



FOOD AND ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (FED)

Activity Highlights April 1 to 15, 2016

- **FED Begins Passing Torch to LADA:** Key FED staff met with the start-up team for USAID's Liberian Agribusiness and Development Activity (LADA) project. LADA is focused on post-harvest and agribusiness activities, including input-dealer networks, processing, storage, transport, market-linkages, etc. FED will be transitioning many of its programmatic interventions to the new project to ensure sustainability after the closedown of FED. The close coordination with the new project will continue this month and throughout the end of the project.
- **High-Value Vegetable Farmers Make Important Market Linkages:** Market linkages between FED-supported farm clusters and several high-end hotels and restaurants in Monrovia continued to grow this month with more contracts and an increased number of buyers. During the second quarter of FY12, FED facilitated a contract between Monrovia's premier Royal Grand Hotel, a property which includes three in-house restaurants, for weekly purchases of high-value vegetables, such as cucumbers, tomatoes, radishes, peppers, lettuce, and cabbage. In the beginning of April, FED facilitated the market linkage of Mount Barclay (Montserrado) vegetable farmers with Golden Beach restaurant in Monrovia, another institutional buyer. FED is now working to establish market linkages with supermarkets and other high-end Monrovia hotels such as Mamba Point and The Cape Hotel before project closedown. These market linkages are important because they provide sustainable income for the vegetable-production clusters, whose production and sales continue to improve. FED is also preparing a shipment of two, 5 kilogram samples of okra to a prospective buyer in France. This buyer has also indicated an interest in red chili peppers.
- **ESCs Start Up:** 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 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, a consultant from Top Consulting will embed in each of the BSPs to assess their existing resources and to develop a tailor-made business plan. Unlike the BSPs, the ESCs will be based on a fee-for-service business model, to promote sustainability after the closedown of FED.
- **Cassava Input Harvesting Begins:** On April 11, FED began harvesting the cuttings of nine improved cassava varieties from the Lofa screening site. Because of their higher yields and resistance to disease, these varieties were imported from IITA Nigeria in 2014 and multiplied at the Lofa screening site. A planned total of 113,040 cuttings will be harvested for distribution to 80 cassava nurseries in Bong, Lofa, Nimba and



Grand Bassa Counties. These cuttings will be distributed and planted by the nurseries before the onset of the rainy season.

- **Training for Lead Goat Farmers:** FED's Goat Value Chain specialist conducted an on-site practical training for 52 FY16 lead goat farmers in Bong, Lofa and Grand Bassa Counties. The trainings focused on goat-herd production, management and mineral-block (salt lick) production techniques as well as the design of goat shelter made of locally available materials, with the understanding that the lead farmers will pass on the acquired knowledge to the members of their goat-producer groups.
- **PPR Vaccinations Campaign:** The Goat Value Chain specialists visited three FY15 goat production sites in Kolutawula, Gbaota and Kweyarkula Town, Bong County, to determine how many goats had been vaccinated in those communities under the BRAC-led PPR Vaccinations Campaign. FED has contracted BRAC, an international nongovernmental organization, to implement the vaccinations for as many as 108,000 goats and sheep in Bong, Lofa, Nimba and Grand Bassa Counties. About 180 goat production sites under the FED project are expected to benefit from the ongoing goat's vaccination campaign.
- **Rice Business Hubs:** Six rice business hubs in Lofa and Bong Counties were completed and all equipment installed in April. Five of these rice business hubs had their equipment tested by FED's in-house equipment mechanic. It is anticipated that all the pending rice business hubs will be fully functional by the end of May.



FED's goat-herd specialist monitors BRAC program assistant during sheep vaccinates in Kweyarkula Town, Bong County.