



USAID | **LIBERIA**
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

FOOD AND ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT (FED) PROGRAM FOR LIBERIA

MONTHLY REPORT: MAY 2014



This publication was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development USAID, and prepared by DAI.

Contract Number: 669-C-00-11-00047-00

Contractor: DAI

Program Title: Food and Enterprise Development Program for Liberia (FED)

Sponsoring USAID Office: USAID/Liberia

Contractor: DAI

Date of Publication: June 15, 2014

Authors: Sandra Okoed and Nicholas Parkinson

Photo Caption: Goat farmer, Wue Yeanue, sells three goats to Monrovia-based livestock trader, Musa Dicko, at a goat marketing event held in Ganta in Nimba County. Regular livestock markets are nonexistent in rural Liberia.

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 Development Rural en Afrique
AVTP	Accelerated Vocational Training Program
AWEP	African Women Entrepreneurship 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
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
EMMP	Environmental Mitigation and Monitoring Plan
EO	Extension Officer
FED	Food and Enterprise Development
FtF	Feed the Future
FUN	Farmer Union Network
GBCCC	Grand Bassa County 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
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

USAID Food and Enterprise Development Program for Liberia
Monthly Report, May 2014

LMEP	Liberia Monitoring and Evaluation Program
LREC	Liberia Renaissance Education Complex
MFI	Micro Finance Institution
MIS	Market Information Systems
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
MoCI	Ministry of Commerce and Industry
MoE	Ministry of Education
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
SPS	Sanitary and Phytosanitary
SWAT	Supporting West Africa Trading
TAMIS	Technical Administrative Management Information System
TVET	Technical, Vocational Education and Training
UDP	Urea Deep Placement
UL	University of Liberia
UMU	United Methodist University
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

Acronyms.....	2
List of Tables and Figures	5
Background.....	6
Executive Summary	7
Component One: Increase Agricultural Productivity and Profitability.....	8
Task 1A: Increased Production and Profitability of the Rice Value Chain.....	8
Task 1B: Increased Production and Profitability of the Cassava Value Chain.....	12
Task 1C: Increased Production and Profitability of the Goat Value Chain	13
Task 1D: Increased Productivity and Profitability of the Vegetable Value Chain.....	15
Subtask 1.1: Special Studies and MoA Data Collection Systems Development.....	17
Subtask 1.2: Improve Access to Agriculture Inputs.....	17
Subtask 1.3: Agricultural Extension Support.....	18
Component Two: Stimulate Private Sector Growth and Investment	19
Task 2: Enabling Policy Environment for Private Sector Growth	19
Subtask 2.1: Access to Credit and Business Development Services	20
Component Three: Build Local Technical and Managerial Human Resource Capability	22
Task 3.0: Develop Existing Vocational Centers into Centers of Excellence in Vocational Agriculture Education	22
Task 3.1: Enterprise Service Centers.....	28
Component Four: Cross-cutting Activities	29
Task 4.1: Gender	29
Task 4.2: Youth	29
Task 4.3: Nutrition	30
Task 4.4: Coordination with Partners	30
Task 4.5: Monitoring and Evaluation	30
Task 4.6: Environmental Compliance.....	31
Task 4.7: Communications	31

List of Tables and Figures

	Table of Tables
Table 1	<i>May rice harvest and sales.</i>
Table 2	<i>FY14 Lowland site selection and land preparation by county.</i>
Table 3	<i>Upland rice production groups FY14.</i>
Table 4	<i>Upland site selection and land preparation by county.</i>
Table 5	<i>New jobs created through the FY14 rice business hubs.</i>
Table 6	<i>FY14 land preparation and planting.</i>
Table 7	<i>Cassava harvests and sales in May.</i>
Table 8	<i>Goat sales during May FY14.</i>
Table 9	<i>Vegetable production and sales by farming clusters as of May 2014.</i>
Table 10	<i>VSLA group results as of May 2014.</i>
Table 11	<i>VSLA ag-loan versus no ag-loans as of May 2014.</i>
Table 12	<i>Loans and associated sales as of May 2014.</i>
Table 13	<i>Total loans accessed by farmers through VSLA and LEAD to date.</i>
Table 14	<i>USAID FED in the news in May.</i>

	Table of Figures
Fig. 1	<i>USAID FED-trained equipment operators mill rice at Doumpah, Nimba County.</i>
Fig. 2	<i>Fabrar Liberia buying rice from a farmer in Lofa County.</i>
Fig. 3	<i>IITA Specialist and CARI staff assessing the first batch of cassava cuttings</i>
Fig. 4	<i>Technicians plant cassava cuttings at a nursery in Lofa County</i>
Fig. 5	<i>A goat farmer shares his experiences in the farmer-trader forum held in Nimba County.</i>
Fig. 6	<i>ROSNA Manager signs the vegetable purchasing agreement.</i>
Fig. 7	<i>Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Charles McClain, speaking at the USAID FED Round Table Event.</i>
Fig. 8	<i>KRRTI students carry out field maintenance at the vegetable demonstration site.</i>
Fig. 9	<i>USAID FED demonstrates a point to the eggplant farm team leaders at LCCC.</i>
Fig. 10	<i>USAID FED facilitates a session in Margibi County.</i>

Background

The USAID Food and Enterprise Development (FED) Program for Liberia is a USAID-funded development program that was launched in September 2011. USAID FED uses an all-inclusive strategy incorporating MSME farmers, processors, suppliers, women and youth while partnering with the government of Liberia and local civil societies 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 societies and the private sector in providing communities access to agricultural inputs—including improved seed varieties—extension services, nutrition messages, processing services, market information, transportation, credit, agro-business education, training, and enterprise 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

During the reporting period, USAID FED in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) formally inaugurated and officially turned over three community-based Rice Business Hubs in Nimba County (Doumpa, Payee and Boweh) to beneficiaries.

The Rice Business Hubs, which are intended to support the community's ability to process and store their rice, are equipped with a mill, destoner, thresher, parboiling machine, water source and latrines. The hubs, which are managed by the farmers themselves, will give other rice farmers in these communities access to a fee-based milling service.

USAID FED verified rice surplus available in Lofa County and provided this information to Fabrar Liberia, a large rice mill operator. FED facilitated the negotiation between Fabrar and the farmers by providing information on costs and the markets, helping the processor and the farmers to agree on US\$19 price per 50kg bag. Fabrar Liberia made a 25% down payment of \$5,785.50 USD for 1,200 bags of paddy rice, or 60.9 MT. The balance of \$17,356.50 USD will be paid out in June upon collection of the paddy rice.

Fabrar made it clear to rice farmers that they were willing to purchase up to 40,000 bags of paddy rice, and as a result, Foya-based farmers reported another 1,500 bags of paddy rice in their inventories.

USAID FED supported a goat trading event in Nimba County to pilot a marketing platform that aims to provide a formal and regular venue for traders and goat farmers to carry out buying and selling transactions. A total of 13 lead farmers from goat producing clusters in Nimba County and six goat traders participated in the event where 20 goats were sold for \$965 USD.

Both traders and goat farmers responded positively to the event which indicates that this platform has strong potential. Valuable lessons have been learned that will be considered in the subsequent goat trading events. A major finding is the need to better understand: 1) the specifications/standards for pricing of goats and volumes needed and 2) the trading and payment structure and practices in the goat/livestock trade in Liberia.

ROSNA, which provides catering for Arcelor Mittal, signed a new purchasing contract with 2014 Yekepa farmers who have reported \$2,500 USD in revenues as a result of their business dealings with ROSNA.

USAID FED organized a one-day round table event to discuss the role of radio in agriculture extension. During the event, USAID FED signed MoUs with four community radio stations from Lofa, Bong, Grand Bassa and Nimba counties towards the production and airing of 30-minute agriculture-focused radio shows. County radio stations, lead farmers the Press Union of Liberia, MoA and other agri-business stakeholders participated in the event. USAID FED is providing four computers, digital voice recorders, rain gear, monthly telephone scratch cards and internet modems to enhance program delivery by these stations.

Component One: Increase Agricultural Productivity and Profitability

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

Rice Production and Sales

During the month of May, 93.78 MT of FY13 rice paddy crop was sold for \$35,796.50 USD (Table 1). In total, 940.13 MT of FY13 rice paddy valued at US \$383,707.50 has been sold in FY14.

Table 1: May rice harvest and sales.

County	Inventory Threshed and Bagged May 2014 (MT)	Value of inventory May 2014 (USD)	May Sales volume (MT)	Value of Sales May 2014 (US\$)	Total Rice Sales Volumes YTD (MT)	Total Rice Sales Value YTD (USD)
Lofa	88.18	33,506	88.18	33,506.50	144.28	57,263.50
Nimba	-	-	-	-	69	35,669
Bong	11.54	8,817	5.55	2,270	726.15	290,515
Grand Bassa	-	1,412	0.05	20	0.70	260
TOTAL	99.72	43,735.00	93.78	35,796.50	940.13	383,707.50

FY14 Lowland Rice Production Expansion

Farmer mobilization and recruitment:

By the end of the May reporting period, USAID FED mobilized and recruited a total of 10,794 lowland farmers from 191 groups across the four counties compared to the FY14 target of 8,972 lowland farmers. Of the total 5,652 are male and 5,142 are female.

Lowland site selection and land preparation:

USAID FED selected a total of 205 lowland sites across the four counties against a target of 158 anticipated sites for FY14. A total of 1,151.38 ha of the 1,356 targeted hectares have been cleared for rice production (Table 2). Completion of all land preparation activities was expected to be concluded during the month of May, however, farmers are working less than expected due to a number of reasons. The farmers have requested USAID FED provide food while they work. Land preparation is anticipated to be concluded by the end of June.

Table 2: FY14 Lowland site selection and land preparation by county.

County	Target Sites for FY14	Sites Identified in May 2014	Ha Targeted for FY14	Ha Cleared in by the end of April	Ha cleared in May 2014	Total Ha Cleared YTD
Lofa	40	44	150.00	103.39	50.11	153.50
Nimba	72	75	405.00	95.38	208.00	303.38
Bong	32	58	757.00	270.5	405.00	675.50

Grand Bassa	14	28	44.00	10.00	9.00	19.00
Total	158	205	1,356.00	479.27	672.11	1,151.38

FY14 Upland Rice Productivity

Farmer Mobilization and Recruitment

USAID FED mobilized and recruited a total of 8,595 upland farmers, compared to the FY14 target of 10,177, from 206 groups across the four counties. Of the total, 5,342 are male and 3,253 are female (Table 3).

Table 3: Upland rice production groups FY14

County	Groups Recruited FY14 production	Total # Farmers FY14 Targets	Farmers Recruited during May 2014	# of Farmers Recruited YTD	# of Male Farmers	# of Female Farmers
Lofa	33	3,600	0	2,478	1,137	1,341
Nimba	37	2,385	0	2,385	1,432	953
Bong	85	3,667	0	3,207	2,337	870
Grand Bassa	51	525	164	525	436	89
TOTAL	206	10,177	164	8,595	5,342	3,253

Upland Site Selection and Land Preparation

A total of 206 upland sites were selected across the four counties against a target of 184 anticipated sites for FY14. A total of 1,742.5 ha from the targeted 1,863.2 have been cleared and measured in the four counties (Table 4). Completion of all land preparation activities is expected to be concluded in June.

Table 4: FY14 Upland site selection and land preparation by county.

County	Target sites for FY14	Sites Identified in May 2014	Ha targeted for FY14	Ha cleared in May 2014	Total Ha Cleared YTD
Lofa	65	46	129.00	72.00	140.00
Nimba	43	37	90.20	43.66	95.32
Bong	66	85	1600.00	224.00	1524.00
Grand Bassa	10	51	44.00	167.00	490.00
Total	184	219	1,863.20	506.66	2,249.32

Increasing Productivity and Building Capacity

Distribution of inputs:

USAID FED distributed a total of 29.2 MT of rice seeds consisting of 17.5 MT of upland rice seeds (NERICA 14) and 11.7 MT of lowland (NERICA L-19). In June, USAID FED will distribute the remaining 5.5 MT of rice to cover all upland rice sites. The distribution of Lowland rice seed is complete for FY14. In addition, USAID FED completed distribution of total requirement of 4.09 MT of peanut and 2.05 MT of cowpeas for crop rotation and inter-cropping.

Workshop on Production Practices for Upland Rice

USAID FED conducted rice seed production workshops for 33 farmers (27 male, 6 female) in Gbarnga, Bong County. The farmers learned about pre- and post-harvest operations, seed quality and characteristics, seed testing, seed certification processes, seed production protocols, as well as iron toxicity management. This training assists farmers in producing quality rice seed in FY14. USAID FED does not provide any guarantees to seed producers that the program will purchase their seed but the training provided by FED to rice farmers emphasizes the benefits from good seeds of improved varieties. The rice business hubs will be among the outlets of these seeds. Additionally, FED will be supporting seed enterprises and will link these enterprises to FED-supported seed growers. These seed enterprises are expected to set-up a distribution network, procure the seeds from FED and CARI-trained seed growers, process and store these seeds and sell these to rice farmers at the onset of the rice growing season.

Advanced Water Management Infrastructure



Figure 1: USAID FED trained equipment operators mill rice at Doumpah, Nimba County.

During the month of May, USAID FED engaged contractor, Tallobenku Construction Group of Companies, to provide technical/engineering support and oversight in the construction of eight irrigation spillways in Bong and Nimba counties. The communities completed the layout of all head dams to required standards. It is anticipated that all the spillways will be completed by the end of June.

Enterprise Development: Rice Business Hubs

USAID FED, in collaboration with the MoA and USAID, formally inaugurated and officially turned over the community rice business hubs in Nimba County (Doumpah, Payee and Boweh) to beneficiaries: From God to Man Farmers Association, Payee Kolaheh Farmers Association and Boweh Lolewon Farmers Association.

The Rice Business Hubs (Figure 1) will serve as a one-stop shop for services to rice farmers and will be owned and managed by rice farming groups. FED is providing training and coaching on the management of these rice business hubs so they will be properly run and generate a profit.

FED is providing a power tiller, rice thresher, solar dryer, parboiling tank, handpump well, destoner, rice mill, gender-friendly latrine, storage and store outlet for input supply and milled rice. They are centrally located to serve several communities with a critical mass of rice farmers. The rice business hub is a platform by which mechanized services (e.g., power tiller), storage, rice mill and input supply are made available and accessible to the rice farmers. At the same time, the hubs also serve as outlets for milled rice to increase the availability of local rice.

The production support offered by the hubs will aim at producing surplus rice while reducing production costs through mechanization. This cluster approach will help to ensure that there will be raw material for the rice mill and that farmers have a reliable market for their produce. These hubs could also serve as buying stations for bigger rice mills located outside of the cluster and operating at an industrial scale, such as Fabrar Liberia.

In Lofa, the rice processing center at David Selma town is completed, and construction work in Lofa, Bong and Grand Bassa is expected to be completed in June. USAID FED expects to officially hand over the hubs in June and July.

Once operational, the 10 rice hubs [Bong (3), Nimba (3), Lofa (3) and Bassa (1)] will create 58 new jobs (Table 5).

Table 5: New jobs created through the FY14 rice business hub construction; additional jobs will be generated from management and operation of the hubs.

County	Firm hired	Total # of Jobs Created	# Male Employees	# Female Employees
Bong	Local Mason	9	9	0
Lofa	OCRAR	16	16	0
Nimba	Local Mason	9	9	0
Grand Bassa	OCRAR	5	3	2
Margibi	Global Group	19	16	3
		58	53	5



Figure 2: Fabrar Liberia buying rice from a farmer in Lofa County.

Market Access for Rice Producers

USAID FED verified rice surplus available in Lofa County and helped facilitate an agreement with rice farmers on the sale of rice paddy to Fabrar Liberia (Figure 2). The processor and the farmers agreed on US\$19 per 50kg bag and Fabrar Liberia made a 25% down payment of \$5,785.50 USD on 1,200 bags of paddy rice, or 60.9 MT. The balance of \$17,356.50 USD will be paid in June upon collection and weighing of the purchased rice.

Development Program for Liberia
Report, May 2014

Fabrar made it clear to rice farmers that the firm is willing to purchase up to 40,000 bags of rice, and as a result, Foya-based farmers reported another 1,500 bags of rice in their inventories.

The construction of Fabrar Liberia's commercial rice processing facility in Kakata is expected to be completed in June 2014, and become operational in mid-July after the processing equipment is installed and workers are trained. Fabrar Liberia has allocated sufficient funds to procure 2,000MT of rice from Liberian rice producers during FY14.



Figure 3: IITA Specialist and CARL staff assessing the first batch of cassava cuttings

received in April.

The cuttings are:

- IITA-TMS-IBA011368
- IITA-TMS-IBA30572
- IITA-TMS-IBA980505
- IITA-TMS-IBA920057
- IITA-TMS-IBA961632

An IITA cassava specialist from Ibadan, Nigeria, Mr. Peter Llubebey, conducted the initial inspections of the first batch at the CARL screening site to assess their adaptability to environmental stresses and diseases (Figure 3).

Establishment of Cassava Nurseries

By the end of May, 60 ha of land were brushed and cleared to establish commercial nursery farms in the four counties: Nimba 24 ha; Grand Bassa 18ha; Bong 12ha; and Lofa 6 ha (Figure 4).

USAID FED trained 40 farmers (33 male and 7 female) on commercial cuttings production as well as nutrition. These nurseries are expected to boost the availability of improved planting material for an estimated 12,000 cassava farmers.

FY13 Cassava Crop Production Preparations

USAID Food and Enterprise Development Program for Liberia
Monthly Report, May 2014

Task 1B: Increased Production and Profitability of the Cassava Value Chain

Importation of Improved Cassava Cuttings Varieties

The International Institute for Tropical Agriculture (IITA) delivered the remaining 5 of 11 improved cassava varieties to the Center of Agriculture Research Institute (CARI) in May. The shipment consisted of 20,000 improved cassava cuttings. This is in addition to the 24,000 cuttings that consisted of six varieties



Figure 4: Technicians plant cassava cuttings at a nursery in Lofa County.

As of May, 1,788.2 ha representing 85% of FY14 target have been prepared for cassava production in the four counties (Table 6). Area preparation is anticipated to be completed in Bong and Nimba counties by the first week of July. To address the short supply of tools for preparing mounds and ridges, FED Management decided to supply additional cutlasses, hoes, diggers and shovels to 600 *kuus*. These tools will be delivered in June.

Planting has started and at the end of May, 24 ha have been planted. Planting of cassava will continue through June and July.

Table 6: FY14 land preparation and planting

Counties	FY14 Targets, Land Preparation (ha)	Land Prepared in May, 2014, (ha)	Total Land Prepared, YTD (ha)	Total # ha planted for FY14 crop	*In Grand Bassa, farmers have prepared more land than the anticipated FY14 target. The land prepared outside the FY14 target is for farmers own additional production.
Nimba	840	12.61	490.70	21.50	
Grand Bassa	630	-	1,201*	-	
Bong	420	-	75	-	
Lofa	210	10.50	21.50	2.50	
Total	2,100	23.10	1,788.20	24	

Cassava Crop Harvests and Sales

During the month of May, a total of 0.32 MT of raw cassava tubers from the FY13 crop were harvested and sold for US \$58.82 in Grand Bassa County bringing the total amount of cassava harvested from FY13 crop to date to 60.76 MT (Table 7). The majority of cassava harvesting is expected to commence in June and peak in July and August. The total harvest anticipated by the end of August is 5,325 MT.

Table 7: Cassava harvests and sales in May.

County	FY14 Production Targets, Raw Tuber (MT)	Volume of Raw Tuber Harvest, May 2014 (MT)	Total Volume of Raw Tuber Harvested (MT) YTD	Value of sales FY14 (USD)
Nimba	2,130	-	-	-
Grand Bassa	1,598	0.32	12.46	98.19
Bong	1,065	-	39	146.25
Lofa	532	-	9.3	35.00
Total	5,325	1.64	60.76	279.44

Task 1C: Increased Production and Profitability of the Goat Value Chain

Goat Trading Event

USAID FED supported a goat trading event in Nimba County (Figure 5) to pilot a marketing platform that aims to provide a formal and regular venue for traders and goat farmers to carry out buying and selling transactions. A total of 13 lead farmers from goat producing clusters in Nimba County and six goat traders participated in the event where 20 goats were sold for \$965 USD.



Figure 5: A goat farmer shares his experiences in the farmer-trader forum held in Nimba County.

Both traders and goat farmers responded positively to the event, which indicates that this platform has strong potential. Valuable lessons have been learned that will be considered in subsequent goat trading events. A major finding is the need to better understand: 1) the specifications/standards for pricing of goats and volumes needed, and 2) the trading and payment structure and practices in the goat/livestock trade in Liberia.

Sales

In the month of May, goat farmers across the four counties reported that 317 goats were sold for \$21,385 USD. May sales bring the FY14 total to 868 goats sold representing 72% of the target for FY14, which is 1200 goats. Total sales at the end of May reached \$51,318 USD (Table 8), representing 66% of FY14 target, which is \$78,000 USD. With the extension of the successful goat trade fair to other counties, the program expects

goat sales to increase over the next few months.

Table 8: Goat sales during for May FY14. USAID FED uses an average price of \$65 USD for each animal.

County	# of Goats Sold in May 2014	# of Goats Sold FY14 YTD	Value of Goats Sold in May (USD)	Total Value of Goats Sold (USD) YTD
Nimba	27	79	1,190	4,175
Gr. Bassa	98	148	6,140	9,350
Bong	137	245	11,165	20,050
Lofa	55	396	2,890	17,743
Total	317	868	21,385	51,318

Goat Shelters

All 84 goat shelters were still under construction during the month of May and are expected to be completed by mid-July.

USAID FED submitted a draft MOU to Integrated Water and Sanitation Hygiene Program (IWASH) to leverage and coordinate the provision of wells and IWASH messaging around the goat shelters.

Community Animal Health Worker (CAHW) Training

During the reporting period, USAID FED trained 40 Community Animal Health Workers (CAHW) on the application of drugs for animal health. The CAHWs were introduced to agro-pharmacists in their districts who will be supplying veterinary drugs.

The initial supply of veterinary drugs from the agro-pharmacists will be supported through a 100% voucher subsidy program in June. Training for CAHWs in Grand Bassa (34 CAHWs), Nimba (60 CAHWs) and Bong (40 CAHWs) counties and their introduction to designated district agro-pharmacists suppliers through the voucher program will be carried out in June. The plan is that all 174 CAHWs trained will be women.

Task ID: Increased Productivity and Profitability of the Vegetable Value Chain

Production, Harvest and Sales

During the reporting period, a total of 374 vegetable farmers (267 male and 112 female) in 21 clusters in Montserrado, Margibi, Grand Bassa and Nimba counties commenced production for the second vegetable season. The farmers planted local pepper, bitter ball, cucumber, lettuce, watermelon and sweet corn.

An additional cluster, Mulleh farm cluster, in Caresbury, Montserrado County with a total of 20 farmers was identified and included as one of USAID FED's vegetable clusters, bringing the total to 21 clusters on 108.5 ha.

During the month of May, a total of 15.98 MT of assorted vegetables were sold for \$13,958.12 USD. In FY14, a total of 37.25 MT of vegetables have been harvested and sold at a value of \$32,096.58 USD (Table 9).

Table 9: Vegetable production and sales by farming clusters as of May 2014.

County/Cluster	May Harvest (kg)	YTD Total Harvest (kg)	May Sales (USD)	YTD Total Sales FY14 (USD)
Montserrado				
Bokays Town	-	1,011.30	-	859.76
CGCWEP Vegetables	1,112.40	3,559.90	816.94	2,640.70
Central White plane	-	1,560	-	621.50
Low Cost village	-	1,773.50	-	1,849.18
Kollieman Town	-	246	-	-
Mawah Farmers Association	-	4,373	-	6,268.88
Mulleh Farm	6,245	6,245	6,891.76	6,891.76
Sub Total	7,357.40	18,768.70	7708.71	19131.79
Nimba				
Yekepa	766.20	2,168.70	1,233.29	3,776.84

Sanniquelleh	-	3,841	-	477.94
Ganta	449	1,245	495.65	1,120.18
Gbedin	68	136	71.65	143.30
Sub Total	1283.2	7,390.7	1,800.59	5,518.26
Margibi				
Kpoyea's Town	287	287	146.88	146.88
Joeblow Town	50	50	61.18	61.18
Kollie Kan Ta	2,135	2,135	1,614	1,614
Francis Lewis	286	1,324	210.35	553.35
Weala	1,460	3,127.5	951.59	2,470.24
Nyanka Ta	2,240	2,240	837.06	837.06
Gbofellah	670	686	344.71	344.71
Horton Farm	-	1,086	-	977.94
Sub Total	7,128	10,935.50	4165.76	7,005.35
Grand Bassa				
Tubmanville	212.87	212.87	283.06	283.06
New Buchanan	-	155	-	158.12
Sub Total	212.87	367.87	283.06	441.18
Total	15,981.47	37,462.77	\$13,958.12	\$32,096.58

The sales achieved so far are only 11% of target for FY14. According to reports from the field, this variance is largely due to reduced yields resulting from high incidence of pests and diseases and delays in the distribution of the hand pumps and drip irrigation kits. To address the pests and diseases problem, USAID FED has hired a STTA, Emmanuel Owusu, who is an expert in horticulture as well as vegetable pest and disease management.

Installation of Drip Irrigation Kits

During the month of May, USAID FED distributed a total of 10 drip irrigation kits in the newly added Mulleh Town Cluster. Seven vegetable clusters were using drip irrigation in Montserrado County in the month of May, and have begun collection of the material to store during the rainy season.

Establishment of Community Collection Centers

A total of 10 collection centers out of 20 have been established across the vegetable clusters for the aggregation and sorting of vegetables. The remaining 10 collection centers are expected to be completed in June.

Market Linkages

ROSNA, which provides catering for Arcelor Mittal, signed a new purchasing contract with seven lead
 USAID Food and Enterprise Develo
 Monthly Report, I



Figure 6: ROSNA Manager signs the vegetable purchasing agreement.

farmers representing the Yekepa vegetable production cluster in Nimba County. Since March 2014, Yekepa farmers have reported approximately \$2,500 USD in revenue from business with ROSNA (Figure 6).

USAID FED organized a similar event in Buchanan, Grand Bassa County between ROSNA and Tubmanville vegetable cluster to initiate a relationship between the two parties. During the meeting, both parties discussed pricing, delivery and payment procedures. It was agreed that ROSNA will offer prevailing market prices at the time of purchase. At the end of the meeting, ROSNA initiated procurement and bought vegetables valued at \$283 USD.

Subtask 1.1: Special Studies and MoA Data Collection Systems Development

USAID FED collected all geo-spatial location data, including way points and area measurements in seven vegetable clusters in Montserrado County. A total of 30.43 ha covering 126 individual farmer fields were calculated. Additionally, training in the usage of the GPS device was conducted for all PUA extension officers and lead farmers in Montserrado and Margibi.

USAID FED finalized discussion with MoA's Monitoring and Evaluation team on the implementation of the pilot M&E support activity. A schedule of activities to be conducted is being finalized and procurement is in progress.

Subtask 1.2: Improve Access to Agriculture Inputs

Rice Seed Multiplication

USAID FED distributed 40 Urea Deep Placement (UDP) applicators to lowland rice sites in addition to 2 MT of Nerica L19 seed variety to 10 lowland sites in Bong, Nimba and Lofa counties. It is anticipated that the delivery of 6 MT of improved rice seed variety will be completed during early June. The West Africa Agriculture Productivity Program (WAAP) and CARI distributed 6 MT of Nerica 14 intended for USAID FED to other WAAP sites. USAID FED has been compelled to accept the Lac 23 variety as a replacement for lowland planting.

In April, USAID FED distributed 4.2 MT of fertilizer (2.4 MT NPK and 1.8 MT urea granules) to Bong, Nimba, Lofa and Grand Bassa counties. The fertilizer will benefit 22 rice seed multiplication sites in these areas. In addition, USAID FED also distributed 2.5MT rice seed donated by the West Africa Agricultural Productivity Program to lowland seed multiplication sites in Nimba, Bong, Lofa and Grand Bassa counties.

PUA Vegetable Dry Season 2 Voucher Program

During the period April to May 2014, USAID FED distributed 354 vouchers for redemption towards stimulating the demand for inputs and improving productivity. By the end of May, 90 vegetable farmers had redeemed their vouchers, a 25% redemption rate.

USAID and the input supply company Wienco conducted a rapid assessment to determine the reasons for the low redemption rate and established that the package composition of vouchers, the cost of the voucher, as well as the limited cash flow of farmers, influenced their inability to redeem vouchers for the dry season production. A lessons learned workshop that includes the input supply company, the agro-

dealers and vegetable farmers will be held during June 2014 to evaluate the low redemption rates and come up with ideas on how best to design a future program, especially for the wet season. The FED team is also finding other options to stimulate demands for inputs other than vouchers.

Goat Voucher Program

USAID FED trained 42 extension staff (2 male, 40 female) on the voucher distribution and redemption process. USAID FED identified and delivered goat kits to eight Agro-Pharmacists. Participant rosters have been finalized and the distribution of 84 vouchers is expected to start in June. The redemption process is anticipated to take place over a period of 6-8 weeks.

Improved Integrated Soil Fertility Management (ISFM)

The USAID FED team collected soil samples in the counties based on recommendations made by IFDC Soil Scientist, Dr. Upendra Singh. The soil samples will be tested in reputable laboratories located in Ghana and the USA to determine their nutrient content during June 2014. The outcome of the exercise will determine the fertilization program for lowland rice.

A total of 58 people including USAID FED staff, lead farmers and staff from the Centers of Excellence were trained on soil sample collection. It is expected that 17 people will be trained during the month of June on soil testing and nutrient analysis using the Hach test kits and utilizing samples from vegetable production sites.

A soil chemist from IFDC will be engaged in June to conduct training for instructors from the FED-assisted Centers of Excellence in Vocational Agricultural Education and USAID FED staff on soil testing and nutrient analysis using the Hach kit.

Subtask 1.3: Agricultural Extension Support

Engaging Community Radio Stations

USAID FED organized a one day round table event to discuss the role of radio in agriculture extension. During the event, USAID FED signed MoUs with four community radio stations from Lofa, Bong, Grand Bassa and Nimba counties towards the production and airing of 30-minute agriculture radio shows. County radio stations, lead farmers the Press Union of Liberia, MoA and other agri-business stakeholders participated in the event.



Figure 7: Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Charles McClain, speaking at the Round Table event.

USAID FED provided four computers, digital voice recorders, rain gear, monthly telephone scratch cards and internet modems to enhance their work. During the event, the Deputy Agriculture Minister for Planning and Research, Dr. Charles McClain stressed the need for the media to exert more effort in reporting on the agriculture sector in order to erase the perception that the government was doing nothing to improve it (Figure 7).

“There is a lot happening in the sector but the information is not getting to the public. We want to encourage the media to reach out for information about the sector,” he said.

Nutritional Messaging

USAID FED produced and translated four different nutrition jingles into simple Liberian English and Bassa and Kpelle local languages. The recorded messages will be aired on selected community radio stations in Bong and Grand Bassa counties in June. The messages will also be translated into seven local dialects for subsequent broadcast in other counties.

Extension Material Development

USAID FED developed four fact sheets on the major diseases affecting cassava production in Liberia. The fact sheets, which are integrated with nutritional messages, are part of a new “Cassava Disease ID and Management” series intended for use by USAID FED, MoA and NGO field extension staff working on the cassava value chain. Simplified versions of these materials will be produced for farmers.

Component Two: Stimulate Private Sector Growth and Investment

Task 2: Enabling Policy Environment for Private Sector Growth

Policy Reform

In May, USAID launched the Liberia Agriculture Business Enabling Environment Inter-agency Policy Group (LABEE IPG) to facilitate moving forward with policy initiatives that stimulate growth in the agriculture sector. The LABEE IPG consists of key technical personnel from Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI), MoA, National Investment Commission, the Governance Commission, the National Legislature, World Food Program, International Finance Corporation and private sector partners such as Weinco, Gro Green, Fouta Corp, Liberia Fruits Company, among others. During the meeting, participants drafted terms of reference which will be adopted in June.

The Co-Chair of the House Committee for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Hon. Fofi S. Baimba, asked the group to help the government change its strategy. “I’m asking our supporters that if they want to help Liberia, they have to get real and make sure that we are seeing practical results. I’d like to quantify our intervention. I see that we are spending more money and getting less and that lessons should be learned from the prewar county agricultural development projects that impacted on agriculture growth in this country.”

National Seed Certification, Crop Protection Chemical, and Livestock Policy

In May, the Minister of Agriculture, Florence Chenoweth, stated that the Ministry can move forward with the implementation of the National Seed and National Crop Protection Chemical policies without them being passed into legislation through the National Legislature, as a result of USAID FED’s efforts. The Law Reform Commission confirmed this stating that MoA has the jurisdiction to implement its own regulations without a national law.

In the interim, regional representatives from the West Africa Seed Project (WASP), West Africa Fertilizer Project (WAFP) and ECOWAS re-confirmed the need to adopt the ECOWAS regulations. A

team consisting of the ECOWAS Commission, CORAF, the World Bank and the Mano River Union Secretariat will plan a high level visit to Liberia for a discussion with the Minister of Agriculture. The date of the visit is to be decided.

Subtask 2.1: Access to Credit and Business Development Services

Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLA)

In April and May, 91 new VSLA groups (2,199 farmers) began savings and lending. The remaining seven groups will complete training in June and begin savings and lending.

USAID FED Access to Finance Officer and the Loan Extension Agents (LEA) have completed the following tasks:

- Completed the awareness phase in the six counties. A total of 98 groups have signed MOUs;
- Assisted in the development of a USAID FED-specific VSLA curriculum
- Recruited 20 Community-based Facilitation Officers (CFOs) in the six counties, and conducted a five-day VSLA Training of Trainers in Gbarnga. The 20 CFOs will support new VSLA groups among FED FY13 and FY14 farming clusters.

Through the month of May 2014, the 26 FY13 VSLA groups and 91 new VSLA groups (total of 117 groups) have achieved the following (Table 10-11). USAID FED set the following targets for FY14: disburse loans to 124 VSLA groups, support 3,318 farmers and/or M/SME's to access loans, disburse \$149,000 USD in loans to farmers, and disburse USD \$89,000 USD in loans to M/SMEs. The project aims to disburse an overall total of \$240,000 USD in loans.

Table 10: VSLA group results as of May 2014.

Date (FY14)	# of Groups	# of Active Members*	Shares Purchased (USD)	Total Loans (USD)	Interest Recorded (USD)	# of Members with Loans
Oct-Dec	26	627	\$18,516	\$16,966	\$1,547	443
Jan	26	642	\$6,789	\$9,331	\$933	243
Feb	26	701	\$10,111	\$17,742	\$1,725	286
Mar	26	705	\$10,972	\$12,048	\$1,453	259
Apr	26	654	\$8,443	\$9,321	\$1,822	115
May	117	3,035	\$34,404	\$24,410	\$2,413	503
Total	117	3,035	\$90,124	\$87,106	\$9,753	1,867
FY14 Targets	124			\$149,982		3,280

*Active members are counted when they regularly attend meetings and add to savings pool. Active members are the totals members that are saving that month.

Table 11: VSLA ag-loan versus non ag-loans as of May 2014.

Date (FY14)	Ag-Loans (USD)	Non-Ag Loans (USD)	Total Loans (USD)	# Members with Ag-Loans	# Members with Non-Ag Loans
Oct-Dec	\$10,542	\$6,192	\$16,966	279	164
Jan	\$5,826	\$3,421	\$9,331	153	90
Feb	\$11,375	\$6,682	\$17,742	180	106
Mar	\$8,908	\$3,140	\$12,048	196	63
Apr	\$7,625	\$1,809	\$9,321	97	21
May	\$20,902	\$509	\$21,410	492	11
Total	\$65,290	\$21,815	\$87,106	1,409	448
FY14 Targets	149,982			3,280	

VSLA members reported utilizing loan funds for agriculture activities such as hiring labor to brush and maintain fields, purchasing seeds, agro-chemicals and tools, and for transporting goods to the market.

The VSLA program includes mentorship in group leadership, managing conflicts, and record keeping over a nine month period until the groups' final payout (disbursement of savings and accrued interest). The pilot of 26 groups will 'graduate' and are expected to make payouts in July 2014.

Micro Finance Institution (MFI) Loans

As a result of the successful payoff of 83% of the microfinance loans made in Q1 of FY14, LEAD has increased its loan offer to USAID FED farmers to LD \$3 million (approximately \$36,000 USD). Three groups have already been pre-approved for new loans: Menlehkoyee for \$500,000 LD and Zoedoar for \$1,000,000 LD in June. UFA will receive another \$500,000 LD in July.

As of May, three of the seven groups paid off their loans in full as a result of successful sales of vegetables, while other groups have made partial payments. In total, 83% of the amount loaned has been paid off. The results are as follows (Table 12):

Table 12: Loans and associated sales as of May 2014.

Group	Loan + Interest (LD)	Amount Repaid (LD)	Associated Sales (LD)
United Farmers Association (UFA)	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$1,196,750
Money in the Bush	\$180,000	\$180,000	TBD
Welekema Farmers Association	\$150,000	\$0	TBD
Kukatonon	\$150,000	\$110,900	TBD
Kuwikai	\$150,000	\$80,000	TBD
Menlehkoyee	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$486,800

Zoedoar	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$860,900
Total \$LD	\$1,630,000	\$1,370,900	\$2,544,450
Total USD*	\$20,375	\$17,136	\$31,806
FY14 Targets	\$89,736		
<i>*Based on exchange rate at the time of the loan which was 80 LD / 1 USD</i>			

Through VSLA and microfinance loans, USAID FED supported famers have accessed a total amount of \$65,301 USD in FY14 (Table 13).

Type	Q1	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Total	FY14
LEAD	\$20,375			\$650			\$21,025	\$89,736
VSLA	\$10,542	\$5,826	\$11,375	\$8,908	\$7,625	\$20,902	\$65,290	\$149,952
Total	\$30,917	\$5,826	\$11,375	\$9,558	\$7,625	\$20,902	\$86,315	\$239,638

Table 13: Total loans in USD accessed by farmers through VSLA and LEAD to date.

Business Training and Mentorship to Access to Finance

USAID FED in collaboration with the Enterprise Development Specialist at Liberia Investing in Business Expansion (IBEX) created customized training and mentorship modules for VSLA groups. The groups receive an initial training before VSLA graduation and first share-out in July. A pilot training with the six groups from Montserrado and Margibi will take place in Monrovia in June.

The training will cover:

1. VSLAs as informal financial service providers for micro-agribusinesses
2. Agri-business investment
3. Requirements and strategies for accessing credit
4. Basic record keeping for small businesses
5. Options for VSLA expansion

Component Three: Build Local Technical and Managerial Human Resource Capability

USAID FED interviewed candidates for the Sr. Vocational Agriculture Education Officer position. It is expected that the selected candidate will begin work in June to provide guidance to the four Vocational Agriculture Education Officers assigned to the Centers of Excellence (CoEs) and take the lead in formatting instructional materials in an e-Library format for distribution to instructors. USAID FED hired the Vocational Agriculture Education Officer for Grand Bassa Community College and assisted the GBCC faculty to develop lesson plans for the National Diploma in Agriculture (NDA) courses.

Task 3.0: Develop Existing Vocational Centers into Centers of Excellence in Vocational Agriculture Education (CoE)

In May, Dr. Brad Leger held several meetings to further investigate and make recommendations regarding the issue of USAID FED's designation of the Booker T. Washington Institute (BWI), a secondary educational institution, as a CoE. The National Diploma in Agriculture (NDA), which is a cornerstone of the Center of Excellence, is a post-secondary diploma program, appropriate only for

students enrolled in the Accelerated Vocational Training Program (AVTP) in agriculture which is hosted by BWI but legally administered by the Ministry of Education (MOE).

USAID FED recommends continuing its relationship with BWI in order to build faculty capacity and upgrade its facilities for the benefit of the BWI-AVTP, which will implement the NDA.

Development of Lesson Plans for NDA Fall Semester 2014 Courses

USAID FED developed the syllabi and fifteen lessons plans for each of the seven courses taught during the fall semester. USAID FED worked with twenty-eight instructors at the CoEs during this exercise, documented the textbooks and teaching resources that are currently available, and made recommendations for other resources that are needed for proper delivery of each course.

A major accomplishment for the period is the completion of all syllabi for the seven courses slated to be taught in the first semester of the first year, September of 2014.

Course	Lesson Plans Completed
Principles of Animal Production (NDA 111)	1-4
Communication in English (NDA 112)	1-2
Principles of Crop Production (NDA 114)	-
Intro to Farm Woodland Management (NDA 117)	1-2
Intro to Soil Science (NDA 118)	-
Agricultural Math (NDA 115)	1-3
Computer Applications (NDA 116)	-

NDA Coordination Meeting

USAID FED will organize a follow-up meeting to the March 2014 National Diploma in Agriculture Curriculum Review Session for June 2014. In the meeting, stakeholders will discuss issues relating to the NDA. Issues include the processes for examinations and diploma awards, responsibility for recordkeeping on diplomas awarded, and the potential transferability of credits from the NDA to higher education. It is expected that in addition to the administrators and heads of the agriculture departments at the four Centers of Excellence, the Ministries of Education, Labor, Commerce, Youth and Sports will be represented at the meeting.

ICT Support in Library and Agriculture Departments

The servers for the Lofa and Nimba CoEs arrived in May and are expected to be delivered to the CoEs in June. The addition of the servers to the equipment already in place will have a major impact on the Internet speed.

Lofa County Community College (LCCC)

USAID FED inspected the internet installation at the LCCC. The 1.8 m VSAT C-Band antenna was delivered to LCCC enabling the Internet to function properly.

Nimba County Community College (NCCC)

In May, a series of lightning strikes seriously damaged and disabled Internet connectivity of some of the NCCC IT equipment. While the equipment was properly grounded, it couldn't possibly withstand the impact of three consecutive strikes of lightening, which damaged the IDirect Evolution x3 Modem and Cisco Linksys E#200 series router. All equipment were provided and installed by USAID FED. The damaged equipment was brought to Monrovia for USAID FED's IT staff to evaluate and offer advice regarding possible options for replacement and costs. NCCC has committed to replace the damaged equipment.

Flash Web Design for E-Library Development

USAID FED developed a Scope of Work to engage a local consultant to develop a Flash Website to incorporate soft copy reference instruction materials, publications, factsheets, videos, photos, graphics as well as other documents needed by the CoE instructors to improve the content of their courses.

Once the website and content have been uploaded in a Flash multimedia software platform, it can then be downloaded onto Flash Players so that the contents can be accessible on a wide range of computer systems and devices off-line with no need for Internet access. The players will be made available to CoE faculty and the libraries.

Agriculture Science Laboratories

USAID FED hired an expert on laboratory equipment and a licensed engineer to assess each of the facilities designated by the CoEs for the Agriculture Science Laboratories, also referred to as "soils lab", to ensure that these can accommodate lab equipment. The team will pay particular attention to the electrical and clean water supply requirements.

The team will prepare a layout of each lab incorporating the major pieces of equipment and fixtures and will make recommendations and cost estimates for the renovation of each facility. The assessment team is expected to present its final report in June.

Equipment Procurement for Agriculture Science Laboratories

USAID FED opened bids for the procurement of equipment for the Agriculture Science Laboratories. USAID FED engaged, STTA Soils Specialist, Emmanuel Lincoln, for one day to review the bids to help select the vendor. The purchase order is expected to be issued in June.

CoE Faculty Recruited for the Soils Sampling and Analysis Trainings

USAID FED recruited eight faculty members, two from each CoE, to participate in a Soil Sampling and Analysis training in early June, the NCCC will host one of the trainings.

Demonstration Sites

Work has progressed to establish and/or expand the existing demonstration sites at the CoEs. USAID FED is proposing the following demonstration farm activities:

- BWI: vegetable production, open and protected with drip irrigation and commercial composting
- LCCC: SRI of lowland rice with UDP and goat production



Figure 8: KRRTI students carry out field maintenance at the vegetable demonstration site.

- NCCC: integrated rice and fish farming, SRI of lowland rice with UDP, cassava, commercial composting, and goat production
- GBCCC: vegetable production, both open and protected with drip irrigation, commercial composting, and goat production.

In May, GBCCC successfully acquired 158 acres from the community near Big Joe Town on which the CoE will establish its demonstration farms and the future rice mill and cassava processing operations. The establishment of the goat demonstration enterprise and a greenhouse vegetable demonstration enterprise will be adjacent to the Payesberry campus.

KRTTI Vegetable and Cassava Production Workshop

USAID FED organized a two-day ToT training in Best Practices in Cassava and Vegetable Production (Figure 8), including a practical at Kakata Rural Teachers Training Institute (KRTTI). Ten of the institute's production staff members and 256 students participated in the training which was 80% practical. At the end of the training, participants were able to demonstrate improved vegetable and cassava production practices. The participants have requested an additional training on farm irrigation.

Farming and Lowland Rice Demonstration

USAID FED met with stakeholders to address the implementation of the Fish and Lowland Rice Demonstration Farm at NCCC. As a result of the meeting, NCCC agreed to provide labor for the project while implementing partner Association Pisciculture et Développement Rural en Afrique (APDRA) Catalyst Liberia provides oversight for the construction and development of the rice and fish demonstration project in the nursery and production pond #1.

The paddy field in production pond #1 will be planted by mid-June and USAID FED will provide the seed rice (SUAKOKO-8), NCCC provides the labor, and APDRA Catalyst Liberia provides the technical assistance with monthly visits. The harvest of the fish is expected on the last week of June. The stakeholders will then meet to assess the outcomes of this demonstration project and to capture the lessons learned and determine the next steps.

NCCC Cassava Demonstration Plots

The group of women farmers from the community completed the planting of 1.5 ha of cassava, and NCCC students cleared another 3 ha for the cassava demonstration farm, which is supported by USAID FED.

NCCC Compost Production

NCCC students and instructors started making compost in a pit outside during the month of May and shifted the production to inside the composting building after USAID FED conducted a composting training. USAID FED will prepare a new activity to ensure that NCCC and GBCCC faculty receive hands-on training at BWI's commercial composting facility.

Career, Resource and Internship Centers at CoEs

In May, USAID FED worked to integrate activities for student career development and exploration into each of the seven NDA courses that will be rolled-out in the fall semester. The activities include career days, guest speakers, and field trip reports and interviews from agriculture and agribusiness representatives. This effort coincides with the development of program partnerships which provide for internships and other possibilities that allow the CoEs to leverage external resources and ensure program sustainability. A list of general partners for each institution was developed (LCCC-31 partners, NCCC-11 partners, GBCCC-11 partners, and BWI-14 partners) as well as twenty-six partners that are relevant for specific courses.

BWI providing human technical resources to Fabrar Liberia

USAID FED facilitated the recruitment from BWI of three rice mill technicians to operate Fabrar's rice mill by forwarding to the BWI Administration the job description and qualifications of the technicians. As a result Fabrar received six applications. This is a good demonstration of the FED-supported CoEs in vocational education providing the technical human resources to support private sector investors in agriculture value chains. Conversely, private sector like Fabrar investing in agricultural value chains ensures that the students trained in these CoEs will have employment when they graduate.

Agricultural Extension Curriculum and Expanding Community Outreach Program

USAID FED worked with Green Coast Agricultural Project (G-CAP) to develop their business plan for the expansion of their community-based vegetable farming activities. USAID FED also supported the group to develop a 40 Chances Fellows Program application to start up a social enterprise that collects and composts organic waste to be used in school gardens.

Agriculture Student Leadership Organizations

Two agriculture student leadership organizations are currently active. The Future Farmers Association (FFA) of BWI has 125 members, and the NCCC Nimba County Community College Agriculture Students Association has 130 members (75 male, 55 female). The VAEO at LCCC have worked to recruit students to create an organization at LCCC with the first general meeting scheduled for June.



Capacity Development for Commercial Farm and Agri-Business Planning

USAID FED conducted a training program with thirteen modules entitled Planning a Commercial Farm or Agri-business ToT in Grand Bassa Community College: 27 participants, Booker T. Washington Institute: 17 participants, Nimba County Community College: 41 participants, Lofa County Community College: 34 participants (Figure 9).

ise Development Program for Liberia
y Report, May 2014

Figure 9: USAID FED demonstrates a point to the eggplant farm team leaders at LCCC.

During the 5-day training, 119 participants, including agriculture faculty and students and administrators from the four CoEs, USAID FED Lead Farmers and members of youth-led agriculture organizations learned about: 1) concepts and essential tools needed to assess their farming or agri-business operations to determine profitability and potential for growth; and 2) how to gather specific data on the existing and/or planned agriculture demonstration enterprises at the CoEs and identify the requirements for each enterprise to make money.

Gross Margin Analysis of CoEs' Income-Generating Enterprises

USAID FED developed business plans based on the data collected for each of the CoEs during the training exercise. USAID FED identified the following income generating activities for each CoE.

- BWI: cassava, cattle, pigs, oil palm, rubber, vegetables, and compost
- NCCC: lowland rice, fish and lowland rice, cassava, oil palm, vegetables, compost, goats, canteen services, and photocopying and printing services
- GBCC: lowland and upland rice, cassava, vegetables, compost, and goats
- LCCC: lowland rice, vegetables, cassava and goats

Reducing Energy Costs

USAID FED engaged a local engineer to assess the generators and their fuel consumption at each CoE in order to develop a cost-benefit analysis for potentially switching to a renewable energy source to provide electrical power. Engineer, Mr. Prince Stryker, assessed the generators and their fuel consumption and has presented his findings summarized below:

BWI: While the generator is fairly new, it is consuming around 5 gallons of fuel per hour (1600 gallons per month) at an annual cost to BWI of an estimated \$96,000 USD in fuel plus the cost of maintenance and manpower estimated at an additional \$5,800 USD.

GBCC: While there is an 88KvA generator on GBCC's new Payesberry campus, the generator supplies only three workshops, which are located approximately 250 meters from the main campus, and is not connected to the main campus buildings. Since GBCC is still operating in its old campus, the assessment of demand was made based on a 60KvA generator which currently supplies the old campus. This generator is operating at 47% capacity or 16.8KvA at an annual operational cost of around \$35,360 USD.

NCCC: NCCC's generator is in the worst condition, unreliable and with a faulty monitoring device so the voltage, current, frequency, and temperature are not known. The generator has had two repairs with one being a major repair. The annual operational cost for the current generator is \$27,705 USD.

LCCC: LCCC has two brand new generators – a 65KvA and an 88KvA which are operated alternatively. The maximum current on each generator is 10 ampere per phase. The 88KvA is operated at 7.9% capacity or 4KvA while the 65 KvA generator is operated at 10.6% capacity. More load needs to be put on each of these generators since it is unsafe to operate the machines essentially without load. Each machine consumed 1 gallon of fuel per hour for an annual operational cost of \$24,550 USD.

USAID FED will discuss with the administration of the CoEs on their capacity to provide power supply to the facilities that will be put in place based on the result of the assessment of capacity and projected recurring expense on fuel.

Task 3.1: Enterprise Service Centers

USAID FED received four applications for ESCs including:

Nimba County – Nimba County Community College

Bong County – Green Coast Agriculture Project, Inc.

Lofa County – Jacob Tomei Enterprise

Grand Bassa County – Community Youth Network Project

Each applicant is to complete a business plan as outlined in a Request for Proposal document which will be issued in June.

Seed Capital Fund for ESC Applicants

USAID FED has raised \$7,000 USD in seed capital to help applicants access finance for their share of the required investment to establish an ESC. The Warsaw International Church (WIC) Youth Enterprise Fund has committed to provide no-interest/no-collateral 5-year loans to ESC applicants meeting the following criteria:

- The beneficiary must be a registered Liberian enterprise or NGO, owned or led by youth management between the ages of twenty-five and thirty-nine years old who are citizens of the Republic of Liberia;
- The beneficiary must have evidence that it has or will have an executed Memorandum of Understanding or such similar agreement with USAID FED Liberia for the delivery of business development services to pre-venture individuals and existing businesses, including commercial farm businesses within the agreed-upon service area; and
- The beneficiary must demonstrate through a business plan that its approach and business model for the delivery of said services will be viable.

The loan size depends on the type of service to be financed but the maximum loan limits range from \$1,750 to \$2,500 USD. Repayment of the loans will be made into a local seed capital fund, managed by the beneficiary for future on-lending to other youth-led enterprises within the beneficiary's service area. In addition to the financing, the WIC Youth Enterprise Fund will provide pro-bono on-line coaching to the ESC applicants on the development of their business plans.

In anticipation of the development of the proposed National Business Development and Advisory Center (NBDAC) which will be established in Monrovia with assistance from IBEX, USAID FED has planned another investor search to identify a qualified Monrovia-based service provider who would provide services through an agriculture window at the NBDAC while also serving as a hub of support to the county-based ESCs. It is expected that a request for proposal be issued in June.

During the reporting period, USAID FED developed a Scope of Work and advertised for local consultants to conduct a capacity needs assessment of fifty-six farmers' groups which USAID FED assisted in FY13, but who are not being assisted this year, mostly because they fall outside of the geographic areas of the clusters.

The purpose of the needs assessment was to identify and explore what each group may need from USAID FED with regard to future capacity-building in order to realize their goals for their agri-businesses.

USAID FED decided to postpone the capacity needs assessment, since only one respondent, ODAFARA, answered the advertisement and until such a time that the ESCs are fully operational. Instead, USAID FED will focus on providing the old groups with basic business skills training and advisory services, especially the development of simple business and marketing plans as well as helping them to access financing, including VSLAs, embedded financing and micro-financing.

Component Four: Cross-cutting Activities

Task 4.1: Gender

Leadership and Business Incubation for Women Entrepreneurs

USAID FED conducted the first two-day training sessions on Introduction to Leadership, Effective Communication, and Negotiation in Margibi (18 women), Lofa (22 women), and Bong (23 women) counties (Figure 10). The training will continue through August.

The Leadership and Business Incubation program for Women Entrepreneurs aims to address two critical constraints facing women: lower human capital (leadership and business skills) and less access to networks and information. The project will use a combined capacity development approach through basic leadership and business skills training followed by one on one mentoring by USAID FED staff. The mentorship is both scheduled and needs-based and involves travel to the field to support the women. When the Enterprise Service Centers are functioning, USAID FED expects these centers to provide such a service in the future.

Task 4.2: Youth

Back to School Garden Program

During the month of May, garden maintenance at C. B. Harris Memorial Elementary school continued. The student field practice schedule also progressed and 0.25 ha of land is under cultivation at the school for the young farmers club.



Figure 10: USAID FED facilitates a workshop session in Margibi County.

The transplanting of seedlings and planting seeds were completed at the special project sites at the Zorzor Teacher Training Institute (ZRTTI). Corn, cucumbers, water melons, okra, cabbage, tomatoes and eggplants were planted on 0.71ha and cassava planted on 0.5 ha using improved planting methods. The in-service teachers at the institute have begun to learn how to grow vegetables and cassava while they are in school.

USAID FED in collaboration with Advancing Youth Project (AYP) identified and selected a total of 100 schools (20 schools per county) interested in participating in the FY14 Back to School Garden Program. Within a period of seven months, a total of 4,500 students (900 per school) are expected to participate in the program as young gardeners. Almost 75% of the selected schools have completed clearing their land while the others are expected to complete the exercise before June 10, 2014. The program is expected to commence in June 2014.

Task 4.3: Nutrition

In May, a total of 96 (60 male and 36 female) individuals received nutrition messaging promoting diet diversification and intake of micronutrients so as to reduce effects of stunting and micronutrient deficiencies at the rural level.

The awareness exercises were integrated with several workshops to include the Rice Seed Producer Training for upland and lowland farmers; Cassava Nursery Farmer's Training for Lead Farmers and Women Leadership and Business Incubation Training. These training sessions were all conducted in Bong County. It is expected that the participants will include and pass on nutrition awareness to other beneficiaries. To date, a total of 500 (420 male and 80 female) individuals have received direct nutrition messaging under USAID FED interventions during FY14.

Task 4.4: Coordination with Partners

USAID FED collaborated with the Enterprise Development Specialist at IBEX to create customized training and mentorship modules for VSLA groups. The groups will receive initial training before their VSLA graduation and first share-out in July. A pilot training with the 6 groups from Montserrado and Margibi will take place in Monrovia in June. Topics to be covered include:

1. VSLAs as informal financial service providers for micro-agribusinesses
2. Agri-business investment
3. Requirements and strategies for accessing credit
4. Basic record keeping for small businesses
5. Options for VSLA expansion

Other stakeholders in the value chain such as processors, aggregators and traders may also benefit from similar training and mentorship programs.

Task 4.5: Monitoring and Evaluation

USAID FED is working to finalize revisions made to the Performance Management Plan in order to reflect new indicators, reporting frequencies, indicator definitions and data collection methods.

USAID FED started preparations for Results Based Management for Value Chains Monitoring and Reporting Training. This training will help value chain leads to better plan, implement and report their program activities.

USAID FED recruited an M&E Coordinator for Lofa County. The new staff member participated in orientation sessions, and was briefed on USAID FED M&E activities and other related documents including data collection and reporting tools.

Task 4.6: Environmental Compliance

USAID FED reviewed the agro-chemicals recommended by Emmanuel Owusu, the Vegetable Cold Chain Specialist. The purpose of the review was to establish whether the recommended chemicals were considered under the existing USAID FED Pesticide Evaluation Report and Safer Use Action Plan (PERSUAP) or not. The review shows that some of the agro chemical products contain active ingredients likely to be approved in an updated PERSUAP as well as products that would not be approved for use by USAID in an update to the existing PERSUAP. USAID FED is working on the next steps to enable USAID FED beneficiaries' access to additional chemicals for control of major pests and diseases in vegetables.

Task 4.7: Communications

May News Stories

USAID FED released two press releases in the month and was featured in local and online media at least 40 times (Table 14). Note the difficulty in tracking news that appears on radio stations throughout Liberia.

Table 14: USAID FED in the news in May.

USAID FED news	Local Newspapers	Online News Outlets	Radio and Other Media
Fabrar Liberia makes Historic Rice Purchase in Lofa County	7	10+	-
New Policy Group to Improve Business Enabling Environment for Agriculture Sector	4	4	-
Local Procurement Law to Benefit Liberian Rice Farmers (released at the end of April)	3	3	-
Youth in Agriculture (MoCI)	2	-	-
Rural Radio Partnership	1	-	4

Microfinance Loan for United Farmers Association	-	1	-
--	---	---	---

May Success Stories

USAID approved two success stories (attached) in the month of May.

- 1) Microfinancing Helps Women Expand Farms and Increase Sales
- 2) Goat Market Day Unites Farmers & Traders