



USAID | **LIBERIA**
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FOOD AND ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT (FED) PROGRAM FOR LIBERIA

MONTHLY REPORT: JANUARY 2015



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Photo Caption: FY14 rice crop stocks from USAID FED farmers at the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) technology center in Lofa County.

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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
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
CILSS	Permanent Interstates Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel
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
ECREP	Evangelical Children Rehabilitation Program
EMMP	Environmental Mitigation and Monitoring Plan
EO	Extension Officer
FtF	Feed the Future
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FUN	Farmer Union Network
GAP	Good Agriculture Practices
GBCC	Grand Bassa 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
ISFM	Integrated Soil Fertility Management
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
LIPAS	Liberia Integrated Professional Agriculture Service
LMEP	Liberia Monitoring and Evaluation Program
LNGO	Local Non-Governmental Organization
MFI	Micro Finance Institution
MIS	Market Information Systems
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
MoCI	Ministry of Commerce and Industry
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoP	Muriate of Potash
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
TAMIS	Technical Administrative Management Information System
TSP	Triple Super-Phosphate
TVET	Technical, Vocational Education and Training
UDP	Urea Deep Placement
UL	University of Liberia
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

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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 society 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 society and the private sector in providing communities access to agricultural inputs, extension services, nutrition messages, processing services, market information, transportation, credit, agro-business education, training, and business development 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

In order to boost rice production, USAID FED has partnered with rice producers in Liberia to help them transform from subsistence farmers to commercial rice producers. During the month of January, USAID FED partner farmers sold 1,132 MT at a value of USD \$460,280. Cumulatively, 1,368.92MT of FY14 rice crop has been sold at a value of USD \$554,324.21 year-to-date. Both numbers represent a substantial increase compared to previous year's harvest in the same months.

During January, a total of 565.16MT of FY13 cassava tubers were sold for USD \$40,720.64. Of these, 416.80MT were from the demonstration sites and 148.36MT from individual farmer fields. In total, 3,600.34MT of FY13 crop have been sold for USD \$388,996.88.

During the month of January, USAID FED facilitated meetings between cassava processors from Monrovia and producer groups in Lofa County over a five day period. These meetings introduced large buyers from Monrovia and informed the farmers on their requirements. Alternatively, buyers are made aware of where to source cassava tubers that best fit their requirements. Agreements on weight, price per ton, volume to be supplied weekly and payment terms were negotiated. In February, sales agreements will be signed between the clusters and processors along these terms.

Through January 2015, USAID FED has supported the creation of 123 Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLA) for 3,400 farmers, most of which were women. Furthermore, by January 2015, the VSLA groups have generated access to capital for investment in agricultural activities in the amount of USD \$150,196. The savings and financing mechanism provides farmers with access to capital as well as experience in financial organization. Program farmers have made loans of over USD \$30,460 in January 2015.

Through January 2015, LEAD has disbursed loans to more than 459 farmers (174 male and 285 female). The total LEAD loans through this partnership were for USD \$39,900 as part of this partnership with USAID FED. USAID FED is further working with LEAD to identify additional farmers in FY 2015 who will be able to receive loans from LEAD and further business skills training from FED.

Graduation ceremonies were conducted in five of USAID FED operating counties: Bong, Nimba, Lofa, Margibi and Grand Bassa for 103 women between the ages of 18 to 58, who successfully completed the leadership and Business Incubation Training for Women Entrepreneurs. USAID FED designed the Leadership and Business Incubation program for Women Entrepreneurs to address two critical constraints facing women: lower human capital (leadership and business skills) and limited access to networks and information. The project uses a combined capacity development approach through basic leadership and business skills training followed by mentorship and virtual business incubation.

During January, USAID FED completed the compost preparation training workshop at the Booker Washington Institute (BWI), where over 20 participants from the four Centers of Excellence (CoE's) were in attendance. In January, USAID FED finalized the preparations for an exposure visit to Vocational Education Institutions in Ghana for the four CoE's. The purpose of the visit is for CoE staff to get insights from more advanced vocational agricultural institutions on how to enhance program delivery and ensure sustainable management of their institutions.

Component One: Increase Agricultural Productivity and Profitability

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

Rice sales from FY14:

During January, a total of 1,132 MT of rice crop was sold at a value of USD \$460,280. Cumulatively, 1,368.92 MT of FY14 rice crop has been sold at a value of USD \$554,324.21 (Table 1).

Table 1: FY14 Rice crop sales

County	Sales Volume Q1 (MT)	Sales value Q1 (\$USD)	Sales Volume Jan 2015 (MT)	Sales value Jan 2015 (\$USD)	Sales Volume YTD (MT)	Sales value YTD (\$USD)
Lofa	122.09	\$47,983.31	1,065.00	\$426,000.00	1,187.09	\$473,983.31
Nimba	0.00	\$0.00	0.00	\$0.00	0.00	\$0.00
Bong	96.30	\$38,979.40	61.83	\$32,081.50	158.13	\$71,060.90
Grand Bassa	17.70	\$7,080.00	6.00	\$2,200.00	23.70	\$9,280.00
TOTAL	236.09	\$94,042.71	1,132.83	\$460,281.50	1,368.92	\$554,324.21

A total of 2,239.32 ha of upland commercial sites were harvested by the end of January. In total, 4,590.54 MT of rice has been realized from these harvested upland sites (Table 2).

Table 2: FY15 Upland commercial sites harvests

County	Hectare established in FY14	Hectare harvested as of Q1	Volume (MT) harvested as of Q1	Hectare harvested in Jan 2015	Volume (MT) harvested in Jan 2015	Hectare harvested YTD	Volume (MT) harvested YTD
Lofa	226.00	226.00	483.85	0.00	0.00	226.00	483.85
Nimba	95.32	95.32	266.90	0.00	0.00	95.32	266.90
Bong	1,653.50	1,650.00	3,300.00	3.50	9.80	1,653.50	3,309.80
Grand Bassa	490.00	264.50	530.00	0.00	0.00	264.50	530.00
TOTAL	2,464.82	2,235.82	4,580.74	3.50	9.80	2,239.32	4,590.54

A total of 1,080.01 ha of lowland commercial sites were harvested in January. In total, 4,092.68 MT of rice has been realized from these sites (Table 3).

Table 3: Lowland commercial sites harvests

County	Hectare established in FY14	Hectare harvested as of Q1	Volume (MT) harvested as of Q1	Hectare harvested in Jan	Volume (MT) harvested in Jan	Hectare harvested YTD	Volume (MT) harvested YTD
Lofa	139.00	124.00	467.95	16.00	64.50	139.00	532.45
Nimba	308.01	177.72	505.23	130.29	522.50	308.01	1027.73
Bong	622.50	622.50	2490.00	0.00	0.00	622.50	2490.00
Grand Bassa	22.00	10.50	42.50	0.00	0.00	10.50	42.50
TOTAL	1,091.51	934.72	3,505.68	146.29	587.00	1,080.01	4,092.68

Activity I.A.1 Improving productivity and profitability of upland rice

Task I.A.1.1 Identify and recruit 11,025 new upland farmers to produce upland rice

By the end of January, USAID FED had identified 11,296 upland rice farmers, 40 percent of which were women (6,787 male and 4,509 female), in the four counties listed below. A total of 297 MoU's were signed with 297 farmers groups during the reporting period. These farmers aim to cultivate 2,964.5 hectares for upland rice (Table 4).

Table 4: Upland rice farmer recruitment

County	FY15 Upland Farmer Target	FY15 Upland Target Ha	# of Farmers Identified Q1, FY15	# of Farmers verified by Jan	# of Male Farmers		# of Female Farmers	
					No	60 %	No	40 %
Lofa	1,750	420.0	2,729	1,912	934		978	
Nimba	4,550	182.0	4,553	4,550	2,684		1,866	
Bong	4,060	2,030.0	4,064	4,064	2,599		1,465	
Grand Bassa	665	332.5	770	770	570		200	
TOTAL	11,025	2,964.5	12,179	11,296	6,787		4,509	

Task I.A.1.2 Recruit Local NGOs to provide implementation support to upland rice farmers

By the end of January 2015, a total of five local NGO's were shortlisted for negotiations against RFP's issued during the month of December. The contracting process is expected to be concluded in February after cost negotiations have been completed.

Task I.A.1.8 Procure and distribute 4,752 liters of herbicides to 297 ha of new demo-sites

In January, USAID FED issued a public solicitation to identify vendors capable of supplying herbicides and other approved chemicals. It is anticipated that the selection of vendors will be concluded during the month of February.

Task I.A.1.9 Link up-land rice farmers to financial services providers and agro-inputs suppliers

Through Component 2 assistance, a list of 11 upland rice farming groups consisting of 675 members was submitted to LEAD towards possible micro-finance loan assistance. LEAD will be conducting due diligence on these groups in February towards consideration for lending as per their internal criteria.

Activity I.A.2 Expanding lowland rice productivity

Task I.A.2.1 Identify and recruit 7,175 new lowland farmers to produce lowland rice:

By the end of January, USAID FED had identified 7,571 lowland rice farmers (4,073 male and 3,498 female) in the four project counties (Table 5). These farmers plan to grow lowland rice in 1,908.2 hectares of land. A total of 102 MoU's were signed with 102 farmers groups during the reporting period.

Table 5: FY15 Lowland rice farmer recruitment

County	FY15 Lowland Farmer Target	FY15 lowland Target Ha	# of Farmers Identified Q1, FY15	# of Farmers verified by Jan	# of Male Farmers	# of Female Farmers
Lofa	1,400	350.0	2,612	1,884	932	952
Nimba	4,060	812.0	4,324	4,282	2,349	1,933
Bong	1,400	700.0	3,216	1,271	708	563
Grand Bassa	315	46.2	415	134	84	50
TOTAL	7,175	1,908.2	10,567	7,571	4,073	3,498

Task 1.A.2.2 Recruit Local NGOs to provide implementation support to lowland rice farmers

By the end of January 2015, a total of five local NGO's were shortlisted for negotiations against Requests for Proposals issued during the month of December. The contracting process is expected to be concluded during February after negotiations on costs are completed.

Task 1.A.2.3 Establish 191 ha of new demo-sites

By the end of January, a total of 125 ha of lowland had been cleared and mapped towards establishment of demonstration sites.

Task 1.A.2.6 Procure and distribute 7.64 MT of Nerica L-19 seeds to 191 ha of new demo-sites

During January, USAID FED issued a public solicitation to identify vendors capable of supplying NERICA L-19 seed varieties. It is anticipated that the selection of vendors will be concluded during the month of February.

Task 1.A.2.7 Procure and distribute 59.4 MT of TSP, MOP, Urea Briquette and Urea Fertilizer to 191 demo-sites

In January, USAID FED issued a public solicitation to identify vendors capable of supplying TSP, MOP, Urea Briquettes and Urea Fertilizer. It is anticipated that the selection of vendors will be concluded during the month of February.

Task 1.A.2.8 Procure and distribute 3065 liters of herbicides to 191 demo-sites

During the month of January, USAID FED issued a public solicitation to identify vendors capable of supplying herbicides. It is anticipated that the selection of vendors will be concluded in February.

Task 1.A.2.9 Procure and distribute 382 liters of pesticides to 191 demo-sites plots for trials

In January, USAID FED issued a public solicitation to identify vendors capable of supplying pesticides. It is anticipated that the selection of vendors will be concluded during the month of February.

Task 1.A.2.10 Link low-land rice farmers to financial service providers and agro-inputs suppliers so that 7,175 upland farmers have access to inputs and financial services

Through Component 2 assistance, a list of six lowland rice farming groups comprised of 304 members was submitted to LEAD towards possible microfinance loan assistance. LEAD will be conducting due diligence on these groups during the month of February towards consideration for lending as per their internal criteria.

Activity 1.A.4 Promoting use of fertilizers in up-land and low-land rice production

Task 1.A.4.2 Distribute Leaf Color charts to determine Nitrogen requirements to 424 up-land and 696 low-land demo-sites

During the month of January, USAID FED commenced the process of procuring leaf color charts from outside Liberia. These charts are not locally available in Liberia. It is anticipated that the selection of vendors will be concluded during the month of February. Nitrogen deficiencies determined through the use of this chart will be ameliorated in the next cropping season.

Task 1.A.4.4 Monitor and document yield variance of 150 ha under T1, T2 and T3 UDP trials sites as well as 89 ha under best practices establish in FY14

In FY14, USAID FED established 150 ha of trial sites where different technologies were applied to measure comparative yield variances. In addition, 89 ha were established to showcase UDP as an improved technology. Of the 150 ha of trial sites, 50ha were established as T1 sites (where Urea Deep Placement technology was applied), 50 ha as T2 (where Urea Broad Cast technology was applied) and 50 ha as T3 sites (where zero fertilization technology. The FED Rice and M&E teams carried out a rapid yield sampling at some of these sites.



Figure 1: Harvesting taking place in Bong Mines, Bong County.

Table 6: FY14 rice harvest (T1 sites) Urea Deep Placement

County	No. of sites established FY14	Ha established in FY14	Ha harvested in Q1	Vol harvested in Q1 (MT)	Ha harvested in Jan	Vol harvested in Q1 (MT)	Ha harvested YTD	Vol harvested YTD (MT)	Avg Yield MT/Ha
Lofa	7	7	7	36.8	0	0	7	36.8	5.26
Nimba	27	27	27	147.42	0	0	27	147.42	5.46
Bong	12	12	12	58.97	1	5.3	12	64.27	5.36
Grand Bassa	4	4	2	8.9	2	9.4	4	18.3	4.58
TOTAL	50	50	47	252.09	3	14.7	50	266.79	5.34

Table 7: FY14 rice harvest (T2 sites) Urea Broadcast

County	No. of sites established FY14	Ha established in FY14	Ha harvested in Q1	Vol harvested in Q1 (MT)	Ha harvested in Jan	Vol harvested Jan (MT)	Ha harvested YTD	Vol harvested YTD (MT)	Avg Yield MT/Ha
Lofa	7	7	7	28.7	0	0	7	28.7	4.10
Nimba	27	27	27	116.68	0	0	27	116.68	4.32
Bong	12	12	11	47.57	1	4.25	12	51.82	4.32

Grand Bassa	4	4	2	6.1	2	6.5	4	12.5	3.13
TOTAL	50	50	47	199.05	3	10.75	50	209.8	4.196

Table 8: FY14 rice harvest (T3 sites) improved seeds and management practices but zero fertilization

County	No. of sites established FY14	Ha established in FY14	Ha harvested in Q1	Vol harvested in Q1 (MT)	Ha harvested in Jan	Vol harvested in Q1 (MT)	Ha harvested YTD	Vol harvested YTD (MT)	Avg Yield MT/Ha
Lofa	7	7	7	25.2	0	0	7	25.2	3.60
Nimba	27	27	27	104.18	0	0	27	104.18	3.85
Bong	12	12	11	41.1	1	3.8	12	44.9	3.74
Grand Bassa	4	4	2	7.35	2	7	4	14.35	3.59
TOTAL	50	50	47	177.83	3	10.8	50	188.63	3.77

Table 9: FY14 rice harvest (UDP only)

County	No. of sites established FY14	Ha established in FY14	Ha harvested in Q1	Vol harvested in Q1 (MT)	Ha harvested in Jan	Vol harvested Jan (MT)	Ha harvested YTD	Vol harvested YTD (MT)	Avg Yield MT/Ha
Lofa	15	15	15	80.4	0	0	15	80.4	5.36
Nimba	27	27	20	108	5	26.75	25	134.75	5.39
Bong	37	37	31	174.94	4	22	35	196.94	5.63
Grand Bassa	10	10	10	50.05	0	0	10	50.05	5.01
TOTAL	89	89	76	413.39	9	48.75	85	462.14	5.44

Activity I.A.5 Promoting two rice crops per year

Task I.A.6.2 Construct 30 new irrigation spillways and head dykes

Thirty water management infrastructure sites have been selected. 11 MoU's have been signed (Lofa County), while 19 MoU's are expected to be signed in February (Table 10). The end of this reporting period marks the closing of bids for firms who are interested in providing water management structure constructions across the four project counties.

Table 10: Water management sites targeted

County	No. of Sites	Hectare targeted	No. of Beneficiaries	No. of Males	No. of Females	No. of MoU prepared	No. of MoU signed	No. of MoU outstanding
Lofa	11	55.7	653	342	311	11	11	0
Nimba	6	35.0	296	195	101	6	0	6
Bong	10	55.0	574	322	252	10	0	10
Grand Bassa	3	14.5	60	32	28	3	0	3
TOTAL	30	160.2	1583	891	692	30	11	19

Activity I.A.7 Enhancing post-harvest management practices

Task I.A.7.2 Construct and equip identified community rice business hubs

By the end of this reporting period, USAID FED finalized the verification process of the pre-identified sites for the construction of the ten new rice business hubs across the four project counties. MoU's in these counties will be signed during the month of February.

Activity I.A.8 Stimulating private sector investment in commercial rice production

Task I.A.8.2 Provide technical assistance to 2 large scale Liberian rice growers to develop business plans

In January, USAID FED commenced mapping and verification of the area of one pre-selected large land owner in Margibi County. The mapping exercise was intended to determine the actual size of lowland available in the property. Total area is key to the determination of the level of investment required, which will inform the decision by both FED and the land owner to commit to a cost share partnership. Part of the partnership with these large scale land owners will include linkages and a sales arrangement to supply paddy to Fabrar Inc. Liberia. To date, USAID FED has identified five large scale land owners in Bong (2), Margibi (1), Nimba (1) and Lower Lofa (1).

Task I.A.8.5 Facilitate linkages between Fabrar, Government Agencies and Institutional buyers

During the month of January, Fabrar Inc. Liberia continued to procure paddy rice from USAID FED farmers in Lofa County. Fabrar has committed to providing a report on their January procurement in February. Meetings were also organized between Bong and Nimba producer groups and Fabrar to negotiate supplying paddy rice to Fabrar for processing. Fabrar already has an existing contract with World Food Programme to supply 250MT of milled rice valued at USD \$185,000.

Task I.A.8.7 Recruitment of rice technical specialist

During January, USAID FED completed the recruitment and deployment of the Senior Rice Technical Specialist, Dr. Pandian Balamurugan. He is expected to provide technical assistance to the rice value chain team and to deliver technical training to FED extension staff and LNGOs on irrigated rice, rice fallow rice, rice fallow pulse, ratooning on demo-sites and farmer fields.

Task IB: Increased Productivity and Profitability of the Cassava Value Chain

Activity I.B.1 Facilitating access to high yielding cassava varieties

FY13 Cassava crop harvests and sales

During the month of January, a total of 658.6 MT of FY13 cassava crop was harvested from 111.66 ha of FY13 USAID FED supported demonstration sites (Table 11).

Table 11: FY13 Cassava crop harvests - Demonstration sites

County	Total Area planted FY13 crop (Ha)	Expected harvest FY13 Crop (MT)	Area Harvested Q1 FY15 (Ha)	Volume Harvested Q1 FY15 (MT)	Area Harvested Jan (Ha)	Volume Harvested Jan (MT)	Total FY13 Area Harvested YTD (Ha)	Total FY13 Crop Harvested YTD (MT)
Bong	15.7	345.4	8.27	185.6	5.8	130	14.07	315.6
Nimba	24.16	531.52	24.16	434.88	0	0	24.16	434.88
Lofa	17.9	393.8	7.0	154	10.9	239.8	17.9	393.8

Grand Bassa	67.2	1,478.4	42.63	642.3	12.9	288.8	55.53	931.1
TOTAL	124.96	2,749.12	82.06	1,416.78	18.7	658.6	111.66	2,075.38

In addition, a total of 159.39 MT of FY13 cassava crop was harvested from 9.64 ha of farmer fields during the same reporting period (Table 12).

Table 12: FY13 Cassava crop harvests - Farmer fields

County	Area Planted FY13 (Ha)	Expected Harvest FY13 Crop (MT)	Area Harvested Q1 FY15	Volume Harvested Q1 FY15	Area Harvested Jan (Ha)	Volume Harvested Jan (MT)	Total FY13 Area Harvested YTD (Ha)	Total FY13 crop Harvested YTD (MT)
Bong	17	374	0.00	0.00	0.62	17.6	0.62	17.6
Nimba	259.5	5,709	105.66	1,944.6	8.1	139.29	113.76	2,105.49
Lofa	5.0	110	1.04	23.37	0.00	0.00	1.04	23.37
Grand Bassa	630	11,340	39	702	0.92	2.5	0.92	2.5
TOTAL	911.5	17,533	145.7	2,669.97	9.64	159.39	116.34	2,148.96

During the month of January, a total of 565.16 MT of FY13 cassava tubers were sold for USD \$40,720.64 (Table 13). Of these, 416.80 MT were from the demonstration sites and 148.36 MT from individual farmer fields. In total, 3,600.34 MT of FY13 crop have been sold for USD \$388,996.88.

Table 13: FY13 Cassava Crop sales

County	Sales volume Target for FY13 crop (MT)	Sales target value for FY13 crop (US\$)	Volume sold Q1 FY15 (MT)	Value of Sales Q1 (US\$)	Volume Sold Jan(MT)	Value of Sales Jan (US\$)	Volume Sold YTD (MT)	Value of sales YTD (US\$)
Bong	611.5	27,517	60.8	4,433.3	143.9	9,811	204.7	14,244.30
Nimba	5,304.44	713,341.36	1,927.4	247,653.27	129.96	16,951.64	2,540.37	323,088.11
Lofa	428.23	19,270.35	37.37	2,502.47	0.00	0.00	37.37	2,502.47
Grand Bassa	1209.6	60,300	526.6	35,204	291.3	13,958	817.9	49,162.00
TOTAL	7,553.77	820,428.71	2,552.17	289,793.04	565.16	40,720.64	3,600.34	388,996.88

FY14 cassava crop harvests and sales:

During the month of January, a total of 80.6 MT of FY14 cassava crop was harvested from 4 ha of the FY14 USAID FED supported demonstration sites in Grand Bassa (Table 14). No harvests of FY14 crops have been realized from farmer fields (Table 15).

Table 14: FY14 Cassava crop harvests - Demonstration sites

County	Total Area planted FY14 crop (Ha)	Expected harvest FY14 Crop (MT)	Area Harvested Q1 FY15 (Ha)	Volume Harvested Q1 FY15 (MT)	Area Harvested Jan (Ha)	Volume Harvested Jan (MT)	Total FY14 Area Harvested YTD (Ha)	Total FY14 Crop Harvested YTD (MT)
Bong	30	540	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Nimba	120.36	2,647.92	0	0	0	0	0	0

Lofa	230	5,060	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Grand Bassa	90	1,620	0.00	0.00	4.00	80.60	4.00	80.60
TOTAL	470.36	9,867.92	0.00	0.00	4.00	80.60	4.00	80.60

Table 15: FY14 Cassava crop harvests - Farmer fields

County	Area Planted FY14 crop (Ha)	Expected Harvest FY14 Crop (MT)	Area Harvested Q1 FY15	Volume Harvested Q1 FY15	Area Harvested Jan (Ha)	Volume Harvested Jan (MT)	Total FY14 Area Harvested YTD (Ha)	Total FY14 crop Harvested YTD (MT)
Bong	450.6	8,110.80	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Nimba	839.64	18,472.1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lofa	95	2,090	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Grand Bassa	630	11,340	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
TOTAL	2,015.24	40,012.9	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

During January, a total of 80.60 MT of FY14 cassava tubers were sold for USD \$2,120.00 (Table 16).

Table 16: Cassava crop sales

County	Sales volume Target for FY14 crop (MT)	Sales target value for FY14 crop (US\$)	Volume sold Q1 FY15 (MT)	Value of Sales Q1 (US\$)	Volume Sold Jan(MT)	Value of Sales Jan (US\$)	Volume Sold YTD (MT)	Value of sales YTD (US\$)
Bong	8,110.80	38,166.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Nimba	17,952.02	2,414,187.25	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lofa	276.25	12,431.25	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Grand Bassa	16,200	64,000	0.00	0.00	80.60	2,120.00	80.60	2,120.00
TOTAL	42,539.07	2,528,784.5	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Activity I.B.I Facilitating access to high yielding cassava varieties:

Task I.B.I.1 Screening of cassava cuttings on 2 sites in Lofa through collaboration with CARI:

During January, USAID FED conducted daily management and monitoring of the two established screening sites in Lofa containing imported varieties. The final inspections of the varieties will be completed in February by CARL.

Task 1.B.3.2 Identify and recruit 12,960 new farmers in 648 Kuus towards FY15 cassava production

By the end of Q1, FED had identified a total 12,960 new beneficiaries in 648 kuus across the four counties (Table 17). A total of 192 MoU's were signed during January. The rest of the MoU's will be signed in February.



Figure 2: USAID FED cassava Enterprise Development Officer at a screening site in Voinjama, Lofa County

Table 17: FY15 beneficiary signed up for production

County	FY15 No. Farmers targeted	FY15 No. Ha targeted	FY15 No. Kuu targeted	Total No. FY15 Farmers identified YTD	Male		Female		No. of Kuus identified YTD
					No	%	No	%	
Bong	2,500	688	125	2,500	1,286	51	1,214	49	125
Nimba	5,360	1,474	268	5,360	2,791	52	2,569	48	268
Lofa	1,500	413	75	1,500	900	60	600	40	75
Grand Bassa	3,600	990	180	3,600	2,356	65	1,244	35	180
TOTAL	12,960	3,564	648	12,960	7,333	57	5,627	43	648

Task 1.B.3.3 Train 324 Kuu leaders on Good Agriculture Practices (GAP) and Integrated Soil Fertility Management (ISFM) and disseminate extension material

Training activities on GAP and ISFM for 324 Kuu leaders will be done in February.

Activity 1.B.4 Improving access to market information and market:

Task 1.B.4.2 Provide cassava clusters with market information on varieties required, volumes and prices

During January, USAID FED facilitated meetings between Monrovia based processors and cassava production groups in Lofa County. The relevant information on volumes, varieties required and prices were disseminated to farmers. The results of these meetings are detailed under Task 1.B.4.3.

One of the Monrovia based processors being



Figure 3: Liberia Business Incubator (LBI) constructing its cassava processing facility in Montserrado County.

supported in FY15, Liberia Business Incubator (LBI), has started construction of a new processing facility in Montserrado County. This processing facility is expected to have a processing capacity of 5 MT of raw tubers per day. In total, LBI will invest USD \$35,760.00 towards the establishment of the new processing facility. USAID FED will fund some of the equipment to be installed in the facility.

Task 1.B.4.3 Organize meetings between identified processors and cassava clusters to develop trade linkages

During January, USAID FED facilitated meetings between small processors from Monrovia and producer groups in Lofa County over a five day period. The objectives of these meetings were to link the main value chain actors to share market information and negotiate commodity supply and prices. Agreements on weight, price per ton, volume to be supplied weekly and payment terms were negotiated. During February, sales agreements will be signed between the clusters and processors along these terms (Table 18).

Table 18: Agreements for cassava sales between processors and producers in Lofa

Agreement	Voijama	Quandu Boindu	Kolahun	Foyah	Zorzor	Salayea
One bag of 80kg is considered	65 kg	65 kg	65 kg	65 kg	70 kg	70 kg
Price per ton	5,000 LD	5,000 LD	4,000 LD	3,000 LD	5,000 LD	5,000 LD
Volume Weekly	5 MT	5 MT	5 MT	5 MT	5 MT	5 MT
Transaction Type	Cash and Carry	Cash and Carry	Cash and Carry	Cash and Carry	Cash and Carry	Cash and Carry
Aggregators	All three (3) microprocessors within the county and AWEF Lofa representative					

Task 1C: Increased Productivity and Profitability of the Horticulture Value Chain

Task 1.C: Improving Productivity and Profitability of the Horticultural Value Chain Vegetable harvest and sales from FY14 clusters

In January, a total of 27 MT of vegetables from 21 FY14 clusters were sold for USD \$21,126 (Table 19). A total of 98 MT of assorted vegetables were sold for USD \$53,943.23 from the FY14 clusters year to date.

Table 19: FY14 vegetable cluster sales

County/Cluster	Total Sales Volume Q1 (kg)	Total Sales Value Q1 (US\$)	Total Sales Volume Jan (kg)	Total Sales Value Jan (US\$)	Total Sales Volume YTD (kg)	Total Sales Value YTD (US\$)
Montserrado						
Bokays Town	4,099.00	\$1,924.75	1,890.00	\$1,760.00	5,989.00	\$3,684.75
CGCWEF	3,437.30	\$1,494.28	2,707.00	\$3,904.00	6,144.30	\$5,398.28
Central White Plane	1,877.00	\$774.57	95.00	\$91.00	1,972.00	\$865.57
Low Cost Village	1,134.00	\$718.93	341.00	\$366.00	1,475.00	\$1,084.93
Kollieman Town	869.00	\$535.29	454.00	\$466.00	1,323.00	\$1,001.29
Mawah Farmers	10,210.00	\$5,558.06	2,170.00	\$5,669.00	12,380.00	\$11,227.06

Mulleh Farm	2,095.00	\$722.35	0.00	\$0.00	2,095.00	\$722.35
Sub Total	23,721.30	\$11,728.23	7,657.00	\$12,256.00	31,378.3	\$23,984.23
Nimba						
Yekepa	0.00	\$0.00	0.00	\$0.00	0.00	\$0.00
Sanniquelleh	2,700.00	\$2,094.20	0.00	\$0.00	2,700.00	\$2,094.20
Ganta	6,300.00	\$4,079.00	0.00	\$0.00	6,300.00	\$4,079.00
Gbedin	0.00	\$0.00	0.00	\$0.00	0.00	\$0.00
Sub Total	9,000.00	\$6,173.20	0.00	\$0.00	9,000.00	\$6,173.20
Margibi						
Kpoyea's Town	3,753.00	\$1,588.81	1,988.00	\$394.00	5,741.00	\$1,982.81
Joeblow Town	2,355.00	\$1,276.46	4,400.00	\$733.00	6,755.00	\$2,009.46
KollieKan Ta	7,175.00	\$2,510.92	6,411.00	\$1,804.00	13,586.00	\$4,314.92
Francis Lewis	4,630.50	\$2,640.93	3,096.50	\$2,493.00	7,727.00	\$5,133.93
Weala	3,958.00	\$1,190.16	1,859.00	\$1,379.00	5,817.00	\$2,569.16
Nyanka Ta	5,785.00	\$2,194.63	670.00	\$620.00	6,455.00	\$2,814.63
Gbofellah	6,821.00	\$2,185.79	250.00	\$253.00	7,071.00	\$2,438.79
Horton Farm	3,544.00	\$1,328.10	735.00	\$1,194.00	4,279.00	\$2,522.10
Sub Total	38,021.50	\$14,915.80	19,409.50	\$8,870.00	57,431.00	\$23,785.80
Grand Bassa						
Tubmanville	0.00	\$0.00	0.00	\$0.00	0.00	\$0.00
New Buchanan	0.00	\$0.00	0.00	\$0.00	0.00	\$0.00
Sub Total	0.00	\$0.00	0.00	\$0.00	0.00	\$0.00
TOTAL	70,742.80	\$32,817.23	27,066.50	\$21,126.00	97,809.30	\$53,943.23

Vegetable sales from FY15 clusters

During the month of January, a total of 9.5 MT of vegetables from 8 FY15 clusters in Montserrado and Margibi were sold for USD \$10,252.00 from the 21 clusters supported in FY14 (Table 20).

Table 20: FY15 vegetable cluster sales

County/Cluster	Total Sales Volume Jan (kg)	Total Sales Value Jan (US\$)
Montserrado		
Mensah Farm	3,585.00	\$4,216.00
Kpolo Town	1,564.00	\$2,598.00
Kpangbeh Town	390.00	\$470.00

Fendell Veg. Planters Association	346.00	\$456.00
Careysburg Veg. Group	950.00	\$1,331.00
Subtotal	6,835.00	\$9,071.00
Margibi		
Kerjutornor cluster	145.00	\$128.00
Dekegar Veg. Group	112.00	\$112.00
Wenneh Town Cluster	2,432.00	\$941.00
Subtotal	2,689.00	\$1,181.00
TOTAL	9,524.00	\$10,252.00



Figure 4: Chili pepper ready for sale at Mawah cluster, Montserrado County.

The Monrovia Vegetable Traders Association sold a total of 3.46MT of sorted vegetables at a value of USD \$6,976 during the month of January. In addition to Quarter I sales, they have sold a cumulative total of 11.4MT of vegetables at a value of USD \$21,709.00.

Establishment of rain shelters on FY14 sites

During the month of January, 7 rain shelters were installed in Margibi and Nimba Counties (Nyanka ta, Weala, Joe blows town, Gbedin, Ganta, Sanniquelleh and Yekepa clusters). This brings the total number of established shelters to 20. All pending shelters will be completed in February.

Activity I.C.1 Improving access to affordable seeds of improved vegetable varieties

Task I.C.1.3 Identify financing needs of continuing and new farmers



Figure 5: Completed rain shelter in Mawah Cluster, Montserrado County

During the month of December, USAID FED submitted a list of 14 clusters to LEAD for due diligence towards potential loan disbursements. The field and application due diligence, selection processes and loan disbursements to selected clusters are anticipated to be completed during the month of February.

Table 21: Clusters recommended for LEAD loans

County	No. of Clusters	No. of Farmers	Loan requirements (\$USD)
Montserrado	6	134	\$27,794
Margibi	8	149	\$36,794
TOTAL	14	283	\$64,588

Activity I.C.2 Promoting Integrated Pest Management (IPM) practices

Task I.C.2.1 Identify 3,750 farmers and establish 18 demonstration plots in 6 counties

By the end of January, USAID FED has identified a total of 3,746 new beneficiaries (2,203 male, and 1,543 female) in 194 clusters across the 6 FED counties (Table 22 and 23) for FY15 production. A total of 42 MoU's were signed with the clusters.

Table 22: FY15 Cluster identification

County	FY15 Target Clusters	No. of clusters selected Q1	No. of clusters selected in January	Total No. of Clusters YTD
Montserrado	48	48	2	50
Margibi	41	40	2	42
Nimba	28	35	0	35
Lofa	25	25	0	25
Grand Bassa	19	21	0	21
Bong	27	21	0	21
TOTAL	188	190	4	194

Table 23: Horticulture beneficiaries signed up for FY15 production

County	FY15 Farmer Target	FY15 Target Ha	No. of Farmers signed up Q1	No. of Farmers signed up January	No. of Farmers signed up YTD	No. of Male farmers		No. of Female farmers	
						No	%	No	%
Montserrado	967	31	960	40	1000	595	60	405	40
Margibi	777	25	729	40	769	441	57	328	43
Nimba	569	19	686	0	686	432	63	254	37
Lofa	509	17	485	0	485	221	46	264	54
Grand Bassa	379	20	391	0	391	285	73	106	27
Bong	549	13	415	0	415	229	55	186	45
TOTAL	3,750	125	3,666	80	3,746	2,203	59	1,543	41

Task 1.C.2.2 Provide demos with improved seeds and pesticides to demonstrate IPM

Six demonstration sites totaling 3 ha were identified in Montserrado and Margibi Counties to showcase best practices in horticulture production during the month of January. These demonstration sites are already being prepared for production of vegetables. It is anticipated that all 188 demonstration plots will have been established before the end of March 2015.

Task 1.C.2.3 Train 188 lead farmers on GAP, IPM, Production planning and appropriate harvesting – Trainer of Trainers (ToT)

All 188 lead farmers from 188 proposed clusters were identified during the month of January. The lead farmers will be trained by the Horticulture Specialist STTA during the month of February.



Figure 6: Lettuce seedlings at Muleh cluster, Montserrado County.

Task 1.C.2.6 Recruitment of Horticulture Specialist (STTA):

During the month of January, the Horticulture Specialist visited various FY14 production sites in Montserrado and Margibi counties to provide technical assistance to farmers in the dry season production. A total of four clusters were visited to assess current production, monitor pest prevalence and provide support as required. These farmers received technical advice based on their current crops.

Activity 1.C.3 Reducing harvesting and post-harvest losses

Task 1.C.3.2 Identify 5 new trader associations in Bong, Nimba, Grand Bassa and Margibi Counties

Towards the selection of five trader associations, Expressions of Interest (Eols) were issued at the county level in order to get applications from trader associations, which can partner with FED on marketing activities. It is anticipated that the selection of trader associations and signing of MoU's will be completed by the end of February.

Task 1.C.3.7 Provide 2 private sector firms with cold storage facilities on cost share arrangement

Possible options for the procurement of refrigerator containers were considered, and requisitions developed and approved. The selection of the vendor to supply the cold storage equipment will be completed in February.

Activity 1.C.4: Farmers produced vegetables for the markets during the wet and dry seasons

Task 1.C.4.1 Procure, distribute and install 360 drip irrigation kits to high value vegetable producers

In January, the vendor that will supply drip irrigation kits was selected. It is anticipated that the vendor will supply the drip irrigation kits in early March.

Task 1.C.4.2 Procure and distribute motorized pumps to 188 vegetable farming clusters

In January, the vendor to supply motorized pumps was selected. It is anticipated that the kits will be supplied in early March.

Task 1.C.4.5 Improve wet season production through protected cultivation

During the month of January, 18 new sites were identified for the establishment of rain shelters during FY15. Rain shelter specifications were revised on the recommendation of the Horticulture Specialist. The new specification promotes more air circulation and cooler environment allowing use of the structure even during the dry season.

Task 1D: Increased Productivity and Profitability of the Goat Value Chain

Activity 1.D.1 Promote goat shelters

FY14 Goat production intensification sites - kidding rates

During January, a total of 606 new kids (327 male and 279 female) were born within the FY14 goat production sites (Table 24). The total herd size of the FY14 supported sites are 6,347 goats (3,266 does, 505 bucks and 2,576 kids). By February of FY15, all surviving kids born during the FY14 will reach maturity age.

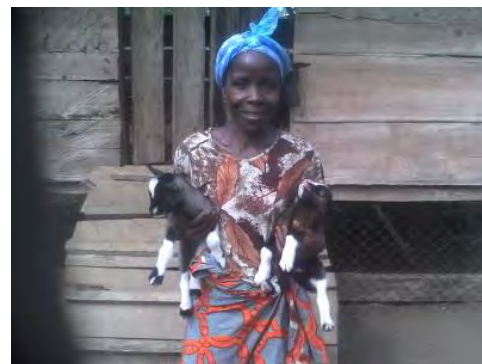


Figure 7: Goat farmer Mary Wrehdyu, with new born goat kids in Gbangee Town, # 4 district, Grand Bassa County.

Table 24: Herd statistics for FY14 sites

County	No. of Farmers supported in FY14	No. of Males	No. of Females	Total No. of Goats in herd	No. of Does	No. Bucks	No. of Kids by end of FY14	No. of Kids born Q1 FYY5	Kids recorded Jan FY15	Total No. of kids FY14 herds
Nimba	693	341	296	1,243	539	48	81	450	125	656
Grand Bassa	275	166	1,862	1,053	413	112	171	46	9	528
Bong	596	493	179	2,714	1,312	329	210	702	161	1073
Lofa	496	260	214	1,337	1,002	16	147	163	311	319
TOTAL	2,060	1,260	800	6,347	3,266	505	609	1,361	606	2,576

FY14 goat production sites - sales:

During the month of January, a total of 497 goats (177 Bucks and 320 Does) were sold for USD \$31,275 from the FY14 goat production sites (Table 25). This brings the total number of goats sold from FY14 sites to 1,470 valued at USD \$91,392.78 during the FY15 period.

Table 25: Goat sales from FY14 goat production sites

County	FY15 Goat sales target	FY15 Goat Sales Target (\$USD)	No. of goats sold Q1 FY15	Value of goats sold Q1 FY15	No. of goats Sold Jan	Value of goats sold Jan (\$USD)	No. of goats sold YTD	Value of goats sold YTD (USD)
Nimba	932	\$65,280.00	142	6,395.78	115	\$5,100.00	257	\$11,495.78
Grand Bassa	330	\$23,040.00	133	8,475.00	34	\$2,210.00	167	\$10,685.00
Bong	795	\$55,680.00	388	32,070.00	172	\$13,980.00	560	\$46,050.00
Lofa	686	\$48,000.00	310	13,177.00	176	\$9,985.00	486	\$23,162.00
TOTAL	2,743	\$192,000.00	973	60,117.78	497	\$31,275.00	1,470	\$91,392.78

FY14 goat production sites veterinary care

During the month of January, a total of 171 animals received veterinary treatment from Community Animal Health workers in Bong and Nimba Counties (Table 26).

Table 26: Goats that received veterinary treatment

County	No. of Goats treated	Cause
Bong	109	Internal and External parasites, Physical injuries and diarrhea
Nimba	62	Internal and External parasites and diarrhea
Lofa	0	Good management practices
Grand Bassa	0	Good management practices
TOTAL	171	

Activity I.D.I Promote Goat Shelters

Task I.D.I.I Identification and recruitment of Lead farmers

During quarter I of FY15, FED identified a total of 77 lead farmers (69 male, 8 female) in 77 clusters to sign up as lead farmers for FY15 goat production intensification sites (Table 27).

Table 27: FY15 goat lead farmer recruitment

County	FY15 Lead Farmer Targets	Total Lead Farmers Identified YTD	No. of Male Lead Farmers		No. of Female Lead Farmers	
			No	%	No	%
Bong	22	22	22	(100%)	0	(0%)
Nimba	26	26	23	(88%)	3	(12%)
Lofa	19	19	15	(79%)	4	(21%)
Grand Bassa	10	10	9	(90%)	1	(10%)
TOTAL	77	77	69	(90%)	8	(10%)

Within the 77 identified new goat production clusters, a total of 1,545 beneficiaries (929 male, 616 female) were identified and verified during the same period (Table 28).

Table 28: FY15 goat farmer recruitment

County	FY 15 Farmer Target	No. of Target Sites	Total No. of Farmers Identified YTD	No. of Male Farmers		No. of Female Farmers	
				No	%	No	%
Nimba	522	26	522	370	71	152	29
Grand Bassa	201	10	201	101	50	100	50
Bong	441	22	441	202	46	239	54
Lofa	381	19	381	256	67	125	33
TOTAL	1,545	77	1,545	929	60	616	40

During the month of January, all 77 MoU's were prepared and sent to the field for signature. To date, 20 MoU's have been signed between USAID FED and 20 goat production intensification sites. The remaining MoU's are expected to be signed in February.

Task I.D.1.2 Contract and train eight sawyers to cut wood for shelter construction

Recruitment and training of eight new sawyers to support the cutting of wood provided by the communities in the identified FY15 goat sites is pending contracting of the LNGOs.

Task I.D.1.3 Contract and train eight carpenters (two per county) on shelter construction

Recruitment and training of eight new carpenters to construct the shelters in the identified FY15 goat sites will commence in February once the LNGO that will help implement the Goat Program in FY15 is contracted.

Task I.D.1.4 Determine shelter material requirements for 77 shelters

During January, all the shelter material requirements for the 77 USAID FED-supported goat sites were determined and the procurement process was initiated.

Task I.D.1.5 Design and construction of two wells in Grand Bassa County

In January, one vendor was selected to develop alternative water wells in Neorpeh and Blaygbah at FY14 sites in Grand Bassa County. It is anticipated that sinking of the wells will commence between February and the end of April 2015.

Task I.D.1.7 Construct 77 Shelters in Bong, Nimba, Lofa, and Grand Bassa through cost share

Shelter construction will commence in February as soon as the LNGO that will manage this is contracted.

Activity I.D.2 National PPR Campaign

Task I.D.2.1 Acquire MOA agreement to provide PPR vaccine and contract BRAC to implement PPR campaign:

In FY14, USAID FED, in collaboration with BRAC and the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), planned to implement the national Peste des Petits Ruminants (PPR) vaccination campaign. However, due to the Ebola Virus outbreak, implementation of the activity was deferred to FY15. During Quarter I of FY15, meetings were held with the BRAC Country Representative to plan new timelines of implementation. It was agreed that implementation could commence during March and April 2015. In follow-up meetings, MoA informed FED that due to budget constraints, they were unable to provide the required vaccines but would assume responsibility of the importation process if FED would make finances available. For this activity, a total of 1,500 vials valued at USD \$5,000 will be required to vaccinate approximately 150,000 animals country-wide. It is anticipated that the contract will be awarded in February to BRAC, and the vaccination will commence in March.

Activity I.D.3 Access to veterinary treatment and drugs

Task I.D.3.7 Farmers trained on nutrition and good animal husbandry practices

This task will be implemented under Activity I.D.6 (*Improving nutrition for higher livestock value*) following identification of high yielding forages suitable for Liberia.

Activity I.D.4 Establishment of nuclear breeding herd

Task I.D.4.1 Sign a MoU with CARI whereby CARI commits to allocating funds to hire people to maintain and manage the nucleus breeding herd (100 goats).

In FY14, Land O' Lakes has signed an in-kind-grant with CARI to support the importation of improved genetic stock of goats for the nucleus breeding center. Due to the Ebola outbreak, Land O' Lakes suspended its activities in Liberia and is expected to resume in February 2015. Following resumption of their activities, FED will sign an MoU agreement with CARI to support establishment of the nucleus breeding center in FY15 under task I.D.4.2 to task I.D.4.9.

Task I.D.5.5 Develop and air radio advertisements for promotion of the goat marketing events

Before the marketing event which is expected to commence in March, all FED partner radio stations will start announcing the event through the FED extension unit.

Task I.D.5.6 Facilitate marketing event every month in each county

USAID FED will carry out a dual marketing strategy consisting of cluster level and county-level marketing events. The county-level marketing events will be geared towards large procurements and held during special holidays. The cluster-level marketing events will be scheduled according to volume of goats ready for sale, willingness of clusters to sell and interest of traders to buy. Towards the end of January, FED began to inventory animals by age at the cluster level to determine which clusters have the potential to carry out a marketing event. Clusters with significant number of animals that can be prepared for the marketing event will receive assistance in improved nutrition to fatten their animals so they get good prices.

Activity I.D.6 Improving nutrition for higher livestock value

Task I.D.6.1 Develop databases for forages most suitable for Liberia:

Towards developing a comprehensive database of forages and animal nutritional requirements that goat farmers can benefit from, USAID FED began the process of contracting a Goat Forage Production Expert (local STTA) to identify, test, select and recommend high yielding forages for cultivation at the FY13, FY14 and FY15 goat production intensification sites. This consultant is expected to commence their assignment in February. The recruitment of the consultant further enhances the ability to implement Task I.D.6.2 (Test cultivation of selected forages to determine which ones have highest yields and rates of success) and Task I.D.6.3 (Train farmers in growing selected forages and using forages in feeding) of the FY15 work plan.

Sub Task I.1 Special Studies and MoA Data Collection System Development

During the Month of January, the M&E Team reviewed all the special studies in line with the FY15 work plan. Additionally, SOW's have been approved for two STTAs to support the development, coordination and implementation of these special studies. The special studies will include:

- a) Post-harvest losses in rice, cassava and vegetables without FED intervention and with FED intervention
- b) Determining the impact of increase in rice production on the economics of the household (HH) (i.e. savings)
- c) Determining the impact of FED interventions on diet diversity at the HH level (i.e. increase in rice consumption; vegetable consumption; meat and fish consumption; Diet Diversity score)
- d) Determining adoption rates of technologies introduced by FED and non-FED farmers
- e) Study on the effectiveness of FED's extension services and extension materials

- f) Women in Agriculture Empowerment Index three years after FED
- g) Impact of FED supported shelters in goat production
- h) Optimal goat shelter size, materials and cost
- i) Rice seed requirements in Liberia

Activity 1.1.2.5 Gross margin per unit of land or animal of selected products (baselines)

One special study will be on the gross margin estimates for USAID FED's four value chains in the six counties of operation for FY15 and will include information on:

- a) Area (ha)
- b) Yield (MT)
- c) Sales (MT)
- d) Sales (US\$)
- e) Costs (US\$)
- f) Prices (US\$)

Task 1.1.2.5.2 Carrying out surveys to gather missing baselines and processing the data

The recruitment for the Special Studies and Surveys Advisor who will be responsible for implementing this activity has been completed. An STTA candidate has been identified, but will be available to mobilize in April.

Task 1.1.2.5.3 Consensus with management and USAID on the baselines

This survey consensus on the baselines will be completed in April when the Special Studies and Surveys Advisor I arrives.

Activity 1.1.3.1 Equipment and Materials Procured for the MoA Offices in Nimba, Lofa and Grand Bassa Counties

Task 1.1.3.1.1 Obtain written communication from MoA to commence this activity

In January, USAID FED informed MoA officially that this pilot project to support the MoA M&E system in Bong County will begin shortly once approval has been granted by the MoA. To date, no approval has been received. Additionally, Harry G. Wonyene has been transferred to another position and the Director for M&E position has been vacant during the month of January. The Director for M&E is the main point of contact at the MoA for this activity.

Task 1.1.3.1.2 Develop activity in TAMIS

An activity to replicate the Bong County M&E pilot program in Nimba, Grand Bassa and Lofa Counties of has been developed in TAMIS and is currently being reviewed by the technical team. Finalization, however, will depend on the success and lessons learned from the pilot activity in Bong County.

Task 1.1.3.1.3 Procurement of equipment

To date, NXP requests have been forwarded to USAID for review and have received approval.

Activity 1.1.4.1 Recruitment of data repository system consulting firm

Task 1.1.4.1.1 Contracting of data development firm

USAID FED has selected a firm and the negotiation is ongoing.

Activity 1.1.4.2 Piloting/quality assurance of the database system design***Task 1.1.4.2.1 Training materials, manual and modules approbation***

USAID FED is identifying the needs of the project and MoA in order to establish areas of engagement for the contracted firm. This activity is linked to the mainstreaming of the online database system in the USAID FED office.

Activity 1.1.5.1 Assessment of the Training Capacity Needs for Technical & M&E Capacity***Task 1.1.5.1.1 Preparation and approval of concept notes to conduct training***

A concept note has been developed in regard to this activity following a meeting with key staff at the MoA. This meeting resulted in the development of a road map with timelines and responsibilities for the conduct of two categories of training for the MoA: the first phase of training for central ministry staff including Directors of Planning, Technical and Extensions and Project Coordinators of PMU projects, M&E Officers from Smallholder Agricultural Productivity Enhancement & Commercialization (SAPEC), West Africa Agricultural Productivity Programme (WAAPP), Smallholder Tree Crop Revitalization Support Project (STCRP/IFAD) and Smallholder Tree Crop Revitalization Project (STCRP/WB). The second phase of training will be carried out at the county level for field technicians on data collection analysis and reporting and MoA staff who are involved in survey and information collection. However, this timetable was not followed because of the departure of Harry Wonyene, the M&E Director. USAID FED will resume implementation of the activity once the new Director for M&E comes on board.

Task 1.1.5.1.2 Recruitment of STTA/NGO to facilitate training

The training manual has been developed. Based on the training modules, USAID FED will determine whether or not to conduct the training in house or through a STTA. The consideration is availability of a local STTA with the capability to carry out this training.

Activity 1.1.6.1 Impact Study of the Rice Commodity***Task 1.1.6.1.1 Assist in the preparation and approval of concept notes to conduct study***

A concept note has been developed by the USAID FED rice value chain team that will be submitted for technical review in line with the work plan.

Task 1.1.6.1.2 Assist in SOW design, review and validation for implementation

The USAID FED rice value chain team is currently drafting the SOW in close collaboration with the M&E department.

Activity 1.1.6.3 Cassava Varieties Yield Assessment***Task 1.1.6.3.1 Assist in the preparation and approval of a concept note for a study to assess yields of different cassava varieties***

A concept note is being developed by the USAID FED cassava value chain team that will be submitted for technical review.

Activity 1.1.6.4 Assessment on Integrated Pest Management (IPM) on Vegetable Yields?

Task 1.1.6.4.1 Assist in the preparation and approval of concept notes to conduct study

A concept note to assess the impact of IPM on vegetable production is currently being developed by the USAID FED vegetable value chain team that will be submitted for technical review in line with the work plan.

Task 1.1.6.4.2 Assist in SOW design, review and validation for implementation

The USAID FED vegetable team is currently drafting the scope of work of the enumerators/consultants to be hired for the IPM Impact Study.

Sub Task 1.2 Improved access to Agricultural Inputs

Activity 1.2.1.1 Support to establishment of commercial production and marketing of rice seeds

Task 1.2.1.1.1 Technical Assistance (TA) and Business Development Support (BDS) to 22 Rice Seed Multiplication (RSM) site operators

By the end of January, a total of 245.11 MT of rice seed had been harvested from 119 ha of 12 upland sites and 156.14 MT of seed rice harvested from 40 ha of 10 lowland sites (Table 29 and 30). FED expected to harvest 120 ha of upland rice but confirmation by M&E revealed that only 119 ha had been planted. It is anticipated that the final inspection results will be submitted to CARI and Africa Rice by Quarter 2 of FY15.

Table 29: RSM sites harvest – upland rice

County	Number Of Sites	Target Area (ha)	Harvested Area (Ha) by Q1 FY15	Volume Harvested Q1 FY15 (MT)	Area Harvested Jan (ha)	Volume Harvested Jan (MT)	Area Harvested YTD (ha)	Volume Harvested YTD (MT)	Avg. Yields (MT/ha)
Grand Bassa	1	10.00	6.00	11.89	4	8	10	19.8	1.98
Bong	9	90.00	90.00	179.90	0	0	90	179.9	2.8
Nimba	1	10.00	9	25.2	0	0	9	25.2	2.8
Lofa	1	10.00	10.00	20.21	10	20.21	10	20.21	2.02
TOTAL	12	120.00	106.00	212.00	14	28.21	119	245.11	2.06

Table 30: RSM sites harvest- lowland sites.

County	Number Of Sites	Target Area (ha)	Harvested Area by Q1 FY15 (ha)	Volume Harvested Q1 FY15 (MT)	Area Harvested Jan (ha)	Volume Harvested Jan (MT)	Area Harvested YTD (ha)	Volume Harvested YTD (MT)	Avg. Yields (MT/ha)
Grand Bassa	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0	0	0	0	0
Bong	5	20.00	20.00	80.00	0	0	20	80	4.0
Nimba	4	16.00	7	9.00	9	49.14	16	58.14	3.63
Lofa	1	4.00	4.00	18.0	4	18	4	18	4.5
TOTAL	10	40.00	31.00	9.00	13	67.14	40	156.14	3.90

During the month of February, USAID FED will collect harvest samples from the 22 sites. The samples will be labeled and marked with the test required to be carried out by CARI. The test will include, amongst other things, Seed Health, Analytical Purity, Germination, etc. Sites for the FY15 RSM program will be confirmed before the end of February.

Task 1.2.1.1.3 Identification, engagement and support of private sector firm for commercial production and marketing of rice seed

During January, USAID FED representatives met with Arjay Farms to discuss the status of project assets currently held by Arjay Farm and partnership between the two parties. Furthermore, a detailed report was prepared highlighting issues discussed during the meeting. It was agreed that USAID will be consulted in order to arrive at a final conclusion and decision on the way forward with regard to any potential partnership between FED and Arjay Farm for the development of commercial production and marketing of rice seed.

Task 1.2.1.1.6 Identification and development of 22 additional sites for rice seed production and training of new seed producers

During the reporting period, a total of 12 new upland sites (120 ha) and 10 new lowland sites (40 ha) were selected for the establishment of rice seed multiplication sites. In total 22 sites with 160 ha will be supported (Table 31 and 32).

Table 31: Identified FY15 upland RSM sites by county

County	Number Of Sites	Hectares (ha) per site	Target Area (ha)
Grand Bassa	2	10	20
Bong	3	10	30
Nimba	3	10	30
Lofa	4	10	40
TOTAL	12		120

Table 32: Identified FY15 lowland RSM sites by county

County	Number Of Sites	Hectares (ha) per site	Target Area (ha)
Grand Bassa	2	4	8
Bong	3	4	12
Nimba	3	4	12
Lofa	2	4	8
TOTAL	10	16	40

Activity 1.2.1.2 Support to commercial production and marketing of cassava cuttings

Task 1.2.1.2.1 New improved varieties released by CARI distributed to and multiplied by 40 commercial nurseries

CARI will complete the inspections of improved varieties at the two screening sites in Lofa by March 2015. It is expected that the official release of suitable varieties will take place in May after palatability tests are completed.

Task 1.2.1.2.2 TA and BDS (advertising, business registration, record keeping, etc.) to 40 cassava nurseries

The support for advertising and business registration for the 40 cassava commercial nurseries established in FY14 will be provided by the Business Development Support service providers that USAID FED will hire in FY15. Support will also be provided through the USAID FED Cassava Value Chain activities in the counties to ensure that the commercial nurseries keep proper business records of their transactions.

Activity 1.2.3.1 Promote UDP, MoP and TSP use in rice based on soil analysis

Task 1.2.3.1.1 Zoning of FED rice sites carried out based on soil analysis and fertilizer recommendations developed for each zone

Under the FED FY14 program, soil samples from 50 TI sites (UDP application only, 29 sites in Nimba, 14 in Bong, and 7 in Lofa County) were taken, processed and packaged at the University of Liberia's soil lab. The samples were analyzed for soil chemical characteristics and micronutrients at the CSIR-Soil Research

Institute laboratory in Kumasi, Ghana. The soils were sampled from two depths (0-15 cm and 15-30 cm). For each depth, three replicates per site were sampled. The soil chemical parameters measured were: pH, CEC, Total Nitrogen, available phosphorous, exchangeable potassium and exchangeable acidity. Based on the results, fertilizer recommendations were made for Nerica Lowland rice variety (Source: Growing Lowland Rice - A Production Handbook by Africa Rice Center (WARDA)).

The results revealed that all TI sites sampled were found to be low in nitrogen content <1.0 g total-N/kg, while available phosphorous content ranges from low to medium - <8 mg/kg [Bray-I] to 20 mg/kg [Bray-I]. Potassium content of soil ranges from medium to high - 0.2–0.4 Cmolc/kg to > 0.4 Cmolc/kg.

These recommendations will be implemented during the next cropping season.

Activity 1.2.3.4 UDP+SRI research

Task 1.2.3.4.1 Complete UDP+SRI research and carry out comparative analysis of cost and benefits vs. UDP only and SRI only

During the month of January, monitoring of the 4 selected UDP+SRI sites noted that 2 of the sites had water shortage challenges. In order to address the issue, it was agreed to find alternative sites on the water management infrastructure sites established in FY14. The sites at Gwenimah in Bong and Taylay in Nimba were dropped. 2 new sites were selected in Nimba County at Karnei Farm Zoelay Memorial and Gausi Farm Deaduk. It is anticipated that FED will procure 450 kg of urea during the month of February. Due to scarcity of urea in the country, the prepared nurseries on the UDP+SRI sites have not been seeded because the SRI technology requires seedlings to be transplanted at 10-12 days old, and UDP should then be applied within 10 days after transplanting. The vendor is expected to have urea in stock by February and Gro-Green will make urea briquettes for FED.

Sub Task 1.3: Agricultural Extension Support

Activity 1.3.3 Development of extension material and information access points

Activity 1.3.1 Support to MoA in the development of de-concentration and decentralization strategies for extension delivery in Liberia

Task 1.3.1.1 Working group established in collaboration with MoA to evaluate existing strategies and to develop new strategies that address the need to de-concentrate and decentralize extension

During Quarter I of FY15, FED held consultative meetings with MoA to agree on a common approach to MoA's de-concentration and decentralization strategy for extension. A technical working group was established to review existing strategies contained in MoA's policy documents. During the month of January, a term of reference for the Technical Agriculture Core Team (TACT) was developed in collaboration with the MoA. The TACT will work with value chain specific groups to validate and package VC extension materials to be included in a decentralized agricultural extension curriculum.



Figure 8: USAID FED meeting between processors and producers in Voinjama, Lofa County

Activity 1.3.3 Development of extension material and information access points

Task 1.3.3.1 Develop extension material and packages covering technical aspects of production techniques, production planning, integrated pest and disease management, variety selection and post-harvest handling developed for rice, cassava, goats and horticulture value chains Value chain extension extensional material:

During January, all eleven lowland rice extension materials that were prepared by USAID FED's Rice Technical Specialist were revised, with the first three chapters developed into booklets.

Task 1.3.3.5 Agricultural radio program content for monthly radio shows produced in collaboration with communications unit and five community radio stations

During January, USAID FED entered into an agreement with the United Methodist Radio in Monrovia towards broadcasting the agricultural radio program "On the Farm" in the counties of Montserrado, Margibi, Grand Bassa, Cape Mount, Gbarpolu, Bomi and Bong. Under this agreement, "On the Farm" will be aired once a week for 30 minutes at no cost to FED. To date, FED has completed the editing of content for four editions of "On the Farm" programs. These include the following topics:

- Discussing the effects of late planting and water management in lowland rice production. Featuring Patrick Farniga and the Koitonon farming group in Bong County.
- Centered on farmers impressions about improved cassava varieties and planting methods. Featuring USAID FED extension officer and a host of cassava farmers in Bong County.
- Advantages of protective cultivation in vegetable production. Features a Community Outreach Officer from MoA, and a host of vegetable farmers in Mount Barclay, Lower Montserrrado County.
- This topic is about the ZILEH Farmers Association in Lofa and access to finance.

From January 19 -23, USAID FED collected content material for the fifth edition of "On the Farm" showcasing the facilitation of cassava market linkages in Lofa County between producers and Monrovia-based processors.

Sub Task 1.4 Youth in Agribusiness

FY14 Back-to-School Garden Program

In FY14, USAID FED, in partnership with the Advancing Youth Project (AYP), supported 120 schools to establish school garden programs. A total of 120 schools participated in the school garden competitions across the five FED supported counties. These school gardens were established towards developing the skills of young students, as well as to encourage their participation in agriculture and food production. The schools received training and technical assistance on how to establish agriculture youth clubs from four LNGOs contracted by USAID FED. The faculty and students in 60 schools that FED supported continued to care for their cassava and vegetable crops even when the schools were closed due to the Ebola. During January, the files were partially harvested; 0.13MT of assorted vegetables valued at USD \$619.64 were harvested from 60 schools (Table 33). Harvesting will continue in February and additional vegetable harvest and sales will be reported in February. Cassava harvests are anticipated from at least 50 school gardens during the month of February.

Table 33: FY14 FED school garden vegetable sales

County	Sales Volume Target for FY14 crop	Volume sold Jan (kg)	Value of sales Jan (\$USD)	Volume sold YTD (kg)	Value of sales YTD (\$USD)
Bong	90.58	39.89	\$191.00	39.89	\$191.00
Nimba	90.58	45.09	\$205.64	45.09	\$205.64
Lofa	90.58	20.08	\$98.00	20.08	\$98.00
Grand Bassa	90.58	25.30	\$125.00	25.30	\$125.00
Montserrado	90.58	0	\$0	0	\$0
Margibi	30.43	0	\$0	0	\$0
TOTAL	483.33	130.28	\$619.64	130.28	\$619.64

Activity 1.4.1 Establishment of agribusiness horticulture pilots

Task 1.4.1.1 Identification of 500 youth in 25 clusters in 2 counties of Montserrado and Margibi:

During January, a total of 25 agribusiness clusters comprising of 500 youth in Montserrado and Margibi counties signed MoU's with USAID FED towards the establishment of horticulture pilot projects (Table 34).

Table 34: Beneficiaries signed up for Agribusiness pilots

County	FY15 Youth Targets	No. of Youth Identified by January 2015	Male		Female		No. of ha	No. of MoU's signed January 2015
			No:	%	No:	%		
Montserrado	360	360	191	(53%)	169	(47%)	90	18
Margibi	140	140	80	(57%)	60	(43%)	35	7
TOTAL	500	500	271	(54%)	229	(46%)	125	25

Furthermore, USAID FED also completed the mapping of a total of 125 ha within the clusters where the demonstration plots will be established. It is anticipated that all baseline information of the 25 agribusiness pilots will be documented and tools and inputs distributed during March.

Activity 1.4.2 Supporting job creation through youth extension aides

Task 1.4.2.1 Identify and recruit 25 youth extension aides to support agribusiness pilots

In January, USAID FED issued an RFP to source a Local NGO (LNGO) that will provide technical assistance to the 25 agribusiness pilot projects. The LNGO will be responsible for the recruitment of the 25 youth extension aides who will be deployed to assist the lead farmers with technical implementation of the agribusiness pilot projects. It is anticipated that the LNGO will be contracted and commence work in February.

Activity 1.4.3 Supporting job creation through youth enterprises as transport service providers

Task 1.4.3.1 Identify and recruit 49 youth towards establishment of a transport business

In order to address challenges related to high costs of transportation due to poor aggregation and limited number of transport service providers between rice and cassava clusters and processors or markets, USAID FED completed the identification of 49 youth entrepreneurs. These entrepreneurs will be supported through cost share arrangements to setup transportation businesses in the counties. Thirty of the identified entrepreneurs signed MoU's with FED during January. It is anticipated that the remaining MoU's will be signed by February.

Table 35: Identification of youth entrepreneurs (Transport services).

County	FY15 Youth Targets	No. of Youth Identified YTD	Male		Female	
			No	%	No	%
Bong	17	10	9	(90%)	1	(10%)
Lofa	13	11	9	(82%)	2	(18%)
Nimba	15	24	14	(58%)	10	(42%)
Grand Bassa	4	4	4	(100%)	0	(0%)
TOTAL	49	49	36	(73%)	13	(27%)

Activity 1.4.4 Supporting job creation through youth enterprises as power tiller service providers

Task 1.4.4.1 Identify and recruit 20 youth towards establishment of power tiller businesses

During January, a total of 18 MoU's were signed between identified youth enterprises and FED towards the establishment of power tiller enterprises through a cost share arrangement in the four counties. It is anticipated that all MoU's will be signed and training of the enterprises completed during the month of February. FED has developed a calculation for each enterprise indicating their current profitability. This information will be shared during the training exercise with the enterprises. Each youth enterprise will till a total of 48 ha of lowland under FED farmers at no fee in order to meet their cost share obligations.

Table 36: Identification of youth entrepreneurs (Power tillers services)

County	FY15 Youth Targets	No. of Youth Identified YTD	Male		Female		No. of MoU's signed YTD
			No	%	No	%	
Bong	5	5	5	(100%)	0	(0%)	4
Lofa	7	7	6	(86%)	1	(14%)	7
Nimba	5	5	5	(100%)	0	(0%)	5
Grand Bassa	3	3	3	(100%)	0	(0%)	2
TOTAL	20	20	19	(95%)	1	(5%)	18

Activity 1.4.5 Supporting job creation through training youth as machine operators

Task 1.4.5.1 Identify and train 98 youth towards operation of cassava and rice processing equipment

By the end of Quarter 1 of FY15, USAID FED had identified 98 potential youth between the ages of 18 and 35 to be trained as machine operators with the 29 identified cassava processors and 10 rice business hubs established in FY14. It was planned that a minimum of two youth would be deployed for training to each processor and rice business hub based on personnel requirement assessments conducted in FY14. It is anticipated that the 98 youth will commence their training during March after training plans and guides are completed by FED's extension support unit.

Table 37: Identification of trainee machine operators (Cassava processing and rice mills)

County	FY15 Youth Targets	No. of Youth Identified YTD	Male		Female	
			No	%	No	%
Bong	33	33	23	(70%)	10	(30%)
Lofa	24	24	13	(54%)	11	(46%)
Nimba	25	25	15	(60%)	10	(40%)
Grand Bassa	10	10	7	(70%)	3	(30%)
Montserrado	6	6	6	(100%)	0	(0%)
TOTAL	98	98	64	(65%)	34	(35%)

Activity 1.4.6 Supporting job creation through blacksmiths and carpenter enterprises

Task 1.4.5.2 Conduct training for 8 master blacksmith and 16 youths as blacksmiths

During January, 16 youth apprentices from FED's four core counties fabricated and sold assorted farming tools (shovels, knives, hoes and rakes) for a cumulative value of USD \$340.59. The 16 youth apprentices are still under apprenticeship training with master blacksmiths until the end of February. At the end of the training, each of the 16 apprentices will receive a toolkit set to enable them to establish blacksmith shops to fabricate affordable farming tools for local farmers in Bong, Lofa, Nimba and Grand Bassa counties.



Figure 9: Youth apprentices and trainers with locally fabricated tools in Grand Bassa County.

Sub Task 1.5: Improving Human Nutrition

Activity 1.5.1 Development of Diet Behavior-Change Communications (DBCC) Strategy

Task 1.5.1.1 Hiring of Behavior Change Communication Specialist

During the January, a final candidate for the Behavior Change Communication Specialist was identified following interviews. The selected candidate accepted the position and once approved will be mobilized in March.

Activity 1.5.2 DBCC Strategy implemented and monitored

Task 1.5.2.1 Community materials printed and multiplied for dissemination

The implementation of this activity is dependent on the recruitment of the Behavior Change Communications specialist (BCCS) and successful development of the DBCC strategy. The recruitment process under Task 1.5.1.1 will be completed before the end of February and activities will commence during Quarters 3 and 4 of FY15.

Activity 1.5.3 Nutrition messaging outreach to more households

Task 1.5.3.1 Revise existing material, develop posters, flyers and radio messages conveying nutrition messaging with specific focus on behavior change targeting: diet diversification within HH general and for pregnant women and children under two years

On January 22, USAID FED representatives met with the Deputy Director of National Health Promotion and the Nutrition Director of the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (MOHSW) to get their feedback on a draft nutrition poster that was developed by FED in collaboration with the MoA. During this meeting, the MOHSW provided additional recommendations on the content of the poster design. It is anticipated that a revised poster will be available for review in February. Once the MoHSW and MoA agree with the poster design, this will be tested in the field by FED and MoHSW staff to determine if farmers actually understand the message that the poster intends to convey. Additional posters and communication materials will be developed based on the recommendation of the BCCS.

Component Two: Stimulate Private Sector Growth and Investment

Task 2: Enabling Policy Environment for Private Sector Growth

Activity 2.1.1 Policy Reform Activities via Technical Working Groups

Task 2.1.1.1 LABEE Technical Working Group

Due to the Ebola crisis and the limited in-country availability of both USAID FED and partner staff, operations of the technical working groups have been suspended until further notice. This includes the Liberia Agriculture Business Enabling Environment Inter-agency Policy Group (LABEE IPG) and the technical working group to be established to push forward the seed certification processes.

USAID FED intends to hold a policy forum in February to discuss issues around optimal rice pricing, EO #64 (Duty Free Waiver for Agricultural Importation) and the local procurement law. Relevant government agencies and key private sector players will be invited to the forum.

Activity 2.2.1 Village Savings and Loan Expansion

Through January 2015, USAID FED has supported the creation of 123 Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLA) for 3,400 farmers (mostly women). Furthermore by January 2015, the VSLA groups have generated access to capital for investment in agricultural activities in the amount of USD \$150,196. The savings and financing mechanism provides farmers with access to capital as well as experience in financial organization. Program farmers have made over loans of over USD \$30,460 in January 2015.

VSLAs that have 'graduated' and shared out after the first cycle are eligible to apply for loans from the Central Bank's Loan Extension and Availability Facility (LEAF). The loans, which are typically three years with quarterly payments at 3% annual interest rate, will be used by the VSLAs for on-lending to their members.

The Central Bank of Liberia facilitated the creation of The National Association of Village Savings and Loan Association (NAPEX) to streamline the application process. NAPEX has elected leadership structures from a base of existing VSLAs at the national, county and district levels throughout the 15 counties.

NAPEX is intended to enhance the delivery of information among member VSLAs in a coordinated fashion, provide the opportunity for feedback on the implementation of activities, and help the Central Bank improve risk management by assisting in loan origination due diligence and the repayment process. All VSLAs wishing to apply for loans through LEAD will be required to register with NAPEX.

Task 2.2.1.2 Upgrade VSLA Curriculum

During the month of January 2015, USAID FED awarded EDUCARE, a local NGO with a PO to work on producing 50 copies of VSLA training materials. By March 2015, all 50 copies of the materials will be finalized and rolled out to the counties.

Task 2.2.1.8 Application to NAPEX and CBL for Loans

Through January 2015, six VSLA groups have registered with NAPEX and received certificates. NAPEX has also submitted their names to the Central Bank of Liberia (CBL) each for LD\$1,000,000.00/USD\$11,904.00.

If they receive these loans from the CBL these VSLA's will be able to utilize the capital for procurement of agriculture inputs for their farms.

Activity 2.2.3 Extension of Micro Finance to Farmers and Entrepreneurs

Task 2.2.3.3 Recruitment of Farming Groups / MSMEs for Loans

During the reporting period, the Zeelie Farmers Association in Lofa received a loan of USD \$10,000 from LEAD purposely to buy paddy rice from FED supported farmers and resell to Fabrar Inc. and MoA. Zeelie buying price for 50 kg bag is USD \$18.00 and selling price is USD \$18.50 to Fabrar and USD \$20.00 to MoA. Zeelie has reported the sale of 3,546.9 kg to MoA value at USD \$70,938 and 1,511.11 kg to Fabrar value at USD \$27,955.53. Total sold is 5,058.01 kg for a value of USD \$98,893.53. The Association earned \$157 for their aggregation services.

Through January 2015 LEAD has disbursed loans to more than 459 farmers (174 male and 285 female). The total LEAD loans were for USD \$39,900 as part of this partnership with USAID FED. USAID FED is further working with LEAD to identify additional farmers in FY 2015 that will be able to receive loans from LEAD and further business skills training from FED.

Subtask 2.2: Access to Business Development Support (BDS) Services and Enterprise Service Centers

Activity 2.3.1 Establish Five Enterprise Service Centers

The five Enterprise Service Centers (ESCs) will support the growth of new businesses and the formalization of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). Ideally, these hubs will use a self-sustaining, fee-for-service business model in providing business advisory services and marketing outlets. However, based on FED's assessment, farmers are not prepared to pay for business development support services. Innovative approaches and several revenue streams are needed to make these Enterprise Service Centers sustainable.

Task 2.3.1.1 Train Business Service Providers

During the reporting period USAID FED received proposals for the Business Development Support Service Providers (BDSSPs). They will be trained by the Master Business Service Provider (MBSP). The BDSSPs will provide Business Development Services to farmers and selected businesses.

Task 2.3.1.2 Hire Business Service Providers to Deliver Business Development Services

The selection and hiring process of a local Master Business Service Provider (MBSP) experienced in providing business management, planning, and farming as a business training, that will develop curriculum and train service providers in the counties has been completed in January. This activity will begin in February once the five business service providers are on board.

Activity 2.4.2 Women Business Incubation

Task 2.4.2.1 Conduct Final Phase of Women Leadership Training

During the month of January, graduation ceremonies were conducted in five of USAID FED operating counties; Bong, Nimba, Lofa, Margibi and Grand Bassa for 103 women between the ages of 18 to 58, who successfully completed the leadership and Business Incubation Training for Women Entrepreneurs.

USAID FED designed the Leadership and Business Incubation program for Women Entrepreneurs to address two critical constraints facing women: lower human capital (leadership and business skills) and limited access to networks and information. The project uses a combined capacity development approach through basic leadership and business skills training followed by mentorship and virtual business incubation.

USAID FED is hiring a Women-Owned Enterprise Development Specialist (WEDS), who will provide advisory and technical support to 25 pre-selected women entrepreneurs. The WEDS is expected to be in Liberia by March 2015.



Figure 10: A participant of the Business Incubation Training for Women Entrepreneurs receives her certificate of completion in Lofa County.

Component Three: Build Local Technical and Managerial Human Resource Capability

Task 3: Develop Existing Vocational Centers into Centers of Excellence in Vocational Agriculture Education (CoE)

The compost preparation training workshop commenced at the Booker Washington Institute (BWI) on January 6, 2015, where over 20 participants from the four CoE's (BWI, Lofa Community College, and Grand Basa Community College and Nimba Community College) were in attendance.

Thirty percent of the time was spent on theory, and seventy percent on field- based learning (preparing compost in the compost plant using leaves and wood chips).



Figure 11: Compost training taking place at BWI in Kakata, Magbi County.

The participants also learned how to operate a wood chipper. The wood chipper chips wood into smaller pieces for different agricultural purposes, including compost making.

Activity 3.1.1 NDA curriculum rolled out in the first semester of AY 2014-2015

Task 3.1.1.2 Distribute posters and flyers, host talk shows on radios and engage high schools to kick start the NDA promotional campaign geared towards the enhancement of double enrollment in the program during AY 2014/2015.

Due to the uncertainty surrounding the reopening of educational institutions in the country, this task has been delayed. Promotional activities are expected to start in early February when schools open on the 16th of February. FED plans to distribute posters and flyers at high schools, public places and other communities to promote the National Diploma in Agriculture (NDA) program. Currently, the NDA radio jingles are being played on FED partner radio stations in the respective counties and Monrovia.

Task 3.1.2.2 Organize stakeholders' workshops/meetings for Curriculum/syllabi for review, identification and incorporation of practical lessons

FED has started the reconnaissance of potential sites for practical learning to support the NDA roll out in the first year. Site identification will be completed in February.

Task 3.1.2.3 Negotiate with farm/facilities owners and finalize MoU's

These MoU's will be signed after the reconnaissance trip has been completed. The MoU's will be made between the CoE's and the farm owners while FED will provide assistance to facilitate the process.

Activity 3.2.2 Exposure visit to vocational education in the ECOWAS region

Task 3.2.2.1 Recruit an expert to conduct capacity needs assessment for identification of skills required for instructors to deliver the NDA

The recruitment for this activity was completed in January. The consultant began his assessment at the Booker Washington Institute, and continued to Grand Bassa Community College where he concluded Phase I of his assessment. He subsequently returned to Monrovia and submitted his intermediary report.

The assessment seeks to determine and identify relevant skills needed by instructors and top management at each of the four CoE's. In addition, the assessment will uncover capacity gaps that are required to be addressed in order to effectively deliver the quality of instruction anticipated for the NDA program.

In February the consultant will conclude his assessment of the remaining two CoE's (NCCC and LCCC).

Task 3.2.3.2 USAID FED coordinates with CoE's for selection of representatives, organize and provide travel logistics to facilitate trip

During the reporting period, the CoE's were officially informed about USAID FED's plans to carry out an exposure visit to vocational education institutions in Ghana. The purpose of the visit is to enhance program delivery, ensure sustainable management of their institutions, identify additional farm enterprises for establishment at each CoE and assure employment for the agriculture graduates. Each CoE was required to nominate staff in each category: one staff member from the business department, one staff member from the agriculture department, and someone from management.

Below is the list of names of participants for the trip to Ghana:

NCCC

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------|
| 1. Yar Gonway-Gono | Administrator |
| 2. Paye G. K. Kwiti | Business Dept. |
| 3. Terry N. Dologbay | Ag. Instructor |

4. LCCC

- | | |
|------------------------|----------------|
| 5. Peter C. P. Taylor | Business Dept. |
| 6. Kollie Yarwo Harris | Ag. Instructor |
| 7. Samuel TM Dunbar | Administrator |

8. BWI

- | | |
|------------------------|----------------|
| 9. Alexander M. Massey | Administrator |
| 10. William C. Todd | Ag. Instructor |
| 11. Nelson B. McGill | Business Dept. |

12. GBCC

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------|
| 13. David N. Zeogar | Administrator |
| 14. Jeremiah M. Swinteh | Ag. Instructor |
| 15. John S. C. Williams | Business Dept. |

The exposure visit to Ghana has since been approved by USAID and arrangements are underway to procure travel tickets and make all other necessary logistics available for the trip which runs from February 15 - 28, 2015 (14 days).

Activity 3.3.1 Establishment of standardized Agricultural Science Labs and training of instructors and technicians

Task 3.3.1.1 Recruit and mobilize construction firms to complete renovation and installation of all equipment and laboratory facilities

In December 2014, a RFP for the renovation/construction of soils laboratories at the CoE's was released. A target date for the commencement of the renovation work at the 4 CoE's will be in February. It is anticipated that renovations will be carried out simultaneously in the four locations while construction is expected to be completed within two months as per the agreed commencement date.

Also, during the month, USAID FED inspected the soils laboratory equipment brought in by one of its vendors, Earthtime Inc. According to the agreement between Earthtime and FED, Earthtime will transport and install the equipment in each of the CoE's. Having checked with Earthtime, they are planning to dispatch to the field and deliver the equipment to GBCC, BWI, NCCC and then to LCCC in February.

Activity 3.3.2 Library facilities upgraded, outfitted and effectively maintained

Task 3.3.2.1 Procure approved listing of textbooks and reference materials

In late 2014, a list of approved textbooks and reference materials was procured with the assistance of the Home Office and shipped to Liberia. The shipment arrived in January and distribution of the textbooks to the CoE's began during the reporting period. Each CoE was given two copies of each book with the material in line with NDA curriculum and syllabi. Some of the textbooks procured are listed below:

- Tropical Root & Tuber, Soil and Water Conservation
- Teaching Communication
- Design & Operation of Farm Irrigation
- Goat Science & Production 2010
- Pork Industry Handbook Vol. No. 1 & 2



Figure 12: GBCC receiving the books procured by USAID FED for their CoE.

On Friday, January 23, 2015 the USAID FED Vocational Agriculture Education Development Specialist (VAEDS) traveled to GBCC and presented 72 copies of textbooks to the institution on behalf of USAD FED in support of the NDA Curriculum.

Task 3.3.3.1 Provide internet connectivity with additional computers and software at the CoE's to support the NDA and income generation for sustainability.

In accordance to USAID-FED FY15 work plan FED intends to further assist CoE's with the establishment of internet connectivity utilizing sustainability plans developed by the CoE's. Internet access will be provided for the computer labs, libraries, Careers Centers as well as departments of agriculture, business, administration, and other meaningful units of the Institution.

Target date for the completion of procurement processes, mobilization, and assessments by firms for the commencement of the service at the CoE's is April 2015.

Activity 3.4.1 Develop and implement a 3-yr strategic plan including priority enterprises to be established at the CoE's

Task 3.4.1.3 Support the establishment of two to three feasible enterprises with business and marketing plans

Below are the vegetable sales through January at the BWI school garden being supported by USAID FED.

Table 38: BWI vegetable sales

No .	Description	Nov. 27 2014	Dec. 2, 2014	Dec. 8, 2014	Dec. 12, 2014	Dec. 17, 2014	Dec. 24, 2014	Jan. 2, 2015	Jan. 8, 2015	Total Sale
A.	Okra	44 lbs	80 lbs	120 lbs	30 lbs	40 lbs	60 lbs	10 lbs	-	384 lbs
B.	Cucumber	75 lbs	120 lbs	152 lbs	42 lbs	-	-	-	-	389 lbs
C.	Watermelon	-	-	-	-	1,089 lbs	184 lbs	694 lbs	238 lbs	2,205 lbs
A.	Okra	\$440	\$800	480	300	400	600	100	-	\$3,120.00
B.	Cucumber	750	3,000	3,770	1,100	-	-	-	-	8,620.00
C.	Watermelon	-	-	-	-	25,975.00	4,600.00	12,615.00	5,950.00	49,140.00
	Total sale LD	\$1,190.00	\$3,800.00	\$4,250.00	\$1,400.00	\$26,375.00	\$5,200.00	\$12,715.00	\$5,950.00	\$60,880.00
	Total sale USD	\$14.34	\$45.78	\$51.20	\$16.87	\$317.77	\$62.65	\$153.19	\$71.69	\$733.49

During the month of January, USAID FED visited the site of the vegetable program at GBCC where cucumber, watermelon, okra, hot pepper and bitter ball (African eggplant) were planted in December 2014-January 2015. From January 19 to 27, 2015 the production supervisor had harvested 32.7 kg of okra with a total value of L\$2,129.50 or USD \$25.66 and 6.6 kg of cucumber with a total value of L\$528.00 or USD \$6.36. The yield of the okra and cucumber was low due to a variety of factors that USAID FED will be working with GBCC on rectifying over the course of FY15.

Component Four: Cross-Cutting Activities

Task 4.1: Communications/Knowledge Management

USAID FED Media Stories

USAID FED was not featured in any media reports during the month of January 2015.

Task 4.2: Environmental Compliance

An environmental assessment was carried out on 261.2 hectare of lowland located in Yakpa Town, Todee District, Montserrado County in line with the USAID FED approved IEE for new project activities. The assessment documented the current environmental conditions of the sites proposed for lowland rice cultivation for a large scale lowland rice farmer.

The land is heavily forested with no human activity for over twenty years. The assessments therefore recommended that there should be no USAID FED implemented activity on the site in keeping with USAID regulations on converting untouched or non-degraded land for agricultural purposes.

Task 4.3: Monitoring & Evaluation

Other M&E Activities

Rapid Rural Assessment (RRA)

The results from the Rapid Rural Appraisal are being analyzed and a presentation of the initial results is scheduled in February for all four counties surveyed.

Data Quality Assessment

During the reporting period, the M&E department commenced a desk review and kickoff meeting for the USAID FED third and final data quality assessment to begin in February. The results are expected by March.

Mapping

During the reporting period USAID FED conducted a field visit to the rural areas of Montserrado and Margibi Counties to survey and verify land belonging to Mr. John Sunday, a large land owner in Todee district of Montserrado. This mapping and survey activity is helping to support Activity I.A.7 Stimulating private sector investment in commercial rice production. This activity identifies large scale land owners who are willing to invest in the rice sector. To be considered large, a land owner has to have at least 100 hectares of lowland, which is ideal for rice cultivation.

During the mapping exercise of Mr. John Sunday's land, it was determined he has 264 hectares of prime lowland with easy access to water. USAID FED's rice value chain team will then determine if Mr. John Sunday is willing and has the capacity to cost-share the development of his land for commercial rice production.

Task 4.4: Market Development Fund Management

MDF Disbursement

During January, the Market Development Fund (MDF) expended USD \$80,799.92 on fourteen MDF activities across FED's three components. The expenditures were low in January as result of activity design in TAMIS for FY15 during Quarter I. Historically, January has always been a low month as per the agricultural cycle, with the need for goods and services beginning in February and March. Therefore, USAID FED normally works on solicitation and proper procurement documentation in January.

MDF Commitments

During Quarter I, activity development under USAID FED continued for the 2015 agricultural season including: entering in FY15 work plan activities into TAMIS, finalizing budgets, writing scopes of work, and entering requisitions into TAMIS for procurement. The USAID FED technical committees reviewed and approved eleven activities under CLIN01, zero activities under CLIN02, and one activity under CLIN03, which total USD \$5,540,470.80.

Fiscal Year 2015 MDF Expended as of January 31, 2014

Estimated FY15 MDF Budget for all three CLIN is USD \$9,123,529.96 and as of January 31, 2015 USD \$1,297,877.25 (14%) has been expended.

MDF FY 2015 Procurement (Delivery of Goods to Liberia/Capacity of Vendors) Challenges

Delivery dates and estimating expenditure billing in Liberia are difficult to accurately forecast due to the countless variables the local vendors encounter in bringing goods to Liberia. In January, it was relayed to USAID FED that the Liberian customs department has been on strike, so no shipments have been getting through the ports or airport. Additionally, due to the Ebola outbreak over the past six months, medical supply shipments have been prioritized, causing delays in the deliveries of non-medical shipments.

USAID FED is experiencing delivery delays for over a half a million dollars of goods that was supposed to be delivered in December. USAID FED continues to get weekly updates from these suppliers, and the team is hopeful that these critical goods (cassava processing equipment and CoE Soil Lab Equipment) will be delivered in February (2-3 months later than expected). This delay in the delivery of goods affects implementation (power tiller procurement in FY2014) and continues to be a huge challenge for USAID FED and the technical team.

The lack of local agricultural commodities continues to be a major impediment to procurement, as no input suppliers have fertilizer or pesticides in inventory in January. Many vendors refuse to have these items in stock, and will only order items if they have signed purchase orders and the quantity is worth the amount of hassle associated with importing these goods into Liberia. USAID FED has been waiting for a delayed pesticide PO that was signed in November. Again, the delay goes back to the previous paragraph's discussion. The normal importation timeline is 45 days and/or 2 months, but the reality has been even longer delivery times for equipment and restricted commodities (e.g. seeds, agro chemicals, and fertilizers).

USAID FED is also having difficulty sourcing the motorbikes and tuk tuks needed for 2015 activities (youth, MoA M&E, and LEAD micro-loan). USAID FED issued a public solicitation and a limited distribution solicitation, and upon vendor verification not a single vendor had motorbikes or tuk tuks in stock or the proper specifications to look at when requested. The vendors told USAID FED that the market for

motorbikes is poor at the moment due the ban on motorbike travel in Monrovia (put into action in February 2014). The demand for motorbikes has decreased and vendors do not have available in inventory. The vendors informed the project that if we sign a contract with them, they can procure the motorbikes and tuk tuks but USAID FED would need to take on importation due to government restrictions for the vendors to bring them into the country. As a result of this request, USAID FED has reached out to the DAI Home Office to have them oversee this procurement as the quality and durability of these items is key (tuk tuks need be able to carry loads of goods to markets), and right now USAID FED is unsure where to find the quality in Liberia for sourcing. This delay in finding viable vendors has delayed the request to USAID for restricted goods approval of these items.

To address these concerns regarding the delivery of goods to Liberia, the FED team has been working overtime to meet the implementation deadlines to have goods in the field in March, April and May 2015. After the FY15 work plan draft was completed in November 2014, USAID FED started to draft scopes of work and estimate goods needed for all of FY15. In December 2014, USAID FED publically solicited over 80% of the proposed agricultural inputs and goods needed for FY2015 in the hopes that local Liberian vendors would submit competing bids. Due to the holiday season (Christmas and New Year), the due dates for solicitations were due beginning to mid-January 2015. Therefore, the majority of the procurements will be finalized and contracted February to mid-March 2015. As stated previously, if goods need to be imported into Liberia by locally awarded vendors, the delivery time period is normally at least a month and a half to two months. This means that larger procurements will be expected to reach the beneficiaries in the field over two months after contract award, factoring in the time to transport goods from Monrovia to the county, and then eventually to the beneficiaries. All small tool procurements should be finalized in February 2015 for distribution in February and early March. USAID FED is working with local vendors who have been awarded contracts to ensure that goods can be delivered in March and April 2015 and used during this agricultural season. USAID FED greatly appreciates USAID's continued approval of larger sized procurements – anything above USD \$150,000 - as this allows FED to meet project implementation targets.

The market for agricultural imports is still predominately based in Monrovia. The number of competitive bidders with quality goods and reasonable prices upon verification of stock is even lower (2-3 reliable suppliers in Monrovia). Up country, the vendor's capacity is even lower as many do not have proper banking opportunities to receive payments, and do not understand procurement processes or purchase order agreements.

In 2015, USAID FED began to issue blanket purchase agreements to reliable vendors in Monrovia and up country for goods or services that the project buys continuously throughout the year (fertilizers, transportation, lodging, and catering services). This procedure will allow USAID FED to build the capacity of local vendors under the BPAs through asking them to set up bank accounts for wire transfers from Monrovia and continuing to show them different forms of procurement.