

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

**BI-WEEKLY REPORT: MAY 1-15, 2013**



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**COVER PHOTO:** Women at Sackie Boma's Farmers Association harvested two plots of chili pepper that yielded 75Kgs that were taken to the market.

### **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

The FED project is running at full capacity as the May 1 through 15 activities demonstrate. Component One: Increased Agriculture Productivity is committed to keeping pace with the current crop cycle. The input supply activity is designing a demonstration program to promote new technologies for improving lowland rice production through UDP fertilizer applications and ISFM. The preparation of a pilot voucher program for agricultural inputs is also in progress for Bong and Nimba Counties.

For the value chains a number of site assessments for the planting of rice took place during this period. The challenges identified during the assessments included the need for rehabilitation of water control and management structures, heavy de-stumping and food for the workers at the sites. The ToT on sustainable cassava production best practices was conducted for 65 participants from NGO staffs, lead farmers, EOs from Bong, Grand Bassa, Lofa and Nimba Counties as well as representatives from CARI. An 8,000 mini-stem cutting germ plasma bank for cassava was established at the FED office in Bong County and Farmers' field in Nimba County.

Twenty sites in Margibi and Montserrado counties are expanding their vegetables production base while maintaining current production and harvesting of vegetables. The PUA and communication teams visited project sites at Sackie Bomah Farmers Association and Yarnquelleh to video tape agriculture best practices where field layout and harvesting of peppers were recorded. Two plots (10 X 10 m<sup>2</sup>) of chili peppers yielded 75 Kgs of peppers that were taken to the market.

Six of 13 lead goat farmer shelters and fenced sites have been completed in Nimba. These six sites will provide good examples for the completion of the remaining shelters to follow in the next two to three weeks. In Bong, one shelter is completed with a second shelter about to start. Construction materials for all lead goat farmer production sites have been delivered for beginning construction of the remaining shelters. Plans are under way for Lofa and Grand Bassa shelter construction.

The development of a National Livestock Policy was the subject of a regional ECOWAS stakeholders meeting on May 6-8 by the African Union/Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources, titled Veterinary-Governance (VET-GOV). Dr. McCarthy and Dr. Agyemang representing FED participated in the conference. The recently completed first DRAFT of the Liberian National Livestock Policy with the support of FED was part of the discussion and will be the first action of the VET-GOV multi-stakeholder review for Liberia.

Component Two Enterprise Development (ED) team worked with Component One to jump start the Pilot voucher program in Bong and Nimba Counties. A backward mapping exercise was initiated in Monrovia to identify large buyers of product from the FED value chains to include location and preference in terms of quality, quantity and purchase frequency. The IQC/RFP0006 bid for rural BSP's was opened and evaluation of the 26 submitted proposals commenced. A Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) RFP for TOT for FED staff was published and a bidder's conference held.

Two MOUs were drafted and await approval for the capacity building of Nimba County Community College (NCCC) and Grand Bassa Community College (GBCC) for Component Three. The second allotment of textbooks (two hundred and eighty) procured through Longman Publishers arrived on May 1. These books are meant for the Centers of Excellence's libraries which will enhance the resources to pilot the new National Diploma in Agriculture, an ECOWAS-TVET post-secondary curriculum for Liberia Community Colleges.

Intense preparation took place for the capacity building workshop for the group of interns assigned to Montserrado, Margibi and Grand Bassa Counties. The workshop started on May 15 and ends May 18 where 111 interns will meet in two groups over the period of four days.

The Monitoring and Evaluation rice farmer survey field work was completed. Survey sample size was 2.3% of about 8,200 farmers. Vegetable demonstration and vegetable seedling surveys continue.

FED is in talks with UNICEF regarding their National Youth Service Program which supports recent college graduates, offering them the chance to volunteer their time and work in four sectors of the Liberian economy. The agricultural sector has been the one sector UNICEF has been struggling to establish. FED hopes to have a partnership in place by the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter FY 2013. UNICEF would provide all of the funding for the volunteers while FED would provide training and stewardship. This activity would allow both UNICEF and FED to reach a larger population of young farmers in Liberia.

## May 1-15 Activities

### Component One: Increased Agriculture Productivity

#### Input Supply

- A demonstration program is being designed to promote new technologies for improving lowland rice production through UDP fertilizer applications and ISFM. The designated lowland sites for the demonstrations are currently being prepared.
- Over 20 Agro-dealers have been identified and profiled in association with the M&E team for capacity building.
- The preparation of a pilot voucher program for agricultural inputs is in progress for Bong and Nimba Counties. The program targets 400 sites where FY 2012 demonstrations were conducted and farmers saw the results associated with the technologies introduced.

#### Value Chain Activities

##### Rice

- A number of site assessments for the planting of rice took place during this period:
  - Assessed category B & C sites in Nimba (Douwin, Nyempa, Kpaglay, Zoeluapa, Zontuo and Boweh).
  - Assessed category B sites in Lofa (Kuluka, Sarkonedu, Baziagia, David Selma Town, Seekemai and Kolliemai).
  - Conducted an assessment of UDP sites in Nimba (Dounpa, NCCC, Payee and Taylay).
  - Conducted an assessment of UDP sites in Lofa (Kugbamai, Jarmulor, Voinjama and Quandi Gbondoi).
- The challenges identified during the assessments included the need for rehabilitation of water control and management structures, heavy de-stumping at most sites and food for the workers at the sites, especially for the application of UDP.

##### Cassava

- An 8,000 mini-stem cutting germ plasma bank was established at the FED office in Bong County and Farmers' field in Tonglewin, Nimba County.
- The ToT on sustainable cassava production best practices was conducted for 65 participants from NGO staffs, Lead Farmers, EOs from Bong, Grand Bassa, Lofa and Nimba Counties as well as representatives from CARI in Bong and Nimba County Community Colleges.
- The formulation of Cassava Growers Associations for the four lead counties (Bong, Grand Bassa, Lofa and Nimba) was carried out.
- Tools were distributed to cassava farmers in the Counties during this period.
- The inspection of the New Generation Women's site for planting the first hectare of land in cassava began. Stakeholder farmers were trained in the planting of cassava intercropped with peanuts which was successfully achieved.

##### Peri-Urban Vegetables

- 20 sites in Margibi and Montserrado counties are expanding their vegetables fields while carrying out field maintenance and harvesting of existing vegetables.
- The PUA and communication teams visited project sites at Sackie Bomah Farmers Association and Yarnguelleh to video tape agriculture best practices where field layout and harvesting of peppers were recorded. Two plots (10 X 10 m2) of chili peppers yielded 75 Kgs of peppers were taken to the market.
- The fertilization of two plots (10 X 10m2) of hot peppers was carried out at the Golaneapolar site in Margibi County.
- The lay out and planting of three plots (10 X 10 m2) of water melon at the “money in the bush” site in Margibi County took place.

## Goats

- Six of 13 lead goat farmer shelters and fenced sites have been completed in Nimba. These six sites will provide good examples for the completion of the remaining shelters to follow in the next two to three weeks. In Bong, one shelter is completed with a second shelter about to start. Construction materials for all lead goat farmer production sites have been delivered for commencing construction of the remaining shelters. Plans are under way for Lofa and Grand Bassa shelter construction.
- The development of a National Livestock Policy was the subject of a regional ECOWAS stakeholders meeting on May 6-8 by the African Union/Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources, titled Veterinary-Governance (VET-GOV). Dr. McCarthy and Dr. Agyemang representing FED participated in the conference. The recently completed first DRAFT of the Liberian National Livestock Policy with the support of FED was part of the discussion and will be the first action of the VET-GOV multi-stakeholder review for Liberia.

## Component Two: Stimulate Private Enterprise

- The Enterprise Development (ED) team worked with Component One to jump start the Pilot voucher program in Bong and Nimba Counties.
- On May 13, the IQC/RFP0006 bid for rural BSP's was opened and evaluation of the 26 submitted proposals commenced.
- A value chain map with business plan for the PUA vegetables farmers was completed.
- A backward mapping exercise was initiated in Monrovia to identify large buyers for the FED value chains to include their locations, preferences in terms of quality, quantity and purchase frequency.
- A Grand Bassa County ED Assistant, Lincoln Flomo, was employed on May 13.
- Consultants hired to build the capacity of the Liberia FED team in utilizing the value chain approach in development and defining successful business models for Liberia ended May 7, 2013.
- A Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) RFP for TOT for FED staff was published in several newspapers and distributed by email to potential BSPs. On May 7, a bidders conference was conducted with interested bidders, attended by 15 people (5 females and 10 males) representing 12 BSPs.
- As part of a youth business plan competition, three finalist business plans have been reviewed and group representatives will be called in for a conference to plan the way forward.

## Component Three: Build Human Capacity

- Two Memorandums of Understanding were drafted and await approval to proceed. These are for the capacity building of Nimba County Community College (NCCC) and Grand Bassa Community College (GBCC).
- Secondly, the Rice and Fish Farming activity has been finalized with APDRA being awarded the contract to begin training and pond layout.
- The second allotment of textbooks (two hundred and eighty) procured through Longman Publishers arrived on May 1. These books are meant for the Centers of Excellence's libraries which will enhance the resources to pilot the new National Diploma in Agriculture, an ECOWAS-TVET post-secondary curriculum for Liberia Community Colleges.
- These books have been branded with USAID stickers. Memoranda of Understanding are being drafted for the distribution of the textbooks to the appropriate Counties plus BWI and the MoE's Bureau of Science, Technical, Vocational and Special Education.
- Intense preparation took place for the capacity building workshop for the group of interns assigned to Montserrado, Margibi and Grand Bassa Counties. The workshop started on May 15 and ends on the May 18. 111 interns will meet in two groups over the period of four days.
- At the Booker Washington Institute sustainable agriculture demonstration site, vegetables and drip irrigation are being trialed. Tomato plants are succumbing to disease and careful watch is for those that survive where seeds will be harvested from these varieties. Comfrey was introduced as a nutritional and medicinal plant. The sweet potato, Beauregard, variety, imported from LSU is surviving and growing very well.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

- The rice farmer survey field work was completed and report is due the week of May 20. Survey sample size was 2.3% of about 8,200 farmers.
- M&E participated in the cassava TOT for the start of the Year 2 planting season.
- M&E Monrovia staff participated in the LMEP Data Quality Analysis workshop.
- M&E field staff assisted in the oversight of the tools and materials distribution for the Year 2 rice groups.
- Vegetable demonstration and vegetable seedling surveys continued.

## Cross Cutting Initiatives

### Gender and Youth

- FED is in talks with UNICEF regarding their National Youth Service Program which supports recent college graduates, offering them the chance to volunteer their time and work in four sectors of the Liberian economy. The agricultural sector has been the one sector UNICEF has been struggling to establish. UNICEF would fund 20 volunteers over the course of a year, while FED would provide the agricultural experience desired by these volunteers. It is part of UNICEF's mandate that they reach over 500 youths through these agricultural volunteers. FED is in discussions with UNICEF to leverage these 20 volunteers to reach specific agricultural youth groups in FED's four core counties. FED hopes to have a partnership in place by the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter FY 2013. UNICEF would provide all of the funding for the volunteers while FED would provide training and stewardship. This activity would allow both UNICEF and FED to reach a larger population of young farmers in Liberia.

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

## COMPONENT ONE: INCREASED AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY

### Input Supply Interventions

- Land preparation, brushing, clearing and de-stumping for lowland rice UDP demonstration sites will take place along with the necessary layout and rehabilitation
- Site selection and nurseries for rice established
- An Agro Input Dealer survey will be conducted
- Monitoring and verification of UDP application demonstration sites

### Value Chain Activities

#### Rice

- Ensuring that the NGO technicians providing the necessary extension oversight and training are deployed
- Recondition the water control structures at the category “A” sites
- Land preparation and nursing of seeds for transplanting in June

#### Cassava

- Sourcing of improved cassava planting material will take place and complimentary demonstration sites identified and preparations begun

#### Peri-Urban Vegetables

- Finalizing partnership with LNGO for rainy season activities
- Land preparation for rainy season activities for the demonstration of crop rotation
- Kick starting vegetables activities at the MoA, Kakata Resource Center
- Continuation of harvest

#### Goats

- Seven additional shelters and fenced sites to be constructed in the coming weeks

## Component Two: Stimulate Private Enterprise

- The pilot voucher program will be piloted with four groups in Nimba and two groups in Bong County in the next few weeks

- Farming as a Business Training of Trainers will be conducted by USAID's LAUNCH project from May 20 to May 30 in Bong and Nimba utilizing co-created curriculum. USAID-FED ED Assistants will attend this training
- Final Report from the IQC Organizational Strengthening Training is expected by May 21
- Marcia Odell, Gender Advisor from PLAN (PO) will be in Liberia May 15 through June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2013 to develop gender sensitive curriculum, consult and work along with the Women Business Officers and USAID Liberia FED staff on gender mainstreaming and conduct a TOT

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

- From May 16-31, there will be an MoU with the Community Colleges (Nimba and Grand Bassa Counties) for the installation of internet and computer services, and to provide adequate services for both the college libraries and agriculture departments
- Rice and Fish farming training and pond layout starts before the end of May
- The end of phase one fiscal year 2013 Internship Program will take place tentatively May 28

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

- Initiate analysis of rice farmer survey
- Initiate cassava harvest survey
- Complete review of COSEO food processing activity
- Complete Year two group member lists and mapping of sites
- Initiate survey of potential participants in the voucher program
- Finalize the survey of Year two goat producers