	Muriate of Potash
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSME	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise
MVSA	Monrovia Vegetable Sellers Association
NDA	National Diploma in Agriculture
NCCC	Nimba County Community College
NIC	National Investment Commission
NSL	National Standards Laboratory
PERSUAP	Pesticide Evaluation Report and Safer Use Action Plan
PIDS	Performance Indicator Database System
PMP	Performance Management Plan
PUA	Peri-Urban Agriculture
R&RF	Rights & Rice Foundation
RFTOP	Requests for Task Order Proposals
RRA	Rapid Rural Appraisal
SRI	System of Rice Intensification
TAMIS	Technical Administrative Management Information System

TSP	Triple Super-Phosphate
TVET	Technical, Vocational Education and Training
UDP	Urea Deep Placement
UL	University of Liberia
USADF	United States African Development Foundation
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VET GOV	Veterinary Governance in Africa
WAAPP	West Africa Agriculture Productivity Program
WAFP	West Africa Fertilizer Project
WASP	West Africa Seed Project
WFP	World Food Programme

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## Background

The USAID Food and Enterprise Development (FED) Program is a flagship Feed the Future (FtF) Initiative, USAID-funded development program in Liberia that was launched in September 2011. USAID FED uses an all-inclusive strategy incorporating micro, small, and medium enterprise (MSME) farmers, processors, suppliers, women, and youth while partnering with the Government of Liberia (GoL) and local civil society to achieve food security.

The goal of USAID FED is to increase food availability, utilization, and accessibility by building an indigenous incentive structure that assists agricultural stakeholders in adopting commercial approaches.

This incentive structure is built upon:

- Improved technology for productivity and profitability
- Expanded and modernized input supply and extension systems
- Commercial production, marketing, and processing
- Enterprise services
- Workforce development

USAID FED works with the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), civil society, and the private sector in providing communities access to agricultural inputs, extension services, nutrition messages, processing services, market information, transportation, credit, agro-business education, training, and business development services.

In five years, USAID FED's thrust to expand market linkages is expected to lead to substantial increases in income and job opportunities. USAID FED aims to significantly boost the production, processing, marketing, and nutritional utilization of rice, cassava, and vegetables, and to enhance the productivity of goat farming in the counties covered by the program.

These initiatives are being carried out in Bong, Lofa, Nimba, Grand Bassa, Montserrado, and Margibi counties. USAID FED focuses on these counties because they are situated along regional development corridors that are crucial in promoting intra and inter-county commerce. These growth corridors are expected to improve food availability and access for all Liberians.

USAID FED's methodology is market-led and value chain-driven; it is committed to developing indigenous capacity building, with a specific focus on Liberia's women and youth.

USAID FED is implemented by five partners: Development Alternatives, Inc. (DAI), Winrock International, International Fertilizer Developmental Center (IFDC), Louisiana State University (LSU), and The Cadmus Group.



## Executive Summary

USAID FED received 49 units of tuk-tuk from the vendor, MASARCO Inc. in August that are going to be distributed to youth entrepreneurs on a cost share basis. The entrepreneurs are going to provide transportation of raw cassava tubers, paddy rice, and goats from the farm gate to the market at a fee. USAID FED will provide training on business management and also help the youth entrepreneurs access loans for the improvement of their tuk-tuk businesses. In addition, the 49 youth will meet the operational and maintenance costs and pay 50% of the cost of tuk-tuk as their cost share. The distribution ceremony will be held on September 18 in Suakoko, Bong County. The three wheel tuk-tuks have a capacity to carry 1,500 kilograms of produce when fully loaded. Each youth was also provided with a tool kit, helmet, and other accessories for the repair and maintenance of the tuk-tuks. This initiative aims to address gaps in logistics to transport produce from the farm to the markets. Youth entrepreneurs were selected as beneficiaries in line with USAID FED's conscious effort to increase youth participation in agriculture and to create employment opportunities for youth in Liberia's agriculture sector.

In August, the three refrigerated containers that USAID FED procured arrived in Liberia. A reefer container can store about 16MT of assorted vegetables. Two private sector partners, ROSNA Services Inc. and Gbomai Farms Inc., are the beneficiaries of the refrigerated containers. Both companies are owned and managed by Liberian women entrepreneurs. Hannah Blackett is the owner and CEO of ROSNA, and Gbomai Bestman owns Gbomai Farms Inc. ROSNA has been sourcing vegetables from USAID FED-supported vegetable growers since 2014 from Grand Bassa and Nimba counties. The companies will expand their businesses and local procurement with this added capacity to store more vegetables to supply workers in the concession areas and ERA Supermarket Chain, of which Ms. Blackett is also the CEO. Gbomai Farms is strategically located close to the Roberts International Airport, and plans to provide fee-based cold storage services to vegetable farmers in the surrounding area.

During August, a total of 1,950MT of cassava tubers were harvested from FY 14 USAID FED supported farmers. In August 512 MT of FY14 cassava tuber were sold for US\$39,933. In total, 15,464 MT of FY14 cassava tubers have been sold for US\$724,630 year to date.

USAID FED continues to see stable sales of goats by USAID FED supported farmers. During August, a total of 335 goats from USAID FED supported farmers were sold for US\$21,318. In total, 5,466 goats have been sold for US\$308,954 year to date.

Under USAID FED's Task 2.0, a complete and final draft of the Liberia Seed Regulation was submitted to the MoA on August 27, 2015. The USAID FED local seed policy expert, Dr. Roland Massaquoi, a former Minister of Agriculture, is working with the MoA to facilitate the passage of the Liberia Seed Policy and Regulation.

In August 2015, an International Pesticides Policy Expert, Dr. Alan Schroeder was hired by USAID FED to provide support to the "domestication" of the ECOWAS Pesticide Regulation. He is going to present the draft Pesticide Policy and Regulations to stakeholders at a workshop to be held on September 2-3, 2015. It is expected that the complete and final draft of the Liberia Pesticide Policy and Regulations will be submitted to the MoA by the end of September 2015.

USAID FED concluded partnership discussions with the West Africa Fertilizer Project (WAFP), resulting in the production of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that is expected to be signed on September 3, 2015. This will result in a joint effort between WAFP and USAID FED to support the Ministry of Agriculture in developing a draft of the Liberia Fertilizer Regulation, including its implementing guidelines. These draft regulations will be presented at a two-day stakeholder validation workshop, which will facilitate the

domestication of the ECOWAS Fertilizer Regulation in Liberia. Under the leadership of the MoA, USAID FED and WAFFP intend to conduct the validation workshop from September 22-23, 2015.

The Business Service Providers (BSPs) sub-contracted by USAID FED trained 3,179 MSMEs on business management. The training program covered topics that include establishing and registering a business, planning for a successful business, marketing, and financial management. The BSPs also facilitated the registration of 124 MSMEs during the month of August. The support provided to the businesses included preparing articles of incorporation; by-laws and constitutions; and actual registration with the Liberia Business Registry (LBR) or with the MoCI's Department of Small Business Administration.

In August, a USAID FED supported farming group, the United Communities Agriculture Group from Jeremiah Gardee Town in Grand Bassa awarded a US\$89,187 grant by the United States African Development Foundation (USADF). USADF selected this group as grantee due to their successful adoption and implementation of technologies and practices learned from USAID FED interventions. Through the support of USAID FED, the United Communities Agriculture Group has become one of the largest cassava producing communities in Grand Bassa, and the group intends to use the grant to expand their commercial cassava production.

During the reporting period, USAID FED facilitated the process for the Monrovia Vegetable Seller Association (MVSA) to receive a US\$25,000 loan from Liberia Entrepreneurial and Asset Development (LEAD). The MVSA will use the loan to provide inputs (embedded financing) to 474 USAID FED supported vegetable farmers on credit. The farmers will sell their produce to MVSA and the loan will be deducted from the total value of vegetable sales.

In August, the installation of laboratory equipment began at the newly renovated science laboratories in all four USAID FED supported Centers of Excellence for Agricultural Vocational Education (CoEs). Installation of equipment in all four laboratories will be completed in September.

## Component One: Increase Agricultural Productivity and Profitability

### Task 1A: Increased Productivity and Profitability of the Rice Value Chain

#### Rice Sales from FY14:

During August, 395MT of FY14 rice crop was sold at a value of US\$157,203. In total, 3,901MT of FY14 rice crop has been sold year to date at a value of US\$1,796,993 (Table 1).

Table 1: FY14 Rice crop sales

County	Sales volume Q1 (MT)	Sales value Q1 (US\$)	Sales volume Q2 (MT)	Sales value Q2 (US\$)	Sales volume Q3 (MT)	Sales value Q3 (US\$)	Sales volume July (MT)	Sales value July (US\$)	Sales volume August (MT)	Sales value August (US\$)	Sales Volume YTD (MT)	Sales value YTD (US\$)
Lofa	122	\$47,938	1,703	\$681,652	192	\$75,355	89	\$82,320	294	\$117,594.00	2,400	\$1,004,859
Nimba	0	\$0	36	\$17,216	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0.00	36	\$17,216
Bong	96	\$38,979	477	\$255,633	676	\$400,359	76	\$25,840	101	\$39,609.00	1,426	\$760,420
Grand Bassa	18	\$7,080	14	\$5,078	7	\$2,340	0	\$0	0	\$0.00	39	\$14,498
<b>Total</b>	<b>236</b>	<b>\$93,997</b>	<b>2,230</b>	<b>\$959,579</b>	<b>875</b>	<b>\$478,054</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>\$108,160</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>\$157,203</b>	<b>3,901</b>	<b>\$1,796,993</b>

#### Improving productivity and profitability of upland rice

In August, USAID FED continued to monitor the progress of vegetative maturity for upland rice planted on 2,965 hectares across the four core counties. All of the planting had been completed in July. This includes the 297 hectares of demonstration sites. Weeds were controlled using herbicides supplied by USAID FED.



Figure 1: Nursery with seedlings ready for transplanting at Lawalazu, Lofa County.

#### Expanding lowland rice production

During August, rice seedlings were transplanted to 1,508 hectares of lowlands. In total, 2,680 hectares have been planted, which represents 75 percent of the total target of 3,546 hectares (Table 2). It is anticipated that transplanting will be completed on the pending 867 hectares by the end of September.

Table 2: Lowland commercial sites cleared for planting.

County	New targeted hectares for FY15	Hectares Planted in Q3	Hectares Planted in July	Hectares Planted in August	Hectares planted YTD	Hectares pending planting
Bong	1,655	350	595	591	1,536	119
Lofa	970	7	79	411	497	473
Nimba	836	169	81	325	575	261
Grand Bassa	86	7	59	6	72	14
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,547</b>	<b>533</b>	<b>814</b>	<b>1,333</b>	<b>2,680</b>	<b>867</b>

## Enhancing mechanization for lowland rice production

By the end of August, the 30 youth power tiller entrepreneurs had tilled 395 hectares or 27 percent of the target of 1,440 hectares to meet their cost share obligations. This included all of the 267 hectares of demonstration sites. The power tiller youth operators are anticipated to complete the pending 1,045 hectares by the end of December 2015. The entrepreneurs will receive ownership titles for the power tillers once all the cost share obligations of 48 hectares have been achieved by each individual operator.

## Promoting 2 rice crops per year

During August, Tallobenku Construction completed an additional eight spillways in Nimba and Lofa counties. In total, 26 spillways have been completed across the four core counties. It is anticipated that the four pending spillways will be completed by the end of September 2015.

In August, 33MT of paddy rice was harvested from nine hectares of land where a second crop of rice was planted in areas supported by 12 FY14 spillways sites in Nimba and Lofa Counties. In total, 15 hectares have been harvested, yielding a total of 52MT of paddy rice (Table 3).



Figure 2: Completed spillway in Duaita, Jorquelleh District, Bong County.

Table 3: Hectares under double cropping that have been harvested.

County	Number of hectares under double cropping	Number of hectares harvested in Q3	Volume of harvest (MT)	Number of hectares harvested in August	Volume of harvest (MT)	Total number of hectares harvested	Total volume of harvest (MT)
Bong	4	4	14	0	0	4	14
Lofa	6	2	5	4	15	6	20
Nimba	5	0	0	5	18	5	18
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>52</b>

## Enhancing post-harvest management practices

### FY15 Rice business hubs construction

During August, two construction firms, B-COM Construction and SEMOG Group of Companies, commenced the construction of nine rice business hubs in three counties. It is anticipated that the construction of these nine rice business hubs will be completed before the end of the 2015 calendar year. Heavy rains have caused delays in the timely transport of the beneficiaries' in-kind contributions, such as sand and gravel.

## Stimulating private sector investment in commercial rice production

Fabrar Liberia Inc. started discussions with Weinco on the possibilities of partnering together to provide embedded services to USAID FED supported rice farmers. Under this arrangement, it is envisaged that Weinco will provide fertilizers to rice farmers through Fabrar Liberia. The farmers will pay back the cost of

fertilizer through paddy rice, and Fabrar will then pay Weenco for the cost of fertilizer supplied. It is anticipated that a formal agreement will be reached by quarter one of FY16.

## **Task 1B: Increased Productivity and Profitability of the Cassava Value Chain**

### **FY 14 Cassava crop harvests and sales**

During August, a total of 1,950MT of cassava tubers were harvested from the FY 14 USAID FED supported farmers. The total volume of cassava tubers by FY14 USAID FED beneficiaries year to date is 17,556MT. There was a reduction in harvests in August compared to July due to the difficulty of harvesting cassava during the rainy season and the low demand from processors of gari and other cassava products due to their dependence on solar drying.

The sales of fresh cassava tubers also dropped in August with 512 MT of FY14 cassava tubers sold for US\$39,933. In total, 15,464 MT of FY14 cassava tubers have been sold for US\$724,630 year to date.

### **Cassava procurement by processors**

During August, micro-processors in the four counties procured a total of 46MT of fresh cassava tubers valued at US\$5,025 from USAID FED and non USAID FED supported farmers. Two USAID FED supported processors in Monrovia processed cassava worth US\$1,195. It should be noted that there was a drop in quantities purchased from the farmers compared to July, but the dollar value was higher. This increase in prices is attributed to the reduction in supplies of both processed and raw cassava.

Figure 1 Delivered and improved press



Figure 3: Cassava press that USAID FED procured for cassava processors.

### **Enhancing farmers' access to improved cassava varieties**

During August, a total of 288 bundles of cassava cuttings were sold by the commercial cassava nurseries for US\$1,440. A total of 9,196 bundles of cassava cuttings valued at US\$45,980 have been sold year to date.

### **Enhancing knowledge on improved varieties and technologies**

During the same reporting period, 284 hectares of demonstration plots have been planted year to date or 87 percent of the target 325 hectares .

### **Mobilizing 12,960 new farmers in 648 kuus towards FY15 cassava production**

During August, a total of 64 hectares of land were planted with improved cassava varieties for the FY15 cropping season. The cumulative number of hectares planted year to date is 3,629 (Table 4), hence exceeding our target for the FY15 by two percent.

Table 4: Land preparation and planting for FY15 crop.

County	Target area for production (Ha)	Area planted in Q3 (Ha)	Area planted in July (Ha)	Area planted in Aug (Ha)	Total area planted YTD (Ha)
Bong	688	617	71	4	692
Nimba	1,474	1,474	0	0	1,474
Lofa	413	6	407	60	467
Grand Bassa	990	574	416	0	990
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,565</b>	<b>2,674</b>	<b>894</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>3,629</b>

#### Activity I.B.4 Improving access to market information and markets

USAID FED assisted cassava processors have received and installed their equipment as of July 2015. The cassava presses, however, have to be recalled by the supplier because of incorrect design of the press, i.e., the shaft thread should have been rectangular instead of serrated as what was delivered. This problem will be addressed in September and the target time frame for the redeployment of this equipment is before the end of September. Figure 3 shows the 'as is delivered' press and the press with technical defect addressed, respectively. The improvement of the press by the USAID FED technician increased its capacity to press cassava at one time from 0.50 MT to 1.00 MT.

The cassava presses augment the current pressing capacity of the processing centers. The mechanized graters have substantially improved gari output by more than 200 to 300 percent. Manually grating the gari produces only 1 MT every two to three weeks while with the mechanical grater production is five tons per week given that the processing center will operate five days a week. Some Monrovia gari processors such as Falama Inc., a USAID FED assisted gari processor, have the capacity to buy 8 MT per week of rough gari. They serve as downstream markets for the community-based processors that USAID FED is supporting.

### Task 1C: Increased Productivity and Profitability of the Horticulture Value Chain

#### FY14 Vegetable harvest and sales:

During August, a total of 17MT of assorted vegetables were harvested and sold for US\$13,769 from the FY14 clusters in Montserrado, Margibi, Nimba, and Grand Bassa counties. The clusters have harvested 297MT valued at US\$205,825 year to date.

The quantities harvested in all the counties sharply dropped in August due to the high frequency and intensity of rainfall. The harvest in Montserrado County dropped from 38MT in July to 9MT in August (a 78 percent decrease), while the harvest in Margibi County dropped from 13MT to 3MT (a 75 percent decrease). As a result, the price of vegetables in Montserrado County increased by US\$0.18/kg while the price in Margibi County increased from US\$0.25/kg to US\$1.57/kg, that is equivalent to a rise of 541 percent.



Figure 4: Rain shelter with okra.



### **FY15 Vegetable harvest and sales:**

During August, a total of 73MT of assorted vegetables were harvested and sold for US\$116,337 from FY15 clusters in Montserrado, Margibi, Bong, Nimba, Lofa, and Grand Bassa Counties. The clusters have harvested a total of 698MT of vegetables that was sold for US\$825,615 year to date.

The harvest volumes in some of the counties dropped in August due to the high frequency and intensity of rainfall. The harvest volumes in August dropped from 208MT in July to 73MT in August (a 65 percent decrease). Margibi experienced the largest decrease in production at 91 percent, followed by Bong and Montserrado at 75 percent and 40 percent respectively. Lofa, however, increased its production by 146 percent, reportedly due to less rains and more sunshine that the county experienced in July and August.

### **Youth Group Vegetable harvest and sales:**

During August, the 25 peri-urban agribusiness vegetable pilot farms in Montserrado and Margibi Counties harvested 10MT of assorted vegetables, which they sold for US\$11,517. These agribusiness pilots have earned a total of US\$21,392 year to date from the sale of vegetables.

### **Utilization of rain shelters on FY14 sites:**

During August, USAID FED assisted vegetable production clusters continued to use the rain shelters for vegetable production. USAID FED provided technical assistance to the high value vegetable farmers on a variety of specific management practices, as well as post-harvest handling and packaging.

Eight of the rain shelters were planted with okra (i.e. Clemson spineless and other hybrid okra varieties) in July for the export trial shipment anticipated to take place in October. Harvesting will start on September 22, 2015 and the shipment to Paris is tentatively scheduled for October 2, 2015. USAID FED is partnering with Brussels Airlines to get Liberia grown vegetables to Europe. Under this partnership, Brussels Airlines has agreed to provide two non-commercial trial shipments free of charge. A 10 kilogram trial lot will be air freighted by Brussels air cargo for free on October 2, 2015.

### **Promoting Integrated Pests Management Practices**

In August, USAID FED's Senior Horticulture Specialist and the extension officers continued to provide field-based technical assistance focused on pest and disease identification and control, as well as on the production of vegetables (okra) for export.

### **Reducing harvesting and post-harvest losses**

During August, no zero energy or charcoal coolers were constructed across the four counties. USAID FED Management has decided to first assess the viability of these technologies by constructing facilities that will be used as a pilot in Montserrado and Margibi Counties in order to ascertain whether it is feasible to replicate these across the four core counties. A feasibility report will be made available in September.

Three reefer containers arrived in Liberia in August and each container can store up to 16MT of assorted vegetables at one time.



*Figure 5: Farmers in CGCWYEP applying NPK briquettes on okra plots.*

Two private sector partners, ROSNA Services, Inc. and Gbomai Farms Inc., are set to receive these refrigerated containers. Both companies are owned and managed by Liberian women entrepreneurs. Hannah Blackett is the owner and CEO of ROSNA, and Gbomai Bestman owns Gbomai Farms Inc. ROSNA has been sourcing vegetables from USAID FED supported vegetable growers since 2014. The company anticipates expansion of local procurement with this added capacity to store vegetables for supply to workers in the concession areas and to the ERA Supermarket Chain. With a three day turnover rate, the two containers will benefit approximately 444 farmers when in use. ROSNA will also do sorting, grading and packing of vegetables.

As mentioned above, Gbomai Farms is strategically located close to the Roberts International Airport, and plans to provide fee-based cold storage services to vegetable farmers in the surrounding area. The company has been growing and supplying vegetables to institutional buyers in Monrovia since 2013.

The vendor for the refrigerated containers, Greenfield will deliver the refrigerated containers to the sites identified by the agribusiness partners during the third week of September. The beneficiaries will provide the mounting, shed, and generator for the container as their cost share in the establishment of the cold storage facility.

### **Production of vegetables during the dry and wet season**

During August, there was a drop in production of vegetables across the 188 local and high value vegetable clusters due to the high frequency and intensity of rainfall. Tomato, cabbage, and cucumber were grown in all the FY15 rain shelters.

One rain shelter located at Fendell campus is facing eviction because of unauthorized construction of the structure at the land of the campus. USAID FED is undertaking steps to address this problem with the university administration. According to the lead farmer responsible for the rain shelter, he has an authorization from the university to build it in the school compound.



Figure 6: Rain shelter marked for eviction in Fendell.

### **Pilot Vegetable Export Program**

During August, USAID FED continued to provide technical assistance to farmer groups planting okra under the rain shelters. The first trial shipment for vegetables is anticipated to take place on October 2.

### **Piloting the application of NPK Briquettes**

The application of fertilizer briquettes was piloted in the rain shelters under okra production. The preliminary tests done in the Chosen General Church Women and Youth Empowerment Project CGCWYEP will guide future formal tests for other vegetable types, varieties and locations.

## **Task 1D: Increased Productivity and Profitability of the Goat Value Chain**

### **FY14 Goat production sites - kidding and mortality rates**

A total of 284 new kids (149 male and 135 female) were born in August in the FY14 goat production intensification sites. The total herd size in FY14 goat production intensification sites stands at 8,175 goats



(5,162 does, 1,709 bucks and 1,304 kids). By the end of August, all of the 196 kids (149 males and 135 females) born during March 2015 (100% survival rate) were weaned and added to the doe and buck statistics.

### **FY15 Goat production sites - kidding and mortality rates**

A total of 183 new kids (97 male and 86 female) were born in the FY15 goat production intensification sites. The total herd size in FY15 goat production intensification sites stands at 5,814 goats (2,662 does, 1,647 bucks and 1,505 kids). By the end of August, all of the 954 kids (700 males and 254 females) born during the Q2 period reached maturity (100% survival rate) and were added to the doe and buck statistics.

### **Goat Mortality in FY14 and FY15 USAID FED sites**

During August, a total of seven goats were reported dead in USAID FED supported FY14 goat production intensification sites in Nimba and Grand Bassa counties (Table 5). The cause of death in Nimba County was attributed to consumption of plastic bags. In Grand Bassa, the cause of death was attributed to diarrhea and mange, a type of skin disease. A total of 133 goats or 1.7 percent of the FY14 herd died year to date.

*Table 5: Goat mortality in FY14 sites.*

<b>County</b>	<b>Mortality recorded in Q2</b>	<b>Total Mortality Q3</b>	<b>Mortality recorded in July</b>	<b>Mortality recorded in August</b>	<b>Total Mortality YTD</b>
Bong	8	5	2	0	15
Nimba	2	7	5	4	18
Lofa	17	66	0	0	83
Grand Bassa	8	6	0	3	17
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>133</b>

In the FY15 goat production intensification sites, a total of 38 goats were reported dead in Lofa, Nimba, and Grand Bassa Counties (Table 6). In Lofa County, the cause of death was attributed to suspected Peste des Petits Ruminants (PPR). In Grand Bassa County, the cause of death was attributed to foot rot. A total of 253 goats or four percent of the FY15 herd have died year to date.

*Table 6: Goat mortality in FY15 sites.*

<b>County</b>	<b>Mortality recorded Q2</b>	<b>Total Mortality Q3</b>	<b>Total Mortality in July</b>	<b>Total Mortality in August</b>	<b>Total Mortality YTD</b>
Bong	8	8	7	0	23
Nimba	4	3	14	0	21
Lofa	29	128	0	36	193
Grand Bassa	2	11	1	2	16
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>253</b>

### **FY14 Goat production sites - Access to veterinary care**

During August, a total of 384 animals received veterinary treatment from Community Animal Health workers (CAHWs) in Nimba, Lofa, and Grand Bassa Counties (Table 7). In total, 3,906 animals have received treatment year to date.

Table 7: Veterinary treatment by CAHWS.

County	Number of animals treated in Q2	Number of animals treated in Q3	Number of animals treated in July	Number of animals treated in August	Total number of animals treated YTD
Nimba	144	1027	0	144	1315
Bong	375	247	0	0	622
Lofa	29	406	75	100	610
Grand Bassa	254	847	118	140	1359
Total	802	2527	193	384	3906

## Promoting Goat Shelters

Sawyers contracted by USAID FED produced 2,462 pieces of wood required for the construction of goat shelters in August. In total, 32,303 pieces of wood have been produced to date. The wood produced so far is sufficient for the construction of 73 site shelters.

A total of 14 goat shelters were constructed in August. In total, 68 shelters have been completed across the four counties (Table 8). It is anticipated that all shelter construction will be completed by the middle of September.



Figure 7: Goat shelter construction taking place at Don Site in Nimba County.

Table 8: Number of shelters constructed in FY15 goat production intensification sites.

County	Number of carpenters recruited	Number of shelters required	Number of shelters built in Q3	Number of shelters built in July	Number of shelters built in August	Total Number of shelters built YTD	Shelters outstanding for completion
Nimba	14	26	9	6	9	24	2
Bong	11	22	7	12	0	19	3
Grand Bassa	10	10	3	3	1	7	3
Lofa	10	19	9	5	4	18	1
Total	45	77	28	26	14	68	9

## National PPR Campaign

During August, USAID FED and a representative from FAO in Rome held discussions on how to proceed with the proposed PPR vaccination campaign in the entire 15 counties of Liberia and the implications of the current PPR outbreak in Liberia. FAO will mobilize resources to vaccinate goats and sheep in non USAID FED supported counties. FAO will also deploy a virologist to Liberia in early September to assess the extent of the outbreak and to advise the MoA and USAID FED on what measures to take.

## Establishment of nucleus breeding herd

During August, USAID FED's in-house engineer conducted an inspection of the quarantine facility at CARL to determine what it would cost to convert the facility to a nucleus breeding herd facility. The facility will be converted by introducing slatted floors. The cost of implementing the changes is estimated at

US\$40,000. This will be done in FY16 once it is clear that the USDA FFP project implemented by Land O'Lakes will provide the breeder goats to comprise the nucleus breeding herd.

## Formalizing livestock market

### Goat sales

A total of 335 goats from FY14 and FY15 goat production intensification supported by USAID FED were sold for US\$21,318 in August. In total, 5,466 goats have been sold for US\$308,954 year to date.

## Sub Task 1.1 Special Studies and MoA Data Collection System Development

### Program Indicator Surveys Conducted

During August, field data collection continued for several special studies. Enumerators, extension officers, and LINGOs in Bong, Grand Bassa, Nimba, and Lofa Counties have been in the field since July collecting data. The studies randomly select USAID FED and non-USAID FED (for some of the studies) farmers in USAID FED's four core counties of operations. Some of the surveys are being collected on PDAs with Open Data Kit (ODK) software, while other surveys are being collected by hand and are being manually entered into the database. The survey portion of this activity will be completed in the beginning of September. 1,414 responses have been collected as of August (Table 9). It is anticipated that the two special study advisors will present their results at the end of September.

Table 9: Surveys collected through August.

No.	Survey Title	Number of Surveys Uploaded to ODK				
		Bong	Nimba	G. Bassa	Lofa	Total
1	Diet Diversity + Women Empowerment	197	191	199	191	778
2	FED Technology Adoption – Cassava	These surveys have been merged with Diet Diversity, Extension and Women's Empowerment			34	34
3	FED Technology Adoption – Goat				47	47
4	FED Technology Adoption – Vegetable					
5	Goat Shelter AHW	3	1	65		69
6	Household Economic	3		32	105	140
7	Rice Post Harvest + Rice Seed Demand	1		28		29
8	Vegetable Post Harvest Losses - Producers			30	35	65
9	Vegetable Post Harvest Losses – Retailers			27	25	52
10	Vegetable Post Harvest Losses - Wholesaler			24	12	36
11	Villages Savings and Loans Associations (VSLA)	96		49	19	164
	<b>TOTAL</b>					<b>1,414</b>

The Special Study Advisors have been frequently travelling to the field to provide technical support to the data collectors. Additionally, the uploaded data have been reviewed regularly for consistency and quality by the M&E unit at USAID FED.

### Equipment and materials procured for the MoA Offices in Nimba, Lofa, and Grand Bassa Counties

USAID FED M&E has developed the parameters to evaluate and determine the effectiveness and efficiency of the Bong County pilot activity, and will eventually come up with recommendations that will guide the replication of this activity in Nimba, Lofa, and Grand Bassa Counties.

Below are the four core parameters that have been developed for the MoA pilot scale-up:

- (1) Agricultural data across the county is collected and processed using the tools developed with USAID FED support
- (2) The agriculture season is taken into consideration when collecting data
- (3) Platforms such as Agriculture Coordination Committee meetings are set for regular/periodical data collection and management
- (4) Information from the Ministry of Internal Affairs Agriculture Coordination Office is integrated into the M&E monitoring system

### **Piloting/quality assurance of the database system design**

In August, HAK technology finished the development of the USAID FED data repository system. The system is now ready to be tested and run by the M&E team in Monrovia before the training is conducted for other end-users. Users training will be conducted for Monrovia and County Office staff by the second week of September 2015. This system will eventually be turned over to the MoA towards the end of USAID FED.

## **Sub Task 1.2 Improved Access to Agricultural Inputs**

### **Support the establishment of commercial production and marketing of rice seed**

In August, USAID FED continued to monitor 120 hectares of upland Rice Seed Multiplication (RSM) sites that were planted in July using the 15 rice seed inspectors and USAID FED extension staff. Each rice seed inspector will conduct a minimum of six mandatory inspections per site until January 2016.

By the end of August, a total of 51 hectares of lowland RSM sites had been planted with NERICA L-19 (at a seeding rate of 30 kg per hectare), representing 16 percent of the total area of 316 hectares to be planted (Table 10). From information received from the counties, it is anticipated that planting on the pending 265 hectares of lowland RSM sites will be completed by the end of September.

### **Support to commercial production and marketing of cassava cuttings**

During August, USAID FED commenced activity preparation for the harvesting of cuttings from the remaining nine disease resistant varieties from the IITA screening sites in Lofa County. The harvesting will be completed in September and cuttings provided to an additional 40 commercial nurseries. In Total, 80 commercial nurseries will benefit from cuttings sourced from improved cassava varieties by the end of FY15.

### **Awareness campaign on benefits of agro-inputs through radio and other platforms:**

During August, USAID FED produced a jingle to promote Urea Deep Placement (UDP) adoption by farmers. This jingle was developed after testing a first jingle in Lofa County with Radio Tamba Taikor and Bong County with Radio Super Bongese. This jingle will be aired in Grand Bassa County through Radio LACSA and Radio Kergheamahn in Nimba County.

### **Promote UDP, MoP and TSP use in rice based on soil analysis**

During August, USAID FED contracted two Laboratory Technicians from the University of Liberia to analyze 168 soil samples using the LaMotte Soil Test Kit. The technicians are analyzing for nitrate,



*Figure 8: Lab technician Nathaniel Korvah with soil samples and reagents.*

nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, and pH. The results will be used as part of the basis for preparing a soils map with indicative nutrient levels that can be used as guide for fertilizer recommendations for certain crops when planted in specific regions.

### **Demonstrate on-farm composting for vegetable production**

On August 12 and 20, USAID FED demonstrated the preparation of compost using a petrol powered shredding machine to 17 vegetable lead farmers (all men) from Margibi County, and five (four men and one woman) lead farmers from Montserrado County. USAID FED also demonstrated how the vegetation brushed during land preparation could provide the group with additional income if used as compost while reducing their own fertilizer costs. In October, USAID FED will conduct similar demonstrations with 25 agribusiness horticulture pilot sites to promote organic fertilizer use and composting as a business.



*Figure 9: Compost shredder breaks down material for fast efficient compost production.*

### **Demonstrate Fertilizer Deep Placement (FDP) in vegetable farming**

On August 7 and 10, USAID FED identified four rain shelters in Margibi and Montserrado counties to demonstrate FDP in vegetable farming. These rain shelters are located in Lowcost, Mulleh and Chosen Generation Church (CGC) Clusters in Montserrado County and Kolliokane Cluster in Margibi County.

Each of the shelters received NPK 15:15:15 at the rate of seven grams per plant in briquette form, which were placed between okra plants seven and 10cm below the soil surface. These sites were planted with two okra varieties, *Indiana* and *Clemson spineless*. Data collected on a follow up visit at Chosen Generation Church (CGC) Cluster in Montserrado County on August 26 revealed no significant differences in plant height or number of leaves between those planted with application of FDP and those with the NPK granule application.



*Figure 10: Demonstrating positioning of FDP application between plants.*

### **UDP+SRI research**

The findings of the UDP+SRI research trials were to be presented at the monthly Agriculture Coordination Committee meeting on August 15. This was postponed to September 24 at the request of the MOA.

### **Adoption of UDP to old sites**

During August, USAID FED linked a rice aggregator, John Selma, from John Selma Town, Lofa County, with Gro Green, an input supply company based in Monrovia. Under this collaboration, John Selma will receive 10 bags (36 kg each) of Urea Briquette to supply to lowland rice farmers. USAID FED will pay Gro Green 50 percent of the value of the fertilizer. John Selma will pay the remaining balance upon the sale of the product to farmers. The briquettes were delivered to the aggregator on August 29. The result of the model in terms of farmer procurement will be reported in September. USAID FED will capture the details through the aggregator's sales report.



## Sub Task 1.3 Agricultural Extension Support

### Development of extension material and information access points

USAID FED produced two cassava farmer guides - “Cassava Planting Methods” and “Tips for preparing and treating cassava cuttings” in August. In total, 11 farmer guides have been developed year to date. This includes six farmer guides for the rice value chain and five farmer guides for the cassava value chain. In September, USAID FED will complete seven farmer guides for the horticulture value chain and three farmer guides for the goat value chain.

During August, USAID FED collected video content on rice seed selection and treatment, as well as nursery establishment from Bong County. It is anticipated that the videos will be ready for validation before the end of September. USAID FED has so far collected video content for a total of five videos. Two videos have been developed, discussing land preparation for lowland rice production and UDP (soil nutrient management).

In August, USAID FED produced a jingle to promote UDP adoption. This jingle was developed after testing a first jingle in Lofa County with Radio Tamba Taikor and Bong County with Radio Super Bongese. This jingle will be aired in Grand Bassa County through Radio LACSA and Radio Kergheamahn in Nimba County.

In August, the third and fourth editions of the *On the Farm* radio program were aired on United Methodist Radio. After discussions with the United Nations Radio in Monrovia, bi-weekly broadcasting of *On the Farm* will resume in September. Stone FM, a radio station owned by Firestone in Margibi County, has also expressed interest in airing *On the Farm*. It is anticipated that an agreement between USAID FED and Stone FM will be reached in September.

## Sub Task 1.4 Youth in Agribusiness

### Activity 1.4.1 Establishment of 25 Peri-Urban Agribusiness (PUA) horticulture pilot sites

In August, USAID FED continued to provide technical assistance to the 25 peri-urban agribusiness horticulture sites in Montserrado and Margibi through Green Coast Agriculture Program (G-CAP), an LNGO contracted by USAID FED. Three of the agribusiness horticulture sites have already re-invested proceeds from sales of their vegetables to buy seeds, fertilizer and pesticides for follow on crops. The inputs were sourced from the local markets.

Seven youth PUA groups harvested and sold a total of 5.8MT of vegetables for US\$11,338 to the Monrovia Vegetable Traders Association. In total, 11MT of vegetables have been harvested and sold for US\$21,213 year to date. 18 other youth groups are currently cultivating new fields and constructing nursery beds for dry season vegetable production (watermelon, chilli pepper, and cucumber). These 18 groups are also preparing to harvest bitter balls, cabbage, eggplant, and pepper in September.



Figure 12: Youth farmers harvesting bitter ball at See Yourself youth group site in Todee, Montserrado County.



Figure 11: Farmers clearing land for nursery preparation in Gbedin, Nimba County.

## Supporting job creation through youth extension aides

During August, the 25 youth extension aides contracted by G-CAP continued to provide technical assistance to 25 agribusiness pilot sites on Good Agricultural Practices (GAP). USAID FED's Senior Horticulture Specialist provided technical assistance on pest and disease identification and control on their production sites.

## Supporting job creation through youth enterprises as logistics service providers in USAID FED-supported Farm Clusters

During August, MASARCO Inc., the contracted vendor, informed USAID FED that the 49 tuk-tuk motorbikes had arrived in Liberia. Samples were distributed to the Bong and Nimba County offices for entrepreneurs to view. By the end of August, a total of seven entrepreneurs had paid the full 50 percent of their cost share for eight tuk-tuks. Seven entrepreneurs had deposited 60 percent of the value of their cost share to access loans from Liberia Entrepreneurial Asset Development (LEAD) for 10 tuk-tuks. It is anticipated that the cost share for the remaining tuk-tuks will be paid for by entrepreneurs before the end of September. The official distribution ceremony will be held in Suakoko, Bong County on September 18, 2015.



Figure 13: Tuk-tuk assembled in FED's Nimba County office.

The 3 wheel tuk-tuks have the capacity to carry 1,500 kilograms when fully loaded. Each youth was also provided with a tool kit, helmet, and other accessories for the repair and maintenance of the tuk-tuks. This goal is to provide transportation of produce from the farm to the markets. Youth enterprises were selected as beneficiaries in line with USAID FED's conscious effort to increase youth participation in agriculture and to create employment opportunities for youth in Liberia's agriculture sector. The following are the criteria for the selection of the youth beneficiaries:

- Entrepreneur must be willing to operate the tuk-tuk as a business, not just for their personal use and should operate it on a fee-for service.
- Willing and able to invest up to 50% of equipment and any other cost excluding cost of operation/maintenance of the tuk-tuk wish is the Entrepreneur own cost
- Entrepreneur must exhibit strong management capability, must be driven, motivated, and have an affinity to grasp transport service as business concepts;
- Entrepreneur must be literate with financial numeracy skills
- Entrepreneur must be a private, income-earning entity (can be a corporation, association, cooperative)
- Must have potential customers from farm base and must be closely clustered (not sparsely scattered) so that use of tuk-tuk is physically feasible
- District must have sufficient markets to enable the transport service provider to transport milled rice product, raw and processed cassava, vegetables, goat and other commodities, service offerings of use of tuk-tuk,

- Entrepreneur must be located in an area with clear physical access to roads and markets and within USAID FED-supported clusters

### Supporting job creation through youth enterprises as power tiller service providers

The 30 power tiller operators had tilled 395 hectares in Bong, Nimba, Lofa, and Grand Bassa as part of their cost share in August. This represents 27 percent of the total 1,440 hectares that are to be tilled as a cost share obligation by December 2015 (Table 10).

Table 10: Total area tilled by power tiller entrepreneurs.

County	Number of power tillers	Hectares to be tilled as cost share	Hectares tilled in August	Hectares to be tilled in September	Hectares to be tilled in November FY16 (Double cropping)	Hectares to be tilled in FY16 (Rice)	Hectare to be tilled in December (Vegetables for Bong-mines)	Total hectares to be tilled
Bong	10	480	104	100	65	100	111	480
Lofa	9	432	67	50	65	250	0	432
Nimba	10	480	187	78	65	150	0	480
Grand Bassa	1	48	37	11	0	0	0	48
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>1,440</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>239</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>1,440</b>

### Supporting job creation through training youth as machine operators

From August 3 to 7, USAID FED conducted a five-day training session on how to operate and maintain cassava processing machines for six youth (all males) from three cassava processing centers in Grand Bassa County. During the training, the youth also learned how to operate and maintain cassava processing equipment.

From August 10 to 14, USAID FED conducted five day training on how to operate rice milling equipment for five youth (3 males and 2 females) from one rice business hub in Grand Bassa County. During the training, these youth were taught how to operate and maintain rice milling equipment.



Figure 14: Youth group members being trained on how to operate a cassava processing machine in Compound #2, Grand Bassa County.

## Sub Task 1.5: Improving Human Nutrition

### Development of Diet Behavior-Change Communications (DBCC) Strategy

On August 13, the findings of the barrier analysis conducted in Nimba County during the month of July and proposed recommendations for the implementation of the pilot Behavior Change Strategy were presented to USAID Liberia, MoHSW, UNICEF, and USAID LAUNCH by USAID FED's Behavior Change Communication Specialist. In August, implementation of the pilot program commenced in Nimba County.



Figure 15: Lead farmers during training in Karnplay, Nimba County.



As part of the pilot, a total of 57 lead farmers (38 men and 19 women) were trained using nutrition training modules and 12 customized messages developed by USAID FED. Similar training exercises will be conducted in September to reach a total of 257 lead farmers within the county.

### **Nutrition messaging outreach to more households**

During August, a total of 57 (38 men and 19 women) lead farmers from the goat, vegetable, and horticulture production clusters located in Gbehlay-Geh, Sanniquellie-Mah, and Bain-Gar districts in Nimba County received training on nutrition messaging.

A total of 1,710 copies of the approved nutrition flyer showing benefits of the three recommended food groups were disseminated to 1,710 (1,614 men and 96 women) beneficiaries in Nimba County. In addition, 2,935 beneficiaries (1,566 men and 1,369 women) received nutrition messaging disseminated through the approved nutrition posters in Montserrado and Lofa counties. In total, 4,702 individuals (3,218 men and 1,484 women) received nutrition messaging through posters and flyers in August.

## **Component Two: Stimulate Private Sector Growth and Investment**

### **Task 2: Policy Enabling Environment for Private Sector Growth**

#### **Policy Reform Activities via Technical Working Groups**

##### ***Domesticating the ECOWAS Seed Regulation***

Following the workshops on the guidelines and implementation regulation of the ECOWAS Seed Regulation in Liberia, held by an International Seed Policy Expert Josiah Wobil, a complete and final draft of the Liberia Seed Regulation was submitted to the MoA on August 27, 2015. The USAID FED local seed policy expert, Dr. Roland Massaquoi former Minister of Agriculture, is working with the MoA to facilitate the signing of the regulations.

##### **Domesticating the ECOWAS Pesticide Regulations**

In August 2015, an International Pesticides Policy Expert, Dr. Alan Schroeder was hired by USAID FED to provide support to the “domestication” of the ECOWAS Pesticide Regulation. He is going to present the draft Pesticide Policy and Regulations to stakeholders at a workshop to be held on September 2-3, 2015. It is expected that the complete and final draft of the Liberia Pesticide Policy and Regulations will be submitted to the MoA by the end of September 2015.

##### **Domesticating the ECOWAS Fertilizer Regulations**

USAID FED concluded partnership discussions with the West Africa Fertilizer Project (WAFP), resulting in the production of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that is expected to be signed on September 3, 2015. This will result in a joint effort between WAFP and USAID FED to support the Ministry of Agriculture in developing a draft of the Liberia Fertilizer Regulation, including its implementing guidelines. These draft regulations will be presented at a two-day stakeholder validation workshop, which will facilitate the domestication of the ECOWAS Fertilizer Regulation in Liberia. Under the leadership of the MoA, USAID FED and WAFP intend to conduct the validation workshop from September 22-23, 2015.

##### **Support to MoCI through the MSME Annual Conference**

USAID FED continued discussions with the Department of Small Business Administration of the MoCI regarding the agenda for the third annual Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise (MSME) Conference due to be held in November 2015. The Department of Small Business Administration of the MoCI has provisionally agreed with the three key policy propositions:

1. The adoption of the Common ECOWAS Tariff (CET)
2. Suspension of the tariff on agricultural equipment and tools, seed, fertilizers, logistics for transport of farm produce, and pesticides for food and cash crops production and processing
3. Enforce the use of cassava wheat composite flour, consisting of at least 10% cassava

The Department of Small Business Administration is awaiting information regarding the final date and agenda for the MSME conference from Her Excellence President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf.

##### **National Standards Laboratory (NSL)**

USAID FED published an Request For Proposals (RfP) to conduct a gap assessment, market study, and business plan for the NSL. After the bidding process was completed, the project was unable to award the

bid to any qualified candidates due to cost proposals being way above the internal FED budget. The project now intends to recruit and directly hire an international STTA to complete this activity. It is expected that the project will identify a qualified candidate in September 2015.

## Subtask 2.1 Access to Financing

### Village Savings and Loan Associations

During August 2015, USAID FED continued to support an LNGO, EDUCARE, to develop the capacity and operations of the already established 373 Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs) which have 9,842 members across the six USAID FED target counties, with 75 VSLAs in Lofa, 75 in Nimba, 75 in Bong, 75 in Grand Bassa, 37 in Margibi, and 36 in Montserrado (Table 11).

All 9,842 members received training in 'Effective Communication' provided by EDUCARE Community Field Officers (CFOs), and as shown in table 13 below, the VSLAs collected a total of US\$133,675 as capital from internal loans. Furthermore, VSLA members also reported a total of US\$22,089 incomes derived from sales of rice, cassava, vegetable, and goats as a direct result of investment made from previous internal loans.

Table 11: Breakdown of number of VSLAs, members, shares, loans and sales by county.

County	VSLAs per County	Active Members per County	VSLA per County (LoP)	Total Shares Purchased per County (US\$)	Total Number of Loan Recipients per County (US\$)	Sales from Investment Loans in August per County (US\$)
Lofa	75	2180		\$36,875	384	\$6,619
Nimba	76	2099		\$32,929	312	\$7,645
Bong	75	1912		\$25,075	298	\$3,795
Bassa	74	1898		\$22,100	244	\$2,085
Margibi	37	925		\$9,671	156	\$1,050
Montserrado	36	828		\$7,025	112	\$895
<b>Total</b>	<b>373</b>	<b>9,842</b>		<b>\$133,675</b>	<b>1,506</b>	<b>\$22,089</b>

In addition, during August 2015, USAID FED-contracted LNGO, Universal Empowerment Missions (UEM), continued to implement its contract signed in July 2015. As part of this contract, UEM will facilitate the formation of additional 350 (all-female) VSLAs, expanding the number of VSLAs across the six USAID FED target counties to a total of 723. During August, UEM recruited 70 Community Finance Officers and five county based M&E officers, and conducted 'VSLA Awareness' training to farming clusters involved in the four USAID FED targeted value chains.

### Piloting Micro-credit Unions with VSLAs

In July 2015, USAID FED & USAID Micro-Lead signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to partner in facilitating the establishment of a pilot 'micro-credit union'. In August, a participant training tool was developed, and five VSLAs in Nimba County, which are interested in forming a union, have each contributed an initial US\$1,200 as potential loan capital. The five VSLAs will receive further training and support in order to be 'formalized' in September.

## Extension of Micro Finance to Farmers and Entrepreneurs

In August, a USAID FED supported farming group, the United Communities Agriculture Group from Jeremiah Gardee Town in Grand Bassa awarded a US\$89,187 grant by the United States African Development Foundation (USADF). USADF selected this group as grantee due to their successful adoption and implementation of technologies and practices learned from USAID FED interventions. Through the support of USAID FED, the United Communities Agriculture Group has become one of the largest cassava producing communities in Grand Bassa. The group intends to use the grant to expand their commercial cassava production.

Additionally, in August USAID FED supported the Zeelie Farmers Association in Lofa County to utilize a US\$24,000 loan they received from the LEAD to buy a total of 5,879.72 kg for US\$18 50 kg of paddy rice from local farmers to sell to buyers at a cost of US\$20 per 50 kg bag. In August, this has resulted in a further profit of US\$2,116 of sales for these farmers, which can be directly attributed to this activity and the technical support previously provided by USAID FED.

## Piloting Embedded Financing

During the reporting period, USAID FED facilitated the process for the Monrovia Vegetable Seller Association (MVSA) to receive a US\$25,000 loan from LEAD. The MVSA will use the loan to provide inputs (embedded financing) to 474 USAID FED supported vegetable farmers on credit. The farmers will sell their produce to MVSA and the loan will be deducted from the total value of vegetable sales.

## Subtask 2.2: Access to Business Development Support (BDS) Services and Enterprise Service Centers

With the support of five local Business Service Providers (BSPs), including LEAD, Liberia Initiatives for Development Services (LIDS), Community Youth Network Program (CYNP), the Jacob F. Tomei Enterprise Center (JFTEC), and Top Consulting Inc. (TCi), USAID FED has been providing comprehensive 'business skills' training to farmers and MSMEs across the six target counties. The training program set by USAID FED covers all of the elements an entrepreneur or farmer requires to establish a successful formal business, including training and support on how to establish and register a business, how to plan for a successful business, marketing, and business financial management.

The Business Service Providers (BSPs) sub-contracted by USAID FED trained 3,179 MSMEs on business management (Table 12).



Figure 16: USAID FED supported MSME training session in Bong County.

Table 12: Breakdown by county of number of MSME's receiving training from BSP's.

Business Service Provider	County	LoP Target # of Farmers and MSMEs to Receive Training	# of MSMEs that Received Training Prior to August 2015	# of MSMEs that Received Training in August 2015	Total # Of MSMEs that Received Business and Management Training from USAID FED
LEAD	Nimba	6,539	6,539	0	6,539
LIDS	Bong	4,411	3,399	2,254	5,653
CYNP	Grand Bassa	3,225	3,419	0	3,419
JFTEC	Lofa	3,369	3,369	0	3,369
TCi	Montserrado / Margibi	3,225	2,300	925	3,225
<b>Total</b>		<b>20,769</b>	<b>19,026</b>	<b>3,179</b>	<b>22,205</b>

### Facilitating Rural Farmers to Formally Register as MSMEs

In July 2015, USAID FED planned to support staff from the MoCI Department of Small Business Administration as it toured the six counties to carry out official registration of 200 of the 337 MSMEs that have been supported by BSPs in preparing articles of incorporation, by-laws, and constitutions. However, the MoCI opened regional offices of the Liberia Business Registry in August in each of the counties, making the tour redundant. As a result, the BSPs were able to facilitate the official registration of 124 MSMEs locally in August. USAID FED will continue to support the registration of the remaining 213 MSMEs over the remaining months (Table 13).



Figure 17: USAID FED supported MSME training session in Bong County.

Table 13: Breakdown by county the number of MSMEs developing articles of incorporation and receiving formal registration.

Business Service Provider	County	Target # of MSME's to be Formalize	# of MSME's Having Developed Articles of Incorporation	# of MSME's Formally Registered in August 2015	Total # of MSME's Formally Registered
LEAD	Nimba	50	86	86	86
LIDS	Bong	50	61	0	0
CYNP	Grand Bassa	50	50	0	0
JFTEC	Lofa	50	50	38	38
TCi	Montserrado/ Margibi	50	90	0	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>250</b>	<b>337</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>124</b>

### Assessment and Development of Action Plans for MSMEs

During August 2015, LIDS, a USAID FED supported BSP, completed an assessment started in July, which aimed to identify the challenges faced by three cassava processing centers, two rice hubs, and one vegetable rain shelter in Bong County. A similar assessment of 14 rain shelters in Montserrado/Margibi counties was

also completed by Top Consulting Inc. (TCi). The assessment in Bong resulted in six of the assessed facilities being supported to develop individual action plans. The facilities will follow these plans for the next three months to help them improve their individual businesses. In September, LIDS will continue to work with the other 16 MSMEs that were assessed in order to assist them in developing their own individual action plans.

### **Subtask 2.3: Women Participation in Agribusiness**

#### **Women-owned Business Incubation Program**

Following up from the three month engagement of a Women-owned Enterprise Development Specialist, in August, all 26 female owned MSMEs were presented with a written copy of the business plan they had developed through group workshops and individual coaching. In addition, a local consultant has been selected to mentor these women as they work to implement their business plans. It is expected that the mentor will begin working with these entrepreneurs in September 2015.

## **Component Three: Build Local Technical and Managerial Human Resource Capability**

### **NDA curriculum rolled out in the first semester of AY 2014-2015**

An assessment of the new National Diploma in Agriculture (NDA) program was completed in July 2015 by the Component Three Lead, Dr. Samuel Duo. USAID FED is now focusing on the following steps:

- USAID FED will be following up with the identification of Short Term Technical Assistants (STTA) in Liberia to provide the field based and laboratory training as required for the program. Such technical training support will be provided prior to the beginning of the second semester (September 2015).
- A subsequent assessment will be carried out in early 2016 to determine the training needs for Year Two implementation of the syllabi and lesson plans.
- The Government of Liberia (GoL), through the Ministry of Education (MoE), should be continually engaged and encouraged to recruit seven additional faculty for the Centers of Excellence (CoEs), including: four instructors for Nimba County Community College (NCCC); two instructors for Grand Bassa Community College (GBCC); and one instructor for Lofa County Community College (LCCC) to ensure effective delivery of the NDA curriculum.
- Further, a USAID FED-supported Liberian intern from Earth University, Washington Tanookpuwah, who arrived in Liberia in August 2015 will be assisting NCCC in crop production using organic manure or compost until the end of the second semester (September-December 2015).

### **Establish performance management system at the CoEs**

The recruitment process to hire a Performance Management System Development Specialist to work with the CoEs began in August 2015, and will be completed by September 4, 2015. Interviews were conducted and background checks are being carried out to complete the hiring process. This consultant, when hired, will commence work by September 9, 2015.

The Performance Management Consultant, upon completion of phase one of their assignment, will follow-up with the CoEs to monitor and ensure that a Performance Management System (PMS) has been established and running functionally in early FY16 with technical support of Component Three.

### **Facilitate the delivery of instructors' immediate training needs for effective delivery of the NDA**

The recruitment process to hire five local consultants listed below commenced in mid-August 2015 and will be completed by September 4, 2015. They are expected to begin work on September 9, 2015 and complete the training delivery process by the end of September, 2015.

1. Farm Woodland Management Specialist
2. Soil Scientist/Agronomist
3. Agronomist
4. Computer Literacy Trainer
5. Animal Scientist



## Establishment of standardized Agricultural Science Labs and training of instructors and technicians

In August, the installation of laboratory equipment began at the newly renovated science laboratories at the CoEs. Installation of equipment in all four laboratories will be completed in September.



Figure 18: Figure 1: Installation of Science Lab equipment at Lofa County Community College.

## Library facilities upgraded, outfitted and effectively maintained

Based upon the revised Scope of Work (SoW) for the development of a Flash Website to enable students and faculty to access academic resources offline for the Centers of Excellence, a RFP has been finalized and forwarded to the IT consulting firms that participated in the previous bid process. The deadline for proposal submissions was August 26, 2015. Subsequent evaluation of proposals for selection of an IT firm will be carried out in early September 2015.

## Develop and implement 3-yr strategic plan including priority enterprises to be established at the CoEs

The recruitment process to hire a Strategic Planning, Finance, and Enterprise Development Specialist began locally in August 2015 and will be completed by September 4, 2015, with the selected candidate beginning work on September 9, 2015. When hired, this consultant will work with CoEs for the development of 3-yr strategic plans including business, HR, institutional, and financial plans.

The CoE training of goat technicians in goat medication administration and caretaking commenced on August 12, 2015 with support from the USAID FED goat value chain. USAID FED provided goat medication and starter kits to facilitate the training (Table 14).



Figure 19: Goat Medication Administering Training workshop at Goat Shelter at NCCC.

Table 14: Goat Technician Training Workshop Participants.

No	CoE	Participant's Name	Position/Title	Gender
1	NCCC	William Gogbay	Goat Manager	Male
2	NCCC	Clinton Larkpor	Assistant	Male
3	NCCC	Zlanner Yenglee	Agriculture Student	Male
4	NCCC	Offie L Sangar	Agriculture Student	Male
5	NCCC	Justin Luo	Agriculture Coordinator	Male



#### *GBCC Vegetable Enterprise Site*

A total of LD\$6,149 or US\$71 was reported by the farm manager as proceeds from the daily harvested crops. However, the harvest is still ongoing. GBCC is producing a variety of vegetables including bitter balls, okra, and tomatoes.

AIM Global Company, the vendor that installed rain shelters, also provided six different chemicals including pesticides and fertilizers for use on tomatoes.

#### **Build Capacity and provide technical assistance support to the business department of the CoE's**

The recruitment of a local independent consultant for capacity development in the area of grant proposal writing commenced in August 2015, with the process expected to be completed by September 15, 2015. The consultant will provide expert training and assist the CoE staff in developing their skills to engage external sources for the purpose of raising additional funding for development of the institutions. Training is expected to commence by the third week of September 2015 and run until the first week of October 2015.

#### **Establishment of advisory committee to provide check and balance to CoE's management**

In August, an activity proposal was developed by USAID FED's Component Three team and was submitted for review and approval by the USAID FED's Technical Evaluation Committee, and eventually by the USAID FED Management. A workshop is planned for September 2015 for the establishment of Advisory Committees for the CoEs.