



# FOOD AND ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT (FED) PROGRAM FOR LIBERIA

MONTHLY REPORT (DRAFT)

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**Cover page photo caption:**

The Menlehkoyee Vegetable Group in Negbin, Nimba County, takes a break from work to pose for a group photo. FED supports clusters of farmers in six counties of Liberia to enhance their earning potential, improve lives, and promote food security.

**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

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
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
EO	Extension Officer
FtF	Feed the Future
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FUN	Farmer Union Network
GAP	Good Agriculture Practices
GBCC	Grand Bassa Community College
GCAP	Green Coast Agricultural Program
GPS	Global Positioning Systems
IBEX	Investing in Business Expansion Liberia
IFDC	International Fertilizer Developmental Center
IITA	International Institute for Tropical Agriculture
IP	Implementing Partner
IQC	Indefinite Quantity Contract
ISFM	Integrated Soil Fertility Management
KRTTI	Kakata Rural Teachers Training Institute
LABEE IPG	Liberia Agriculture Business Enabling Environment Inter-Agency Policy Group
LAUNCH	Liberia Agriculture, Upgrading Nutrition & Child Health
LCCC	Lofa County Community College
LIFE	Livelihood Improvement for Farming Enterprises
LIPAS	Liberia Integrated Professional Agriculture Service
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
NDA	National Diploma in Agriculture
NCCC	Nimba County Community College
NIC	National Investment Commission
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
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 Program

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>ACRONYMS</b>	<b>I</b>
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>	<b>III</b>
<b>BACKGROUND</b>	<b>I</b>
<b>Component One: Increase Agricultural Productivity and Profitability</b>	<b>3</b>
Task 1A: Increased Productivity and Profitability of the Rice Value Chain	3
Task 1B: Increased Productivity and Profitability of the Cassava Value Chain	4
Task 1C: Increased Productivity and Profitability of the Horticulture Value Chain	5
Task 1D: Increased Productivity and Profitability of the Goat Value Chain	10
Subtask 1.2 Improved access to Agricultural Inputs	12
Subtask 1.3: Agricultural Extension Support	14
<b>SUBTASK 1.4: YOUTH IN AGRIBUSINESS</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>COMPONENT TWO: STIMULATE PRIVATE SECTOR GROWTH AND INVESTMENT</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>COMPONENT THREE: BUILD LOCAL TECHNICAL AND MANAGERIAL HUMAN RESOURCE CAPABILITIES</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>COMPONENT FOUR: CROSS-CUTTING ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>19</b>





## BACKGROUND

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

USAID FED is increasing food availability, utilization, and accessibility by building an indigenous incentive structure to assist 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; and
- Workforce development.

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

Midway through its fifth and final year of operation, FED is expanding market linkages designed to substantially increase incomes and job opportunities. It is also significantly boosting production, processing, marketing and nutritional utilization of rice, cassava and vegetables, as well as enhancing the productivity of goat farming in the counties covered by the program.

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

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

USAID FED is implemented by a consortium led by Development Alternatives, Inc., along with Winrock International, International Fertilizer Developmental Center (IFDC), Louisiana State University (LSU), and The Cadmus Group.



## Component One: Increase Agricultural Productivity and Profitability

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

#### Improving productivity and profitability of upland and lowland rice

##### **Provide technical assistance to FY13, FY14, and FY15 upland and lowland rice groups:**

FED field extension staff continued to provide technical assistance this month to the FY13, FY14 and FY15 upland and lowland rice beneficiaries. The technical assistance primarily focused on post-harvest management of rice stocks, land clearing, felling and burning. FED has increased the number of extension officers at the county level to support implementation. However, it still remains a challenge for these staff to cover the large number of clusters in an effective manner to provide technical assistance and monitor activities.

##### **Support 5,250 new upland rice farmers to apply improved technologies on 750 hectares of new upland areas:**

By the end of April, FED upland rice groups commenced land clearing in preparation for the planting season. The rice groups had also cleared 750 hectares of upland areas, and FED initiated the procurement process to purchase improved rice seeds. Planting of upland rice is expected to commence in May. Lead farmers will be provided with 45 metric tons of NERICA 14, an upland rice variety, in May for their demonstration plots.

##### **Support 7,000 new lowland farmers to apply improved technologies on 1,000 hectares of new lowland areas:**

FED lowland rice groups also commenced land clearing in preparation for the planting season. By the end of April, 275 hectares of lowland areas had been cleared. Planting of lowland rice is expected to commence in June. Lead farmers will be provided with 13 metric tons of NERICA L-19 in May for their demos. Smaller demonstration plots will be supported per group as the NERICA L-19 seed ceiling in the restricted goods approvals are lower than the originally planned 40 metric tons. However, this will not negatively affect our ability to reach targets for numbers of farmers reached.

#### Promoting embedded services by the private sector

##### **Technical assistance to aggregators, traders, processors, and rice business hubs in coming up with business-to-business models that embed services to farming groups:**

By the end of April, Afriland Bank had not responded to the loan application for trade financing submitted by the Selma Agriculture Corporation. Such trade credit remains crucial to enable this integrator to procure adequate rice stocks in Lofa County for processing and sale to institutional buyers and community markets. In April, Selma Agriculture Corporation milled and supplied 30 metric tons of rice valued at US\$21,000 to the WFP.



*Rice in the FY14 Selma Town rice business hub ready for market.*

**Support aggregators with trucks on cost-share to support timely and reliable aggregation and transportation of paddy rice:**

In April, USAID Liberia provided the Selma Agriculture Corporation with a five ton truck to support transport of rice in Lofa County. The vehicle will assist farmers across Lofa County to transport their paddy and other agricultural products from farm to processors to market, especially during the rainy season, when the cost of transportation increases because of bad road conditions.



*Farmer on spillway site in Dotein-ta, Bong County, using a cono-weeder to remove weeds.*

**Promoting two rice crops per year**

**Provide technical assistance to 42 irrigation spillway sites for double cropping:**

Dr. Pandian Balamurugan, FED's rice technical specialist, continued to provide technical assistance to the 42 water-management infrastructure sites in support of double-cropping efforts. By the end of April, 90 hectares out of 210 hectares supported by spillways were under a second crop. Lead farmers were also trained on how to use paddy drum seeders for planting and cono-weeders for weed management.

**Enhancing post-harvest management practices**

By the end of April, six new rice business hubs in Lofa and Bong Counties had been completed and all equipment installed. Five of these rice business hubs had their equipment tested by FED's in-house equipment mechanic. It is anticipated that all nine the new rice business hubs will be fully functional by the end of May.

*Completed rice business hub in Salala, Bong County*



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

**Improve productivity of cassava farmers**

**Provide technical assistance and farming guides to FY13, FY14 and FY15 cassava groups to ensure they continue to apply improved practices and use improved varieties:**

FED continues to provide technical assistance through its field extension officers to the FY13 to FY15 farmers as they prepare for the next cropping season, which will start in May. Coverage of extension has been constrained with the exit of the LNGOs, although FED has hired its own extension staff to fill the gap.

### **Support an additional of 6,000 new beneficiaries for FY16 cassava production**

The 6,000 new farmers and 300 demonstration sites targeted for FY16 have been identified, and the signing of MOUs is ongoing. Some demo sites are ready for planting, and the procurement of cuttings of improved varieties (i.e., Carica 1, Carica 2, TMS series) is in process.

Procurement of cuttings for the demonstration sites is proceeding. Parallel to this is the setting of schedules for the preparation of demonstration sites and training of lead farmers. By May, most demonstration sites will be ready for the cassava extension training.

### **Increase Access of Processors, Traders, Logistics Providers, and Integrators to Financial and Business Development Services**

#### **Support at least five new micro-processors in Grand Bassa County to upgrade their processing and storage capacities:**

The final assessment of the five new cassava processors in Grand Bassa continues. Five processors will be selected from the current six.

### **Falama Flour Mill**

FED had intended to provide the Falama Flour Mill with an industrial processing capacity, but procurement of this mill has been shelved due to budgetary constraints. However, our technical assistance to Falama continues, to include efforts to connect Falama to LADA's co-investment fund to finance this facility. In addition, FED is actively promoting Falama as a GDA activity, which would make it eligible for DCA financing under that designation. Angie Howard, Falama's owner and manager, has been advised that FED will continue its efforts in support of the LADA transition and GDA promotion to facilitate USAID's ongoing support to her company. Indeed, several LADA-FED meetings were conducted in April to plan for this transition.

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

FED continued its efforts to assist the high-value vegetable farming clusters in Margibi and Montserrado counties to strengthen existing market linkages and develop new ones with buyers from mainstream vegetable markets and high-end or niche markets. Two five kilogram trial shipments of local okra varieties were also completed in April to an international buyer in Paris. Future such trials for chili peppers and eggplant are planned for the coming months.

Locally designed and constructed rain shelters in Mawah and Mensah vegetable clusters are ready for use in preparation for planting during the upcoming rainy season. Two small rototillers provided by FED have substantially reduced planting bed preparation, and created deeper and better soil tillage. The use of organic fertilizer such as chicken dung with sawdust or rice hulls is being promoted to cut down on

the cost of fertilizer and to improve soil-fertility sustainability. Construction of a small packing house is proceeding together with the installation of a water well for clear water supply.

In addition to the Royal Grand Hotel market linkage created last month, FED brokered a supply agreement between Mawah production cluster and the Golden Beach Restaurant in Monrovia. Such buyer-seller relationships with other local institutional buyers (Greenland supermarket, Cape Hotel, Mamba Point Hotel) continue to be explored,

FED's extension officers and technical specialist continue to extend pest control services and other technical assistance. In addition to providing technical assistance and monitoring the performance of FED-assisted farmers, the Montserrado extensionists also assisted in the monitoring and supervision of the construction of the expanded rain shelters in Mount Barclay.

### **Vegetable production and sales**

In FY16 Q1 and Q2 the cumulative volume and value of sold, high-value vegetables were 697,183 metric tons and US\$1.07 million, respectively. These numbers are subject to verification. The value is about 41 percent of the project's total vegetables sales target of US\$2.624 million. FED was unable to collect sales and harvests numbers in time for this report's publication, however, evidence in the field indicates that farmers continue to plant and harvest their produce in the FED program counties. In addition, market prices continue on an upward trend. In the month of April, the prices of some high value vegetables such as lettuce rose to US\$2.00 per kilogram from US\$1.50, while prices of cabbage and tomatoes remained stable at US\$2.50 per kilogram and US\$3.75 per kilogram, respectively.

Sales are expected to increase in the coming months with the onset of the rainy season, when prices typically spike. During this period, production is limited. Presently, farmers are preparing nurseries and seedbeds with some starting to transplant (Figure 2). Although some farmers have dropped out of the FED program due to predictable attrition, better yield and higher prices are expected to contribute to higher sales in Q3.

### **Improving productivity through GAP and IPM**

#### **Sustain technical assistance to 321 farmer groups (including 25 agribusinesses) on GAP, IPM and other productivity enhancing technologies:**

Figure 2 Farmer at Yancy Cluster with seeded nursery and lettuce seedlings



FED has focused its GAP and IPM interventions in Mount Barclay and Careysburg to enhance the performance of four production clusters. These clusters serve as a model for the development of a vegetable production and marketing growth center for high-value vegetables that will cater to institutional markets and, in the future, to export markets. The growth center will encourage the development of a commercial-level vegetable production value chain and could serve as a model

for scaling up in other parts of Liberia. The production clusters covered by this activity are the Mensah, Mawah, CGCWYEP and Careysburg clusters.



In addition to new, improved varieties of vegetables being tested and introduced this month, other technologies adopted are open-sided rain shelters with 75 percent shade net for high-value vegetable growing (i.e., tomatoes, Romain lettuce, iceberg lettuce, herbs), mechanized plant bed preparation and seed-priming technique (Figure 3). The seed-priming technique improves germination rate to the level indicated by seed producers.

Figure 3 Primed lettuce seeds, Careysburg, Montserrado



Farmers continue to receive from FED's extensionists and horticulture specialist advisory services related to timely pest and disease control interventions. Recommended preventive measures prevented the spread of Choanephora rot (Choanephora cucurbitarum) on okra and tomato-leaf curl virus (Figure 4) transmitted by whiteflies at Fendel Israel Community, Careysburg and Central White Plains vegetable farms. If unchecked, this could result to crop losses as high as 70 percent.

Figure 4 Choanephora rot on okra fruit; tomato leaf curl virus disease



FED also encourages farmers to use organic fertilizer, such as chicken dung. Farmers in Mawah and Mensah have applied chicken dung to vegetable beds under the RS and open field cultivation. This was also used on the okra (Clemson spineless variety) fields (2,100 square meters) at Mawah and Mensah production clusters and GBomai Farms intended for the second trial shipment. Gbomai Farms is a private entrepreneurial high value vegetable farm located approximately 5 kilometers from Roberts Field airport.

## Technology introduction and adoption

### ***Production in rain shelters:***

The Mawah and Mensah farmers in Mount Barclay, Montserrado, have almost completed the construction of the FED-designed RS. FED provided most of the materials, while the farmers constructed the structure and provided local building materials, such as bamboo poles. The farmers in these two production clusters are preparing the beds, including the peripheral areas for planting.

Figure 5 Mawah vegetable production cluster completing the construction of the expanded RS



As shown in Figure 5, adjustable shades, which control sunlight intensity by providing 75 percent shade to the planting area during hot days, have been installed and the beds are ready for planting. The shades will be rolled down during the rainy season and overcast days, when there is low level of sunlight. The shaded rain shelters provide a suitable micro-climate for a year of continuous production of lettuce, cabbage, tomatoes, and other vegetable types and herbs for high-value, niche markets. Herbs such as mint, oregano, and rosemary are special requirements of the Royal Grand Hotel and the Golden Beach Restaurant, each of whom have requested their production and supply. The buyers will select the type of herb and supply the seeds. The prices are more than double the price of the regular, high-value vegetables. Currently, the institutional market depends on import for its supply.

Figure 6 FED guiding Mensah production cluster farmers to install RS plastic sheet roofing



Mensah production cluster is preparing to install the shade net and bamboo fence around the rain shelters for protection against stray animals and thieves (Figure 6). These will be completed on the first week of May.

### ***Mechanization in Planting Bed Preparation***

The preparation of planting beds is physically intensive, using grub hoes and shovels. It takes about one day to prepare 250 square meters of vegetable bed. FED helped reduce land preparation time from one day to one hour by providing 5.5 horsepower rototillers to the Mawah and Mensah clusters. Moreover, the machine does not require as much physical strength, which promotes increased participation by women in the activity. This reduced preparation time has meant that farmers with children are able to spend more time taking care of their children and on other family caregiving chores.

Figure 7 FED demonstrates how to use the rototiller to farmers of Mawah (a) and Mensah (b) clusters





Figure 7 shows the FED horticulture value chain manager demonstrating the rototiller and training farmers in its use. In addition machine maintenance was emphasized. Women and men farmers could easily learn how to use the rototiller as shown in Figure 8.

Figure 8 Farmers of Mawah (a) and Mensah (b) clusters learning how to operate the rototiller



### ***Varietal Testing and Introduction***

FED continues to test and introduce new varieties to determine the most suited for productivity enhancement. This month, some of the seeded vegetable varieties were: 1) Romain lettuce, 2) iceberg lettuce, 3) Chinese cabbage, 4) cherry tomatoes and other varieties of tomatoes, and 5) spring onions.

A collaborative work with the USAID World Vegetable Center through AVRDC tests the performance of four types of vegetables, including three varieties of okra. The okra are already in the fruiting and harvesting stage, and one of the varieties, Koonie, was part of the trial shipment for export. Other okra varieties being tested are Clemson spineless, Indiana, Shankar FI, Batoumambi and Pusa sawani.

### **Reduce harvest and post-harvest losses of vegetables along the value chain**

The construction of the packing house of Mawah production cluster faces some delay as priority shifted to the preparation of Clemson Spineless okra for the second batch of trial shipment for export. With all the needed materials already on site, the farmers are ready to start the work by the first week of May and complete it by the second week. Part of the packing house is a charcoal cooler the construction of which will follow. Postharvest losses are expected to be reduced substantially when the packing house 'facility' becomes operational.

### ***Provide technical assistance to 321 farmer groups (including 25 agribusinesses), six trader associations and transporters on good harvesting and post-harvesting practices:***

Figure 9 FED HVC and Mawah kuu leader closing a supply deal with C. Van Ngo, Golden Beach Restaurant, Monrovia



### **Strengthening farmer-market linkages and expanding markets**

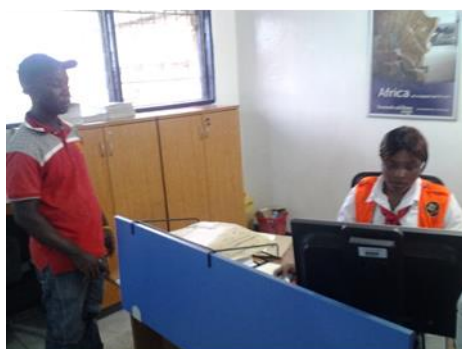
FED-assisted production clusters Careysburg, Mawah and Mensah continue to supply vegetables to Royal Grand Hotel. The hotel has signed the MOU setting up the conditions for production and supply. This will be followed by setting up the supply mechanics that will detail the type, volume, and

quality to be supplied, the schedule of production and the price.

On April 14, FED together with Alexander Moannah kuu, the leader of Mawah production cluster, concluded a vegetable-supply agreement with Golden Beach Restaurant in Monrovia (Figure 10). Like the Royal Grand Hotel farmer-market linkage, Golden Beach's owner, C. Van Ngo, will provide the seeds and some inputs, the cost of which will be deducted from sales of the vegetables. The restaurant has particular interest in herbs and will provide seeds for specific types by June. An MOU is being prepared for this agreement.

The first trial shipment for export of two okra varieties (i.e., Koonie, Shankar FI) proceeded on April 28 (Figure 10). The consignee was Jean Louise Gruter, the chairman of the VS Compagnie Sarl (VSCS) of Paris, France. The shipment consists of 5 kilograms of Shankar FI and 2.7 kilograms of Koonie.

Figure 10 FED Extension Officer waits for The Airway Bill from Brussels Air Cargo, Morovia Airport



The New Shankar FI was harvested in the morning of the same date from Careysburg production cluster, while the Koonie variety came from Whiteplains and King Gray in Montserrado. FED sorted, graded and packed the vegetable fruits in 5 kg vegetable carton boxes (Figure 11). An air-conditioned FED vehicle carried the shipment to the Brussels Air Cargo office at Monrovia airport.

Brussels Air Cargo assumed the transport cost to Brussels and the delivery to the consignee. This will be the arrangement that will apply to future trial shipment of other types of vegetables. There is another shipment (Clemson spineless okra) tentatively set in the first or second week of June for the same consignee. The Mawah kuu leader planted on April 28 about 700 square meters for a one-time harvest of 10 kilograms for this purpose.

The trial shipment of okra will be followed by shipment of other types of vegetables. VS Compagnie Sarl has shown interest on four types, the specifications of which will be sent by next month. It will provide the seeds if there are no locally available seeds.

Figure 11 Sorting, grading and packing of okra trial shipment to Paris, France



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

### Promote Improved Herd Management Practices

**Technical assistance to continuing FY13, FY14, and FY15 farmers:**

FED continued to provide technical assistance to the FY13, FY14 and FY15 goat-producer groups in 180 goat-production intensification sites. This assistance was provided through FED's field extension and Monrovia based technical staff. Technical assistance ensures that farmers will continue to use the goat shelters for herd management, will provide animals with the right feed, and that the farmers will select and fatten the right animals before sale. Because the contracts of the local NGOs expired in March, additional extension staff was contracted in April to support field implementation.

**Train 3,928 new beneficiaries on herd management practices and mineral salt lick fabrication:**

In April, 78 lead farmers (73 men and 5 women) were trained on mineral salt-lick fabrication and on how to design and build goat shelters using locally available materials. These training sessions were held in Bong, Nimba, Lofa and Grand Bassa Counties. The trainees are from 78 new FY16 sites and will in turn pass on the knowledge to 3,928 goat farmers located in their respective sites.

*Lead farmers trained by County*

County	Number of Lead Farmers	Male	Female
Bong	23	23	0
Grand Bassa	9	4	5
Nimba	26	26	0
Lofa	20	20	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>5</b>

**Kidding and mortality rates:**

In April, a total of 292 new kids (141 male and 151 female) were born in FED-supported goat production intensification sites. In total, 1,872 kids have been born within these herds since October 2015. In April, 533 kids were weaned into adulthood after completing a six-month cycle.

A total of 14 goats died within the goat-production sites in Lofa, Nimba and Grand Bassa Counties. No mortalities were recorded in Bong County. The causes of death were mostly attributed to diarrhea. After mortality is taken into consideration, the total herd size by the end of April in FED-supported goat-production intensification sites was 18,621 animals (11,207 does, 4,995 bucks and 2,419 kids). A total of 121 animals were treated by Community Animal Health Workers (CAHWs) during the reporting period.

**Establish Nucleus Breeding Herd at CARI****Renovate the quarantine facility at CARI for housing the nucleus breeding herd**

FED engaged an **A&E** firm to assess the quarantine facility at CARI and to approve the designs for the conversion works needed for the nucleus breeding-herd facility. Subsequent to this, FED issued an RFP for interested contractors to bid for the conversion works. In April, Land O Lake's informed FED and CARI that they will not be in a position to procure the 100 animals needed for the nucleus

breeding herd as planned because of budget constraints. A meeting between the three parties will be held in May to deliberate on how best to support this initiative under the new circumstances.

### **Provide Assistance to MOA in the Control of Peste de Petite de Ruminant (PPR)**

BRAC Liberia commenced the implementation of the PPR vaccination campaign in Bong, Nimba, Lofa, and Grand Bassa Counties. The preliminary report from BRAC indicates that approximately 97,700 sheep and goats have so far been vaccinated. FED county offices as well as the MoA are in the field verifying the report.

*BRAC technicians vaccinate a sheep in Geapa town, Nimba County*



### **Formalizing livestock marketing**

#### **Goat sales**

In April, a total of 130 goats were sold for US\$9,483 in FED-supported goat-production intensification sites. In total, 1,988 goats have been sold by FED-supported farmers for US\$131,966 since October 2015, which is an average of US\$66 per animal. The current sales achievements represent 43 percent of the expected annual sales target.

### **Subtask 1.2 Improved access to Agricultural Inputs**

#### **Increase access to improved seed and good planting material**

#### **Provide technical assistance to 70 rice seed multiplication (RSM) sites in collaboration with Africa Rice:**

FED last month submitted 42 seed samples from the rice seed multiplication sites to the Central Agricultural Research Institute (CARI) for purity and germination tests. A final report of the analysis is still pending from the CARI laboratory. This analysis will determine which sites are best recommended for the production of certified seed rice.





CARI Seed Analyst Nataline Baysah performing germination test on RSM seeds samples

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

In April, FED harvested to total of 131,040 cuttings of nine improved varieties from the two screening sites in Lofa County. These cuttings were labeled, tagged and dispatched to the FED county offices in Lofa, Bong, Nimba and Grand Bassa for onward distribution to 80 commercial nurseries.

Table: Distribution of cuttings by variety and County

County	Nurseries	Cassava Varieties Bundles. (Bundle = 20 Cuttings)									Total Bundles
		TME419	01/1412	98/0581	01/30572	01/0040	98/0505	95/0289	92/0057	96/1632	
Lofa	8	33	38	73	32	101	31	85	143	120	656
Bong	16	66	74	145	63	207	59	173	287	241	1,315
Nimba	32	129	148	289	127	413	124	342	565	486	2,623
Grand Bassa	24	97	112	217	96	308	93	255	420	360	1,958
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>325</b>	<b>372</b>	<b>724</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>1,029</b>	<b>307</b>	<b>855</b>	<b>1,415</b>	<b>1,207</b>	<b>6,552</b>

<b>Total Cuttings</b>	<b>131,040</b>
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*Bundling, tagging and bagging of cassava cuttings*

### **Subtask 1.3: Agricultural Extension Support**

#### **Create Access to and Availability of Standardized Extension Material**

##### **Print and disseminate extension materials and farmer guides to information access points:**

FED communications and technical teams started the process of copy editing extension materials to be printed and distributed to FED-supported farmers. A consultant was engaged to support this process. The copy editing will also ensure that the content and language are correct, and that the branding meets requirements for the USAID Feed the Future initiative. It is anticipated that the materials will be ready for dissemination in May.

##### **Production and broadcasting of agriculture radio programs:**

FED's radio specialist supported Radio LACSA in Compound #3, Grand Bassa County to develop four jingles promoting the cassava value chain in simple English and the local Bassa dialect.

FED also interviewed a successful VSLA farmer group in Central Buchanan. FED supported the group of 25 women in FY14 to start the VSLA initiative. The VSLA has increased its investments from LD2,500 in 2014 to about LD500,000 in 2016. Their success story will be featured on the Twelfth edition of the *On the Farm* radio program broadcast on the UNMIL and United Methodist radio stations in Monrovia.

### **Subtask 1.4 Youth in Agribusiness**

#### **Provide technical assistance to 25 youth agribusinesses enterprises towards production of high value vegetables and cassava tuber**

##### **Production and sales of vegetables:**

In April, FED continued to provide technical assistance to 25 peri-urban, youth agribusiness enterprises in Montserrado and Margibi Counties. This assistance included transplanting, GAP and IPM for vegetables and African eggplant, cabbage, corn, bitterball and chilli pepper cultivation. Fifty-nine hectares were harvested, yielding 1.4 metric tons of vegetables. In April, the peri-urban agribusiness enterprises sold 1.4 metric tons of assorted vegetables for US\$2,756. Since October 2015, these enterprises have sold a total of 31 metric tons of vegetables for a total of US\$50,397.

### **Train 25 peri-urban agribusiness enterprises on improved cassava production methods and practices:**

In the previous reporting period, FED mobilized a total of 210 youth (103 men and 107 women), all of whom are existing members of the 25 peri-urban agribusiness enterprises, to produce cassava during the FY16 period. GPS coordinates of their plots have been recorded and MOUs signed. In May, these youth will begin training on improved cassava production methods and will also be provided with cuttings to plant 50 hectares of cassava. Each youth will individually plant on 0.25 hectares. By the end of April, the youth had cleared a total of 64 hectares in preparation for planting.

*Willie Town and Naida Town demo sites in Todee District, Montserrado County burned and ready for planting.*



### **Support the development of sustainable operations of 126 youth agro-enterprises**

#### **Supporting job creation through youth enterprises as transport service providers:**

In April, the 49 FED-supported tuk-tuk operators generated a total of US\$20,640 in revenue from the transportation of agricultural commodities. These enterprises have generated a total of US\$151,774 in FY16.



*Mayor Farmer Association Youth Transport Service Provider loading his Tuk-Tuk in Voinjama City, Lofa County.*

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

By the end of April, 30 FED-supported power tiller operators had provided tilling services to a total of 786 hectares of lowlands as part of their cost-share obligations. These operators will be linked to the FY16 lowland farmers between May to July 2016 to provide tilling services to an additional 654 hectares towards completion of their cost-share obligations.





*Jackson Kornisiah, a youth power-tiller service provider in Panta, Bong District, Bong County.*

## **Subtask 1.5: Improving Human Nutrition**

### **Implement diet behavior change strategy**

In April, FED incorporated nutritional messaging into goat value-chain trainings for a total of 78 lead farmers (74 men and four women) in Bong, Nimba, Lofa and Grand Bassa Counties. The training exercises focused on mineral-block (salt-lick) fabrication and goat-shelter construction using local materials. As part of the discussion, the farmers were provided with nutrition flyers developed by FED with guidance on food groups and the importance of a balanced diet. In total, 434 individuals (340 men and 94 women) have received direct nutrition messaging in FY16. FED will disseminate nutrition messages and flyers to FY16 rice and cassava farmers in May.



*FED Nutrition Officer Jonathan Brown disseminating nutrition messages to goat farmers in Plealua, Bong County*

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

### **Activity 2.0.2 – 10 Percent Cassava Flour Composite Policy**

FED continues to work with the GoL to assist in the development of a 10% Cassava Flour Composite policy. This month, FED met with the USAID COR and Dr. Roland Massaquoi, a consultant with expertise in policy formation processes in West Africa, to discuss the work plan to establish a cassava technical working group (TWG) and subsequently introduce draft legislation. Group membership reflects representation from major stakeholders, who will be most affected by the policy's adoption and implementation. Development of the first draft of the policy began in March and continued in April, with ad hoc input from TWG members. The first meeting of the TWG is tentatively scheduled to take place on/around May 26 at the MOA. After an initial review of the legal protocols for policy implementation, the second draft of the TWG policy recommendations, also known as a "validated document," is expected in late June. The recommendations will be followed by a planning session coordinated by MOA, MOCI, and FED to mobilize lobbying support from key stakeholders to support passage of the draft policy before August 31, 2016.

### **Activity 2.0.6 – Policy Reform Activities via Technical Working Groups**

FED continued to outline the governance framework and semi-autonomous structures that will be critical to achieving implementation of the domestic adoption of ECOWAS regulations. The regulations were adopted in FY15. Dr. Roland Massaquoi outlined five bodies created to support, monitor and regulate the three policies adopted by GoL in 2015 which ratified ECOWAS regulations on fertilizers, pesticides and seeds. The five bodies include:

- Semi-Autonomous Plant Protection and Regulatory Services Bureau (PPRSB)
- National Council for Pesticide Regulation and Management (NCPRM)



- Liberia Fertilizer Regulatory System (LFRS)
- National Fertilizer Council (NFC)
- Semi-Autonomous Regulatory National Seed Development and Certification Agency (SDCA)

Action plans for these agencies are expected in early May with a follow-on strategy to ensure the adoption of their governance structures, certification mechanisms, technical authority and compliance regimes.

## **Subtask 2.1 Access to Finance:**

### **EDUCARE**

EDUCARE submitted its final report to FED in March and responded to feedback to questions in April. Work undertaken by EDUCARE provided year-long startup support and ongoing technical assistance for 373 VSLA groups in the six counties where the program is being implemented. Meanwhile, EDUCARE is expected to present an exit presentation on its monitoring of VSLAs in early May. The exit presentation will capture all activities related to VSLAs, including access to finance and training in business management.

### **VSLA Village Agents**

The 21 VSLA village agents hired by FED in March 2016 continue to track the progress activities of all 373 VSLA groups in the six targeted counties. The village agents monitor or verify the number of share purchases, loans and loan repayments. To further enhance the working ability of the 21 village agents, FED conducted a one-week refresher workshop on how village agents can more closely monitor the activities of VSLA groups for increase productivity. The village agents will continue to provide technical assistance until August 2016.

## **Subtask 2.2 Development of ESCs and GDAs:**

### **Enterprise Service Centers (ESCs)**

FED this month launched its final, three-month campaign to convert five, regional Business Service Providers (BSPs) into more extensive Enterprise Service Centers (ESCs). The ESCs will expand on the limited resources and activities of the BSPs to help small agribusinesses at the county level establish market linkages and increase opportunities for growth. They will also improve access to transportation, storage and microcredit institutions, among other areas of assistance. On April 7, each of the five BSPs in Bong, Nimba, Lofa, Grand Bassa, Montserrado and Margibi Counties signed MOUs with FED. In the initial phase, consultants from Top Consulting briefly embedded in each of the BSPs to assess their existing resources. These assessments were completed in late May and an expected outcome is one-to-one mentoring assistance to develop a tailor-made business plan suitable to each BSP. Unlike the BSPs, the ESCs will be based on a fee-for-service business model to promote sustainability after the closedown of FED. The Component Lead traveled to Ganta and Gbarnga from April 26 to 28 to meet with BSPs, gauge their initial responses to the assessments and identify potential improvements to the implementation plan for ESC matriculation.

### **Global Development Alliances (GDAs)**

In the second half of April, FED consultant, Annie Baldrige returned to Liberia to create GDA applications and contracts to continue the project's ongoing support of public-private partnerships in target value chains. She is currently formalizing applications and draft agreements with a cassava processing group, an aggregator and two high-end restaurants in Monrovia:

- **Falama** – one-to-one contribution to co-finance a cassava mill and increase downstream production
- **Golden Beach Restaurant:** providing inputs and seeds for vegetable growers who will provide high value vegetables to the restaurant FED is supporting with technical assistance
- **Royal Hotel:** Providing inputs and seeds for vegetable growers who will provide high value vegetables to the hotel. FED is supporting with technical assistance
- **John Selma:** FED donated a vehicle to match John Selma's investment of several vehicles to improve downstream processing and transport of his commodities. Selma is an aggregator in Voinjama District, Lofa County.

In May, FED expects to see the formation of several new partnerships under the GDA structure. All applications will be submitted to USAID before the end of May.

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

FED's Women-Owned Enterprise Mentor, Josephine Greaves, resigned in mid-April. The project has started the recruitment to fill the vacant position and expects to have a new hire by the beginning of May. The new mentor will work with 26 women-enterprise groups participating in small or medium agribusinesses.

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

### **Activity 3.1: Roll out the National Diploma in Agriculture (NDA) in all four COEs**

#### **Task 3.1.2: Strengthening instructors' capacity to roll out the NDA Program**

During the first part of the month, FED staff visited the four Centers of Excellences (COEs) and verified that instructors effectively delivered the developed syllabus and lesson plans of the National Diploma in Agriculture (NDA) program. The CoEs in which where the NDA Program is being implemented include the Booker Washington Institute, and the Nimba, Lofa, and Grand Bassa County Community Colleges.

Dr. Brad Leger, a consultant with Louisiana State University, in the second half of April, facilitated the establishment of the Future Farmers Associations (FFAs) at the Lofa County Community College and the Nimba County Community College Centers of Excellence (COEs). He also conducted a training-of-trainers (TOT) workshop on leadership for the newly elected officers of the FFAs at the two CoEs.

The objectives of the FFAs include supporting and building the capacity of young agriculture students to organize as a group and develop leadership skills; encouraging them to choose agriculture as a career; and increasing their employment possibilities following the completion of the NDA program.

FED is currently reviewing the scope of work (SOW) for a consultant to conduct vegetable and fruit, postharvest technical training for the four CoEs. The training will expose students to the technology of preserving vegetables and fruits to reduce market losses.

### **Activity 3.5: Completing basic facilities needs to enhance learning**

After successfully getting both Nimba and Lofa County's CoEs connected to the Internet earlier this year, FED this month began the process of getting the remaining two CoEs, Booker Washington Institute and Grand Bassa County Community College, wired and online. FED's Information Communication Technology Unit this month conducted needs assessment for structural cabling for LAN at both institutes. Cabling is expected to begin next month after the procurement process is completed, with the intention of getting connected to the Internet soon thereafter.

### **Task 3.5.1: Rehabilitation of libraries**

As part of FED's commitment to renovate and rehabilitate the libraries of the four supported CoEs, the project this month hired an independent consultant to conduct an assessment study of each of the three county colleges' and the Booker Washington Institute's libraries. Next month, engineers will travel to the libraries to complete structural needs assessment at each site.

## **Activity 3.4: Enhancing Availability of Textbooks and Reference Materials for the NDA**

### **Task 3.4.1: Procure additional textbooks**

The procurement of additional textbooks to enhance teaching and learning at the four CoEs is ongoing. Procurement has faced challenges finding textbooks that address agriculture issues specific to Liberia. FED hopes to have this activity complete before the start of the new school year.

## **Component Four: Cross-Cutting Activities**

### **Task 4.1: Communications and Knowledge Management**

This month, FED was featured in one new publication:

*Grand Bassa Community College to Become Liberia's IT Hub*, Daily Observer Newspaper. April 13, 2016.

### **Task 4.2: Environmental Compliance**

Environmental files in Lofa and Bong Counties were updated to ensure that FY16 activities were planned in compliance with environmental best practices. File updates will continue in Grand Bassa and Nimba Counties during the following month.

### **Task 4.3: Monitoring and Evaluation**

FED consultant Annie Chartock arrived in Liberia during the last week of April to assist FED to engage in the process of correcting reported data on the ten Feed the Future indicators that will not be addressed under USAID's independent impact evaluation. We are advised that the latter will address the eight impact/outcome indicators for which FED's previously-collected data cannot be used due to quality considerations. Andrea's task is comprised of reviewing existing project documentation to determine if any valid conclusions can be drawn from it, as well as performing site visits or triangulation with financial and/or project records. The result of the consultancy will be development of a data management and reporting system of sufficient sophistication to allow for capture and reporting of reliable project data that will inform her continued involvement through the remainder of our contract.

At month's end, we were advised that we may also be required to produce data on gross margins for each value chain. We are requesting Mission clarification on this given the inclusion of gross margin in the Mission's own impact evaluation in order to avoid duplicating efforts.