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

BI-WEEKLY REPORT: JUNE 1-15, 2013



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COVER PHOTO: Beneficiaries transplanting rice at a FED UDP site in Gbeindin, Nimba county.

DISCLAIMER

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Executive Summary

On June 1-15 a range of activities took place underpinned by FED's aim to improve food security in Liberia.

Progress in UDP site preparation ramped up between June 1-15 and transplanting of rice in six 20x20 sites has been completed on schedule (see cover photo). Nimba County Manager Horace Yansine and representatives from the FED Rice Value Chain were pleased to facilitate a USAID visit to one UDP site in Nimba on June 13.

Two goat shelters were completed during this period in Bong and work is underway to complete the remaining shelters in Lofa and Nimba in late June and early July. At the beginning of the month STTA Livestock Policy Specialist Dr. Kwaku Agyemang presented his livestock policy documents to the MOA, this is the first document of its kind to be reviewed by the (soon to be finalized) Liberian National Agricultural Policy Hub the policy document made recommendations on the market impact on the import of goats and veterinary pharmaceuticals.

A market linking event was held in Ganta, Nimba on June 14. Fifty (30 males and 20 females) farmers, aggregators, transporters and caterers participated in the event and were informed of the ArcelorMittal market opportunity. FED in collaboration with Building Markets organized the event aimed at enabling producers and aggregators to supply locally produced agricultural products for steel mining company catering services throughout Liberia.

261 Agri-business textbooks were distributed to FED selected Community Colleges; these books will serve as essential resources to students and academics. Further distribution is scheduled for the rest of the month.

FED STTA Larry Tweed arrived on June 13 and will be supporting input supply activities particularly focusing on rolling out the voucher program to FED farmer beneficiaries in partnership with selected agro-input dealers throughout the months of June and July.

June 1-15 Activities

Component One: Increased Agriculture Productivity

Value Chain Activities

Goats

- FED Goat Value Chain manager participated in a consultative workshop, held on June 4 at the Ministry of Agriculture to draft curricula for training Community Animal Health Workers (CAHWS) and Veterinary Assistants (VAs). The workshop was sponsored by Land O' Lakes in collaboration with Dr. Francis Ejobi of Afrisa.
- Assessment carried out on June 14 by Goat Value Chain manager and assistant of CARI quarantine site for receipt of 2,000 USDA/LoL imported improved breed goats from the Gambia.
- Dr. Kwaku Agyemang's Livestock Policy Document written during May was presented to the MOA on June 4.
- Goat shelter building continues in Bong, Lofa, Nimba and Grand Bassa, both shelters in Bong were completed during this period, in Lofa the first of six shelters were completed and in Grand Bassa materials were delivered and sites brushed and ready for work to commence on June 16-30.

Cassava

- Planting of additional 0.5 hectare of cassava was successfully carried out at the New Generation Women (NGW) site, making a total of 2 hectares planted thus far. Planting of vetiver grass to control erosion of field ridges at the NGWO site has begun. FED and Chevron support NGW.
- The NGO West Africa Initiative has been hired to provide technical assistance to cassava production activities in Grand Bassa County for 31 “B” and “C” sites. The groups working on these sites have started ground work but need additional technical support to ensure that their field implementation includes all of the best practices technology package.
- Activity intensified between June 1-15 in land preparation for planting at 119 cassava sites.

Rice

- 20 Urea Deep Placement (UDP) demonstration sites located in four counties are being prepared for rice production demonstrations that will begin next week. Six sites have successfully transplanted their rice seedlings, while 12 sites have seeded nurseries. The UDP demonstration sites will demonstrate the efficient use of improved seed and fertilizers in a controlled environment.
- Field preparation, seeding and fertilization is being carried out by 1,587 upland and 6,845 lowland farmers organized in 128 groups in six targeted counties, Lofa, Nimba, Bong, Grand Bassa, Margibi and Montserrado.

Peri-Urban Vegetables

- On June 1-15 two successful PUA Training of Trainer (ToT) sessions were conducted in Bong and Grand Bassa Counties. Farmers, FED Extension officers, NGO Stakeholders and representatives from the MOA were present at the training sessions.
- The PUA manual was distributed to the participants for use as guide to synchronize extension messages among trainers and technicians.
- In Bong the ToT was conducted from June 5-7 with 15 participants. In Grand Bassa. The ToT took place on June 11-13 with 19 participants.

Input Supply

- Larry Tweed, IFDC STTA, arrived in Monrovia on June 13; he will be working on the roll out of the pilot voucher program of FED.
- Training has started at two workshop sites in Nimba County, Saclepea and Ganta, for the manufacturing of cassava and rice mill prototypes. FED Equipment Manufacturing technicians Quoizenah Lamine and Dennis Wilson will provide direct training to private sector metal workers to promote availability of different kinds of food processing equipment.

Component Two: Stimulate Private Enterprise Growth

- On June 4, Component 2 worked with UNDP, NIC, IFC/World Bank and EU in the planning of the Investment Facilitation Platform to accelerate and foster private sector involvement and investment in the undertaking of projects to support the Liberia National Agricultural Investment Plan (LASIP). FED was requested to identify Liberian entrepreneurs who need financial and technical support from large investors to upgrade their agribusinesses. Meetings were held with selected entrepreneurs to assist them with the development of their business plans.
- On June 7 and 14 meetings were held with potential cassava processors to develop a profitable business model for cassava processing. The Enterprise team visited two of the potential entrepreneurs' sites in Montserrado (Liberia Agro Resources Incorporated) and Nimba (Old Timer Women Group) to assess

their capacity, locations and existing assets. Meetings were also held with other development partners such as UNIDO and WISHH/HANDS between June 4-10 to discuss possible collaboration for technical assistance particularly in food safety and quality standards.

- From June 3-8 Rights and Rice Foundation completed a final Organizational Strengthening training with 50 participants who are part of 'From God to Man' Farmer's Association in Doumpa, Nimba County.
- On June 12 a MOU was signed between FED and Building Markets to support market linkages and collaborate on matchmaking events.
- On June 14, the first networking event was organized in collaboration with Building Markets to facilitate farmers' access to Arcelor Mittal market opportunity; the event was held in Ganta Nimba. The event was attended by farmers based in Nimba and involved in FED's four value chains, aggregators from Montserrado, Margibi and Nimba, Transporters and caterers and other international organizations supporting the value chain such as WFP and EU. A radio talk show was also conducted in Nimba to inform other farmers and value chain actors about these market opportunities.

Component Three: Build Human Capacity

- 164 women rural farmers were awarded certificates on June 7 and 14 marking their completion of a training on food processing and preservation skills; the training was funded by FED and provided by local NGO, COSEO. The graduation ceremonies took place in Bong, Nimba and Montserrado. During the graduation ceremony in Montserrado, CoP Agnes Luz handed over processing and packaging equipment from FED to six women co-operatives.
- On June 4, 87 agriculture and business textbooks were given to BWI for use by the Institution's instructors. These books will serve as resources to enhance instruction in piloting the new National Diploma in Agriculture, an ECOWAS-TVET post-secondary curriculum for Liberian Community Colleges
- On June 6 FED staff presented 87 textbooks to the President of the Lofa County Community College to be used by teachers and students of the Agriculture Department.
- On June 13 Nimba County Manager and Component Three lead presented 87 textbooks to Nimba County Community College.

Cross Cutting Initiatives

- FED Nutritionist participated in the National Nutrition Coordination Meeting held on June 4 at the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare.
- The Back to School Garden Project tools distribution was ongoing throughout this period and of the 20 partner schools, 11 have already been provided with Cutlasses, Wheelbarrows, Shovels, diggers, spraying cans, and hand gloves.
- A series of meetings were held between FED, the Ministry of Youth and Sports (MoYS), UNICEF and USAID's Advancing Youth Program. These meetings centered on collaborating to improve youth engagement in the agriculture sector.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- M&E briefed the participants in the PUA vegetable training for the contract NGOs on monitoring requirements necessary to collect data for meeting FED targets.
- The FED Indicator Targets were reset for the Year 2 activities and finalized in the FTFMS data format and submitted to USAID.

- M&E met with one of the several NGOs providing extension services for both rice and cassava activities. Subsequent meetings are planned to provide the NGOs with the information and tools necessary to provide data and information on meeting targets for these activities.

June 16-30 Planned Activities

COMPONENT ONE: INCREASED AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY

Value Chain Activities

Goats

- All 10 goat shelters in Lofa will be completed by June 22.
- Post-Partum Care training is scheduled between June 24-28 and is aimed at reducing kid mortality. Lead farmers will be attending: 14 from Grand Bassa, 12 from Nimba, four from Bong and 10 from Lofa. Trainings will take during two, two-day sessions, one in Nimba at a lead farmer site and one in Lofa. This on-site practical training will be taking place in partnership with ACIDI/VOCA F2F volunteer program.

Cassava

- Cassava Value Chain Manager will visit sites in Bong and Nimba between June 18-21, visits to sites in Montserrado and Margibi are scheduled for June 24-28.
- Planting of cuttings at 119 cassava sites is ongoing.

Rice

- 80 farmers from four counties will be participating in a rice seed production workshop to learn methods and best practices for new rice seed production on 20 acres. The workshop will be held in Gbarnga, Bong on June 17.

Peri-Urban Vegetables

- Between June 16-30 seeds will be distributed, field layout of plots to be planted during the rainy season will continue and harvesting of produce from the dry season will also continue..

Input Supply

- Larry Tweed, (IFDC STTA) will be carrying out meetings concerning the voucher program with selected farmer groups in Nimba and Bong counties during the week of June 17 and it is anticipated that vouchers will be printed between June 16-30.

Component Two: Stimulate Private Enterprise

- On June 24, the ED team will begin the Rice Business Incubation project with eight farming groups and four entrepreneurs. FED will expand the post-harvest demonstrations introduced by Dr. Vallenki (STTA Post-Harvest Specialist) in developing participating farming groups to provide mechanized services and inputs to surrounding communities in rural areas.
- On June 28, a second 'market matching' event will be held for producers and aggregators in Buchanan to locate suppliers for ArcelorMittal's Buchanan-based canteen.
- On June 20, component 2 will take part in the first Private Sector Development Donor working group initiated by IFC/ World Bank and NIC to help coordinate activities aimed at strengthening the private sector in Liberia. FED will be contributing to the Private Sector Development Strategy drafted by IFC/World Bank to create a comprehensive framework for private sector development.

Component Three : Build Human Capacity

- A further 87 Agricultural and Business textbooks will be delivered to Grand Bassa Community College (GBCC) on June 20.
- Component Three representatives will be meeting with principals at the community colleges to discuss opening Career Services Centers leading to Enterprise Service Centers, these meetings will be held at BWI on June 18 and at GBCC on June 20.
- A MOU between USAID and CARI will be finalized on June 16-30; this will allow FED's Component Three to begin helping CARI build its capacity as an In-service Center of Excellence.

Cross-cutting Initiatives

- Collaborating with MoA-Division of Extension Programs to select messages among the Essential Nutrition Actions (ENA) materials for nutritional awareness-raising.
- MOUs will be signed with AYP and UNICEF this month to further collaboration in engaging Liberia's youth in the agriculture sector.