



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

BI-WEEKLY REPORT: MARCH 1-15, 2013



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**COVER PHOTO:** US Ambassador for Liberia Deborah Malac talks to Raychel Pardoe of the FED supported Welekamah Women’s Project at Sangai farm on March 13<sup>th</sup> 2013

### **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.

## Executive Summary

March 1-15 saw a number of FED activities ranging from an ambassadorial visit to the rolling out of Enterprise Development Training.

On March 13<sup>th</sup> (Liberian Decoration Day) Deborah Malac, US Ambassador for Liberia visited two FED supported sites, her first visit was to Sangai Farm where farmer Bill Tolbert talked the ambassador through some of the technicalities and challenges in the management of peri-urban vegetable crops and showcased the FED funded drip-irrigation which is already assisting in yield and crop quality improvement. The ambassador proceeded to Booker T. Washington Institute where Ms. Malac viewed the USAID supported ICT and internet connectivity facility. During her visit Ms. Malac expressed appreciation at both FED sites after engaging with project staff and beneficiaries alike, the ambassador spoke to staff members and students who highlighted key activities and explained how USAID support had benefited them.

Between March 1-15 130 pepper seedlings were transplanted at the MOA demonstration site in Kakata, Margibi County

The Goat Pass-on Scheme memorandum of understanding signings have been finalized with participating Lead Farmer Goat Producers in Nimba, Lofa, and Bong Counties.

The Enterprise Development team has commenced the Financial Management and Organizational Strengthening Training with three groups in Lofa and Nimba Counties and it continues in Bong and Grand Bassa March 15-29.

A forum was held in Monrovia around developing a national diploma curriculum for Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions on agriculture. The three day forum started on February 27 and ended on March 1, 2013. Alongside the other partners FED's technical expertise in human capacity building and technical agriculture based educational recommendations the forum was to discuss a way forward in the development of a competency based national curriculum in agriculture at post-secondary level taking into account international best practices that will respond to the skill needs of the employment sector

## March 1-15 Activities

### Component One: Increased Agriculture Productivity

#### Value Chain Activities

##### Goats

- March 8<sup>th</sup> – Signing of MOU's with 13 Goat Pass-on Scheme lead farmers finalized and signed in Nimba, Lofa, and Bong Counties. Procurement for the construction of 13 goat shelters now underway and first shelters are being constructed in Lofa. These lead farmers represent 242 goat farmers across the country.

##### Cassava

- March 1-15 land clearing continues across 119 sites.

##### Rice

FED rice value chain team met with 11 NGO's to discuss the roll out of the establishment of rice extension sites in 145 areas. These NGOs were invited to send representatives to the training of trainers for the rice extension sites to be held the following week.

##### Peri-Urban Vegetables

- Transplanting of pepper seedlings at the MOA demonstration site in Kakata was completed and two plots of pepper at Kuwika vegetables demonstration plot. 283 pepper seedlings at Green farm demonstration site.
- Identification of an individual farmer highlighted as a possible candidate for FED intervention, Moses Kaine has been operating in PUA production and sales for six years FED met him at his farm in Sonkay Town, Todee District, Montserrado. It is anticipated that Mr. Kaine will host onsite FED trainings on his farm.

##### Input Supply

- Second meeting with Arjay Farm outgrowers (150 growers) for planning farming operations for the ongoing cropping season.
- Meeting was held with Monrovia based input supplier about launching pilot voucher program.

### Component Two: Stimulate Private Enterprise

- Financial Management and Organizational Strengthening Trainings have commenced with three groups in Lofa and Nimba Counties.
- Subah Belleh Associates (SBA) completed the Stake Holder Profile surveys in the six counties. The total number of interviews conducted exceeded 500. SBA has prepared and submitted the second draft report of their findings from the survey.

### **Component Three: Build Human Capacity**

- Ministry of Education (MoE) and FED hosted a three day workshop on National Agriculture Diploma Curricula development from Feb. 27 – March 1, 2013 at Corina Hotel with 18 persons in attendance. The workshop brought together participants from Lofa Community College (LCC), Bassa Community College (BCC), MoE, FED, and BWI representatives.
- Focus groups were held in Gbarnga, Bong and Buchanan, Grand Bassa to assess local community radio journalist skills and awareness of USAID/FED, the data collected will form the basis of trainings that will take place in May to build skills on agriculture reporting.
- USAID's Deputy Contracting Officer Representative (DCoR) Ken Hasson and the Component Three staff, visited Nimba County Community College on March 5th. The purpose of this meeting was to finalize a memorandum of understanding (MoU) between FED and APDRA. The MoU focused on providing a training and set up for rice production and local fish culture. APDRA is a French organization that has experience in low cost, locally relevant sustainable rice production and aquaculture. The visit included a site selection at NCCC.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

- Two M&E Staff participated in the USAID L-MEP Managing for Results Training in Ganta, Nimba County from March 4-8, 2013;
- Task Orders were finalized and sent to IQC holders requesting proposals to conduct the Rice Farmer Household Surveys.

### **Cross Cutting Initiatives**

A rapid assessment of the nutritional situation in FED's 6 counties of operation with a focus on Grand Bassa was conducted during this time period by Allison Gardner and she and lead nutritionist Kathleen Kurz presented their findings and recommendations to USAID on March 1<sup>st</sup> initially with a follow up final presentation on March 8<sup>th</sup>.

- STTA Tony Babb presented his findings on March 13<sup>th</sup> with his recommendations for a partnership with CDA to boost FED's involvement with co-operatives as a means of access to finance for farmers.
- USAID accompanied Jaclyn Carlsen, STTA ICT Specialist to two counties to learn about how Market Price Information Systems are currently being utilized and to analyse the potential to roll that out further. They presented their findings on March 12<sup>th</sup>. With assistance from USAID Jaclyn is working on developing an MIS strategy.

# March 15-31<sup>st</sup> Planned Activities

## COMPONENT ONE: INCREASED AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY

### Value Chain Activities

#### Goats

- Identification and signing of MOU's with additional seven lead goat farmers representing groups as part of the Goat Pass-on Scheme in Grand Bass. This will bring the total of FED MOU's with goat lead farmers up to 20.
- Further roll out of goat shelter construction in Lofa and Nimba.

#### Cassava

- Two meetings are scheduled with Chevron to discuss New Generation Women (NGW) partnership, the first of which is planned for Tuesday March 15<sup>th</sup>.
- Technical leads (PUA and cassava) will demonstrate less laborious ways of implementing best practices at NGW.

#### Rice

- March 18 – 29, 2013 training of trainers of rice production best practices, will take place in Gbarnga for an estimated 85 participants from FED and MOA Extension Officers, Community Facilitator, NGO technicians, Lead Farmers, and participants will have representation from BWI, Nimba, Grand Bassa and Lofa Community Colleges. The objective for this training is to ensure uniformity and accuracy in message and practices when the training is rolled out by the trainers to farmers. . After the TOT, these trainers will train approximately 8000 rice producers.
- Demonstration on post-harvest technology to farming groups as a means of helping them to reduce post-harvest losses and improve the quality of rice as well as production for commercialization and food security. The rice post-harvest process to be demonstrated will include advice on construction of drying floors, demonstration of construction and use of rat guards, par-boiling tanks.

#### Peri-Urban Vegetables

- Capturing harvest information and continuing weekly demonstrations on field maintenance and layout in all six counties of operation.
- Lay out and further transplanting of pepper and bitter ball at the Kakata Demonstration Site March 25-29.
- Input distribution is scheduled to take place March 25-29.

### Input Supply

- March 18-29 FED will conduct input demand assessment with County Managers and Teams for organizing the pilot voucher program
- Two STTAs will carry out a rapid evaluation of FED sites with County Managers and Teams for implementing UDP and ISFM demonstrations.

### **Component Two: Stimulate Private Enterprise**

- Organizational Training Strengthening continuing during this period in Grand Bassa.
- Youth Business Plan Competition awarding of certificates is scheduled on Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> March at FED Monrovia Office.

### **Component Three : Build Human Capacity**

- STTA Dr. Edward Rhodes will carry out training in soil test kit usage at BWI on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> March, Buchanan Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> and in Nimba Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup>.

### Cross-cutting

- EMMP Training will be taking place in Voinjama, Gbarnga, Ganta and Buchanan, the first sessions will be with 35 lead farmers and all county level FED M&E staff will be attending these trainings.