

## FY15 Q2 Quarterly Report

**January – March 2015**

**“Espoir pour les Communautés de Ouallam, Tillabéri”**  
***ECOUT Program***

***2014-2015***



*Vegetable nursery crops in the gardening field school of Tolkoboye*



*Women transporting tomatoes harvested from her garden*

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## I. Executive Summary

Since April 2014, Mercy Corps Niger has been implementing an Emergency Food Security Program (EFSP) funded by USAID/Food For Peace entitled ECOUT<sup>1</sup>. This program is designed to meet the immediate needs of communities affected by recurrent food crises and to improve local capacity to adapt and build resilience to future stresses and shocks. The program targets 56,000 of the most vulnerable individuals (8,000 households) in the communes of Ouallam and Dingazi in the Ouallam department.

During this reporting period (January – March 2015), the program achieved the following:

- 958 farmers (93% women) were trained in gardening techniques, 580 beneficiaries (345 women and 235 men) received trainings on low-cost alternatives to biological and chemical pest and disease control (using on hot peppers, Neem tree seeds “*Azadirachta Indica*”, kerosene and tobacco) and 776 beneficiaries (326 women and 450 men) were trained on other techniques of soil and natural (agro-forestry) regeneration: composting, farmer managed natural regeneration (FMNR)
- Access to microcredit was facilitated through an established warrantage system: 5 of 5 selected villages have successfully implemented the planned pilot warrantage activity. Microcredits corresponding to the value of 17.4 tons of stored agricultural products were disbursed to 386 beneficiaries. The total amount disbursed is 3,186,630 XOF (US\$ 6,373) corresponding to 80% of the value of stored products as determined by local market prices.
- 224 community engineers and 4,519 beneficiaries were trained on how to make animal multi-nutritional blocks and straw treatment with urea and salt.
- Monitoring the health and adaptation of distributed red goat from Maradi known for its high milk production, as well as its fast multiplication; which recorded a good adaptation rate of 91% (91% of distributed goats are still alive and well-adapted).
- 56 assemblies were held at each support village to identify the main shocks and locally-derived community coping and adaptations mechanisms. Following the identification of local locally-derived community strategies to deal with recurring shocks, four relevant strategies have been put in place and will be applied to the context of each village (Community Fund; Community granary; Organization of tomato producers and sellers; setting up Village saving loan associations).
- 15 business people (traders) have been selected to assist with the transmission of information (using 7 corridors identified) from the community-based early warning system (village level) to the vulnerability monitoring observatory at commune level and vice versa.
- 513 beneficiaries trained on germinated millet porridge preparation and 428 persons trained on low cost techniques of hygienically drying tomatoes.
- Conducted weekly surveys of the primary markets of Ouallam and Dingazi communes to monitor the availability, quantity, quality and prices for main food commodities.
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The program also undertook regular monitoring and evaluation activities to ensure efficient program implementation and follow-up, including distribution and post-distribution monitoring.

## II. Program Overview

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<sup>1</sup> *Espoir pour les Communautés de Ouallam, Tillabéri* in French

Large parts of the Nigerien population have been affected by severe food insecurity in the last decade, particularly in 2005, 2008, 2010 and 2012, after a combination of drought and flooding decimated crops and forage. In August of 2013, this pattern repeated itself, impacting the harvest of staple crops. The Ouallam department of Tillabéri region was one of the hardest hit, and with 59 percent of the population moderately food insecure - the highest proportion in the country - the population was immediately vulnerable to food insecurity.

The ECOUT program aims to assist 56,000 beneficiaries (8,000 households) over a period of 18 months to meet their immediate needs and build their resilience to future shocks and stresses. The program supports agro-pastoralists affected by food insecurity within the communes of Ouallam and Dingazi to improve their nutritional status through the purchase of nutritious food during the lean season using food vouchers and unconditional cash transfers. ECOUT also support the diversification of household diets by increasing access to dairy products. Beneficiaries of the program received vouchers for the purchase of a goat, animal feed and vaccinations, and benefited from training in animal husbandry, animal health and fodder management.

The ECOUT program also aims to increase the resilience of agro-pastoralist communities to future shocks. Specifically, the program will support community-driven projects to rehabilitate pastureland and increase water efficiency through Food for Work (FFW) activities. ECOUT will further contribute to the recovery and increased resilience of farmers in Ouallam department by providing training on climate-smart techniques. Participants who complete the training will earn vouchers to purchase improved agricultural inputs. Lastly, the ECOUT program will contribute to strengthening the GoN’s early warning system (EWS) for food insecurity by building the capacity of community-based early warning committees to effectively identify imminent shocks and communicate projected needs to commune-level bodies. Mercy Corps will also work to ensure that nutrition messaging is a part of all program activities.

### III. Program Activities

#### 3.1. Program achievements during the reporting period

Description of Activities		Achievement			Quantitative and Qualitative Description
		Achieved	Ongoing	No	
<b><i>Outcome 1: Agro-pastoralist populations affected by food insecurity have reduced nutrient gap</i></b>					
Activity 1.1.1	8,000 households benefit from food for work activities, receiving food through voucher system	X			One month of food for work (FFW) activities conducted in July 2014, enabled us to rehabilitate 1,107 ha of degraded soils. These FFW activities have been followed by three months of unconditional cash transfers during the 2014 lean season. For the next quarter, the activities of the 2015 lean season will begin.
Activity 1.1.2.	8,000 households benefit from unconditional cash transfers (UCT)		X		3 rounds of unconditional cash distributed during the 2014 lean season (August, September and October) benefitting 4,941 households. The total value of vouchers distributed during this lean season was 481,682,500 XOF (\$1,016,208). The program plans to undertake additional cash transfers during the 2015 lean season to reach the 8,000 targeted beneficiaries.
Activity 1.1.3	4,400 households benefit from vouchers to purchase goats (4,400 does, 600 bucks)	X			4,392 households received vouchers for the purchase of goats (does) and 554 bucks were distributed (ratio of one buck for eight does). The total value of goats distributed was 153,326,000 XOF (\$323,473).
Activity	4,400 households		X		A memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) between

Description of Activities		Achievement			Quantitative and Qualitative Description
		Achieved	Ongoing	No	
1.1.4	benefit from one-month animal feed vouchers and vaccinations for their goats				Mercy Corps and private veterinary service is signed followed by veterinary service during this quarter, provision of vouchers to access veterinary services. Additionally, feed vouchers distribution is planned for the next quarter (April 2015)
Activity 1.1.5	4,400 households benefit from training in animal husbandry, animal health, fodder management, and nutrition/hygiene around dairy production		X		Trained field agents and beneficiaries on the basics of animal health, breeding, milk production, animal settlement infrastructure, herd management; making of multi-nutritional blocks; straw treatment with urea and salt. In total, 6,495 beneficiaries have been trained (3,603 women, 3,436 men and 364 youth). Trainings are still ongoing to reach all of the beneficiaries of goats in all the villages targeted by the program and on other topics.
Activity 1.1.6	Community-level nutrition messaging and behavior change activities related to ENA (essential nutrition actions) and household dairy consumption		X		115 outreach workers and 16 health workers were trained on malnutrition prevention tools and sensitization techniques. Nutrition caravans were organized in targeted villages to disseminate messages about healthy eating and nutrition practices for infants and young children as well as pregnant and lactating women; Food taboos about early weaning of children and nutrition of children, pregnant and lactating women were identified and community sensitizations were conducted to remove those food taboos. Beneficiaries were also sensitized through religious and scientific arguments about the nutritional benefits of consuming goat's milk.
<b><i>Outcome 2: Agro-pastoralist population affected by food insecurity have increased capacity and resources that support resilience</i></b>					
Activity 2.1.1	Land rehabilitation and small infrastructure projects conducted under food for work activities	X	X		1,107 ha of land have been rehabilitated through FFW activities (half-moons) in 36 villages during the 2014 lean season. In addition to the last land rehabilitation, some actions to strengthen activities of recovery and rehabilitation for vulnerable households during 2015 lean season are planned and the process of making them is ongoing.
Activity 2.1.2	8,000 households benefit from agricultural inputs, via voucher system	X			During this quarter, 27 villages (10 in Dingazi and 17 in Ouallam commune) were selected for vegetable gardening activities based on the availability of water (dam, stream, etc.) and received vouchers redeemable for vegetable seeds and tools. 3,455 potential were identified in these 27 villages. In total: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 3,425 beneficiaries received seeds;</li> <li>- 3,067 beneficiaries received tool vouchers (one hoe, one watering can, one rake)</li> </ul> This distribution complemented the cowpea and/ or millet seed distributions conducted in previous quarters to 4,845 households.
Activity 2.1.3	8,000 households trained in climate-smart agricultural techniques		X		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 958 farmers ( of whom 93% are women) trained on gardening techniques;</li> <li>• 580 beneficiaries (345 women and 235 men) benefited from trainings on biological pest control;</li> <li>• 776 beneficiaries (326 women and 450 men) benefited from trainings on other thematic: composting, farmer managed naturel regeneration (FMNR)</li> </ul> All these topics are also made to the field agents so that they will monitor and train other beneficiaries.
Activity 2.1.4	30 EWS structures benefit from training		X		- 19 EWS structures (six in Ouallam and 13 in Dingazi) were established and members trained on

Description of Activities		Achievement			Quantitative and Qualitative Description
		Achieved	Ongoing	No	
	and capacity building support				- the roles and responsibilities of an EWS member; The four EWS structures (two in Ouallam and two in Dingazi) that were in existence before were also trained and oriented on the roles and responsibilities of an EWS' members and the Mercy Corps' strategy

## 3.2. Program activities narrative

*Activities related to the outcome “Agro-pastoralist population affected by food insecurity have reduced nutrient gap”*

### Community level nutrition messaging and behavior change

#### ➤ *Beneficiaries sensitization on essential nutrition actions*

In the context of accelerating behavior change to prevent malnutrition of under five children, several awareness sessions were conducted to promote the 8 Essential Nutrition Actions (ENA). These sessions were conducted for all the residents in the villages of intervention (direct and indirect beneficiaries). During this quarter, 4519 people attended to these sessions with over 50% of them are women. During these awareness sessions, the focus was mainly placed on:

- ✓ Food diversity and use of food supplements;
- ✓ Use of health services;
- ✓ Family planning;
- ✓ Exclusive breastfeeding;
- ✓ General hygiene and hand washing.

Most of these sensitizations campaigns were performed in village assemblies with direct and indirect beneficiaries.

#### ➤ *Beneficiaries training on germinated millet porridge preparation enriched with peanut paste, goat milk and sugar*

A cooking demonstration for field staff, community outreach workers and beneficiaries was held to encourage the consumption of enriched millet porridge. The objective of this training is strengthening the capacity of field agents, outreach workers and beneficiaries of Ouallam and Dingazi on the preparation of a good food supplement based on local products in all ECOOUT villages. Thus, in total 513 community members (women represent 75%) including community outreach workers (33 women out of 74 members), 10 field agents and 429 beneficiaries attended the training.

Inviting all community actors in this training also aims to promote replication of this culinary demonstration by the beneficiaries under supervision of outreach workers in their villages with the support of ECOOUT field agents. ECOOUT's Nutrition Agents summarized steps for this porridge preparation in the form of a poster (with drawings for easier understanding) and disseminated it among beneficiaries through the outreach community volunteers.

#### ➤ *Training of women on low cost techniques of hygienically drying tomatoes*

Before the training, a rapid assessment was made in the program area about this practice. During the assessment of recurrent shocks and risks, the surplus tomato harvest was pointed out as one of the major problem for tomato producers. This assessment also highlighted that many beneficiaries from three

villages (Tolkobey, Sargane and Ouallam) have already received training on tomato drying. However, these past trainings were complex and required significant financial investment. Therefore, the method had not been found affordable feasible. Thus, the program has arranged to conduct training on an inexpensive method of drying tomatoes using local materials. This training was carried out to teach the beneficiaries on how to avoid selling off all their fresh tomatoes at harvest when the price is lowest, and at the same time, to enable them to have tomatoes throughout the year. It also helps to promote dietary diversity all year around.

During the training, four sessions were conducted in four days and 428 participants were trained; they included:

- 10 field agents (8 men and 2 women);
- 32 outreach workers (16 men and 16 women) in Dingazi Commune and 38 outreach workers (23 men and 15 women) in Ouallam commune;
- 348 beneficiaries (women represent 90%) in the two communes.



*Children under five eating the enriched millet Porridge*



*Demonstration of low cost tomatoes drying during the training at Sargane Golle*

### **Goat distribution and training of beneficiaries in, animal health and fodder management**

In order to encourage the diversification of household diets and to promote resilience of vulnerable households, the ECOUT program distributed vouchers to vulnerable households redeemable for the purchase of goats locally known as “*chèvres rousses de Maradi.*” In total, 4,946 goats were distributed,

including 4,392 does and 554 bucks, to 4,392 women. Some of the distributed goats were gestating and to date, 48 of them have already produced kids. Many other activities have been undertaken to improve goat management by the beneficiaries. These activities are as follows:

➤ ***Technical monitoring of distributed goats***

The post distribution monitoring of goats highlights a death rate of 9.40% in all villages of the program, during the three months following the distribution. This occurred despite the treatment of animals prior to their transfer from Maradi to Ouallam (vaccination, anti-stress). However, according to the literature and goats specialists in Niger, this rate remains normal during an adaptation period. In the case of this program, the main causes of mortality were animal diseases. The symptoms were: oral dermatitis, tearing, cough, etc.; death occurs two to three days after onset of symptoms. Based on the situation, the program immediately took action to treat sick animals (1,018 goats) and vaccinate healthy ones (3,366 goats).

In addition, bucks were distributed with the ratio of 1 buck for 8 does (8 households). So, the buck is shared between eight goat beneficiaries. Thus, the beneficiaries kept the buck in rotation on a weekly basis.

➤ ***TOT of "community engineers" on making multi-nutritional blocks and treatment of straw with urea and cooking salt***

In each one of the targeted 56 villages, 4 community engineers (2 women and 2 men) were identified for these trainings which were organized in three selected training sites (Ouallam, Dingazi and Fourmey). Thus, a total of 224 community engineers (trainers) were trained on these two topics (multi-nutritional block production and treatment of straw with urea and salt). The specific objectives of these training were: i) to train and retrain all field agents and 4 people per village on the straw treatment techniques with salt or urea and production of animal multi-nutritional blocks; ii) to enable our beneficiaries to have a stock of good quality forage for the dry season; iii) to improve livestock productivity through the use of multi-nutritional block made in the traditional way; iv) to develop a schedule plan for replication of the techniques.

- ***Production of multi-nutrient supply to the urea***

- ✓ Theoretical phase: Beneficiaries gathered in a room were first briefed on the situation of food insecurity which severely shook their livelihoods including their animal herd. This aimed at capturing the attention of each trainee so as to enable them learn the most of the practice as the people who were going to be responsible for knowledge transfer. Thereafter, all the steps involved were taught to participant in the local language.
- ✓ Practical phase: the practical application of acquired knowledge helped better assimilate the teachings. The presentation of all materials and ingredients is done before the practical demonstration of the production of blocks by trainers'.

- ***Treatment of straw with urea and cooking salt theoretical phase:***

- ✓ Theoretical phase: The main points covered during this training of trainers were: the principle of straw treatment; the materials and ingredients for straw treatment; dosage for treatment; duration of treatment and room temperature; the various storage silos; silo filling; period of treatment, use and management of treated feed stock.
- ✓ Practical phase: The practice phase is carried out on the field in the presence of all participants.

➤ ***Community training by the "community engineers" (CE)***

The participants of the TOT are community representative and are expected to conduct in turn the trainings in their respective villages under the supervision of Mercy Corps' field agents. During the reporting period, the above mentioned trainings were conducted in all villages by the community engineers. To facilitate these village level trainings, 56 kits of demonstration materials (salt, urea for animal feeding, cement) were distributed to each village team of trainers. To date, 4,519 participants attended these village level training sessions: 1884 men, 2271 women and 364 youth.



*Twin kids of a distributed goat at Sargane (left) and a goat with her kid at Saptaka (right)*



*Community engineers making multi-nutritional blocks during the training at Ouallam*



*Community engineers treating straw during the training at Ouallam*



*Children bringing goats for treatment at Tidjani (left) and vaccination of goat by the private para veterinary service agent at Kabefo*

*Activities related to the outcome “Agro-pastoralist populations affected by food insecurity have increased capacity and resources that support resilience”*

## Promoting vegetable crop production

### ➤ *Training of trainers and gardening field schools*

Among the 28 villages which benefited from improved vegetable seeds, 25 villages have also benefited garden kits for improved vegetable production techniques (12 rolls of wire fence and 42 to 44 metallic tubes for site garden protection). The selection of villages for demonstration kit distribution was based mostly on the availability of water and the number of beneficiaries in the village.

During this first year of implementation, fifteen sites (out of the 25) participated in the activity (which benefited 958 beneficiaries of whom at least 93% were women). In total 1006 beneficiaries (958 above plus 48 community Engineers) were trained in vegetable production techniques (gardening bed making, applying manure, seeding and transplanting).

In addition to these basic trainings, the beneficiaries benefit from other trainings regarding to:

- Low cost alternative (based on pepper fruit, Neem tree seeds “Azadirachta Indica”, kerosene and tobacco) to biological and chemical pest and disease control: 580 beneficiaries (345 women and 235 men).<sup>2</sup> :

*Table 1: description of how to prepare solutions for pest control using biological products*

Products used in making solutions	Solution 1		Solution 2	
	Quantity of product (gram)	Water (liter)	Soap	Water (liter)
<b>Grains of <i>Azadirachta indica</i></b>	500	9	3 pinches	1
<b>Tobacco leaves</b>	100	9	3 pinches	1
<b>Hot pepper</b>	200	9	3 pinches	1

- Other trainings: 776 beneficiaries (326 women and 450 men) and 205 beneficiaries (112 women and 93 men) benefited from trainings, respectively for composting and for farmer- assisted natural regeneration.

## Disbursement of microcredit to beneficiaries through warrantage system

In order to support farmers to protect their harvests and improve their incomes, Mercy Corps worked with the MFI ASUSU to establish a warrantage system.

Out of the 56 target villages, the program identified 5 villages that were motivated to pilot this activity: ASUSU SA<sup>3</sup> agreed to grant loans to program beneficiaries of the Warrantage<sup>4</sup> and to support the warehouses’ disinfection in collaboration with the agricultural extension services.

In Total 386 persons (including 90 women) participated in piloting warrantage activity. The number of women involved in the Warrantage activity might be higher as some, anonymously stored their produce under the cover of male relatives. The total amount of credit disbursed to the beneficiaries of the Warrantage activity is 3,186,630 XOF corresponding to 80% of the local market value of products stored (see table 2). The introduction of such amount of money in 5 villages is a significant boost to the local

<sup>2</sup> It aims to help farmers to control crops’ diseases and pests using alternative methods instead of chemical treatments or biological.

<sup>3</sup> See more details on ASUSU SA at : <http://asusu-sa.com/>

<sup>4</sup> Through the Warrantage system, the community is able to store the harvest produce and sell them later when prizes are favorable, at the same time being able to access loans and use them for IGA’s.

economy. This money is mostly invested in Income Generating Activities (IGA). According to most participants, the stored commodities will be used as seeds for the forthcoming rainy season.

*Table 2: Number of beneficiaries, quantity of products stored and the corresponding amount of credit distributed per village*

Villages	Number of beneficiaries	Quantity of stored products (tons)	Amount of credit distributed per village (XOF)
Goura-Goura	55	3.07	575 130
Samtigué	52	4.45	718 000
Banikane	52	4.51	776 065
Korou	169	3.27	765 455
Kouffey	58	2.14	351 980
<b>Total</b>	<b>386</b>	<b>17.44</b>	<b>3 186 630</b>



*Demonstration of vegetable crops transplanting at Tolkoboye*



*Water transportation by women for gardening activities at Tolkoboye*



*Demonstration of manure composting at Dingazi*



*Cereal stocks in warrantage at Banikane village*

## Implementation of early warning activities in Ouallam department

### ➤ **Identification of recurrent shocks and locally-derived community responses**

The analysis of recurrent shocks and risks was conducted in February in both Ouallam and Dingazi communes through villages' general meetings. It is clear from this diagnosis that food insecurity due to drought is the main difficulty faced by the communities. Related causes are irregular rainfall, late planting, pests and diseases attacks. For the community leaders food safety is the primary purpose of each community.

Following this diagnosis, investigations were done to identify locally-derived community strategies to deal with these recurring shocks. Four strategies were proposed by the community members and ECOUT program intends to strengthen, document and disseminate them throughout intervention area. These strategies are as follow:

- i. Community fund;
- ii. Community granary;
- iii. Organization of tomato producers and sellers;
- iv. Establish and manage Village Saving & Loan associations (VSLA)

Following this diagnosis, the program aims to improve the marketing of tomato in the area. In this strategy, seven intervention corridors have been identified: i) Promotion of village based committees into professional organizations; ii) Training of villages community associations on management, marketing channel and survey and sharing information through an organization network; iii) Improvement of the quality and diversity of agricultural production; iv) Development of storages infrastructures and equipment of transformation; v) Improvement of community food security and nutrition through sensitization; vi) Facilitating access of rural organization to credit and strengthening of value chains.

### ➤ **Training of community community-based early warning systems (CEWS)**

The program has continued training courses on community-based early warning systems (CEWS) for civil society, extension services, traditional leaders, local authorities, associations and NGO representatives. Several sensitization sessions were held during the reporting period by the field agents, with the aim of raising awareness on the importance of CEWS. Working group sessions were held in the villages to help communities to better understand the role and responsibility of CEWS. The contents of this training included: CEWS rules and operations, establishment of CEWS, sensitization of community members, rules and responsibilities of the communes and vulnerability monitoring observatory, etc. During the reporting period, 2,594 community members attended to these training sessions (890 men, 1,168 women and 536 youth)

➤ **Identification of trader information carriers**

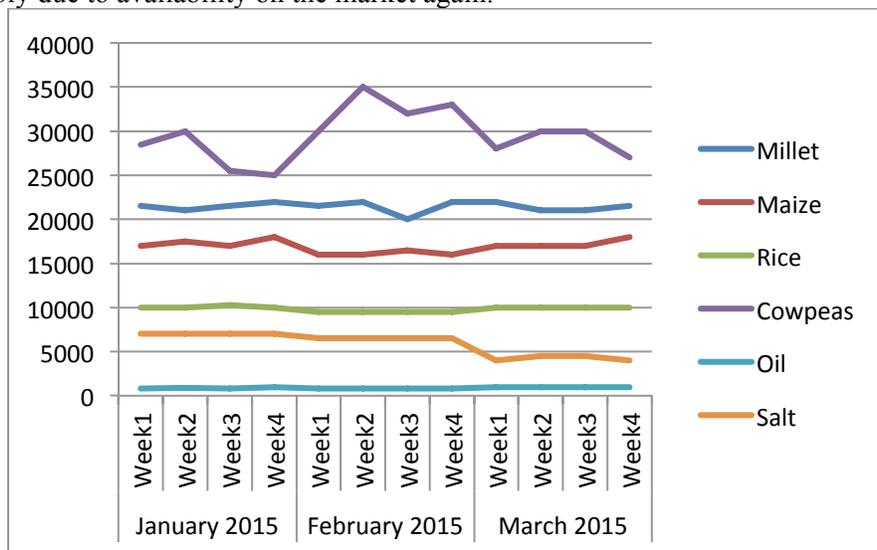
It is expected that traders traveling to different weekly village markets will take care of the transmission of information from the community-based early warning system (village level) to the Vulnerability Monitoring Observatory (VMO at commune level) and vice versa. This will enable us to improve the transmission of information in the CEWS, which has been the major challenge in Niger. Thus, the identification process of the trader information carriers was completed in both Ouallam and Dingazi communes. To date, 15 potential traders were identified (5 in the town of Ouallam and 10 in the town of Dingazi).

The system will function by taking into account the corridors defined in the operational strategy. On a weekly basis, these traders travel to different market sites, and they will carry and transmit information via closed envelopes from the village CEWS to VMO at commune level. The strategy proposed 7 axes for the transmission of information from villages (CEWS) to municipalities (VMO) and vice-versa. This network will be consolidated, through traders' capacity building so that they can play fully their roles, for the interest of their community.

**Weekly market surveys in five principal markets in Ouallam and Dingazi**

Five essential markets (Ouallam, Sargane and Dabr  in Ouallam commune, Dingazi and Yadia in Dingazi commune) were surveyed on a weekly basis to track the availability (quality and quantity) and prices of the following essential commodities: millet, maize, rice, oil, salt, sheep, goats and chickens. These markets and commodities were selected based on the commodities produced or frequency of purchase by the program beneficiaries. The sizes of sheep and goats surveyed were selected to mirror those typically owned by the poor and very poor.

The monitoring of market prices indicated that essential commodities are available (regarding the quantity and the quality). However, a slight price increase of millet and maize was observed. The prices of rice and oil remain stable. The price of cowpeas remains high compared to the other commodities but has a decrease trend. The price of salt increased last quarter due to heavy rains in Ghana but decreased this quarter, probably due to availability on the market again.



*Figure 1: Commodities prices trends in Ouallam market over the past three months*



Tomato sales day at Tolkoboye

#### IV. Monitoring & Evaluation

During this quarter, the program conducted several post distribution monitoring visits (PDM) on the following distributed items: red goats, agricultural inputs, small garden equipment and the effects of nutrition caravan activities as well. The main results of these PDM summarized in the table below:

*Table 3: Summarize of the main results of the post distribution monitoring*

PDM	Results/ highlights
Agricultural inputs and small gardening equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 98% of beneficiaries appreciate the good organization of distribution (information, waiting time before distribution and distance from the village to the distribution site);</li> <li>• 98% of our beneficiaries identified have received all the seeds of the 8 species distributed. 63% of the households used 100% of these seeds this year</li> <li>• 90% of the beneficiaries confirm the good quality of the seeds distributed while 30% of them complained of poor quality of the watering cans</li> <li>• Women represent 45% of the beneficiaries of seeds and small gardening equipment</li> </ul>
Red goats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 97% of beneficiaries appreciate the good organization of distribution (information, waiting time before distribution and distance from the village to the distribution site);</li> <li>• 95% of beneficiaries certified that they received their goats on the planned distribution day.</li> <li>• 61% spent less than 1 hour to reach the distribution site</li> <li>• 91% of beneficiaries claim that their goats are alive and about 9% of beneficiaries confirm the death of their goats;</li> <li>• 24% of beneficiaries confirmed that their goats are pregnant.</li> </ul>
Nutrition caravan activities for behavior change with the Imam of Ouallam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 48% of beneficiaries confirmed to be more confident and convinced by the presence of Imam</li> <li>• 76% of beneficiaries were able to recite the awareness themes taught in the caravan</li> <li>• 35% of beneficiaries retained the benefits associated with the</li> </ul>

### *consumption of goat milk*

In addition, the program activities are monitored using the ODK system of data collection at the households level. This enables Mercy Corps to track the main indicators of the program as indicated in the logical framework.

*Table 4: Summary of progress for select indicators from the logical framework*

<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Baseline/planned</b>	<b>Current level</b>	<b>Progress</b>
<i>1.2: 4,400 households include goat milk in household, especially children's, diets.</i>	8%	32%	75%
<i>2.2.1 Number of households who use the vouchers provided by the program to purchase agricultural inputs</i>	4,333 households	3,425 households	83%
<i>2.2.2 Proportion of type of inputs purchased using vouchers</i>	8 types of seeds	8 types of seeds	100%
<i>2.4.1: # of SCAP/RU who identify communities vulnerable to new shocks</i>	30	6	20%
<i>2.4.2: # of SCAP/RU communicating regularly with communities</i>	30	16	50%

## **V. Challenges**

The main challenges encountered by the program during this reporting period include:

- Difficulties working with service providers (vendors) during voucher distributions;
- Violation of distribution protocols by suppliers, and a poor quality of some items provided;
- Delays in payment of credit to beneficiaries in warrantage system;
- Premature withdrawal of water resources and attacks on crops by nematodes have made it challenging to market gardening in some villages;
- Difficulties in identifying "trader information carriers" (business people) for a few villages in the municipality of Dingazi located in Farka area;

## **VI. Next steps**

The next quarter will coincide with the 2015 lean season. Thus, the program will implement activities which aim to consolidate the early recovery activities implemented during the previous quarter and before. So, the next quarter will focus on the following activities:

### ***Livestock***

- ✓ Training beneficiaries on animal strategic feeding;
- ✓ Distribution of vouchers for animal feed;
- ✓ Training on animal health
- ✓ Organization of joint missions by Mercy Corps, agents of the Ministry of Livestock in Ouallam and a private veterinarian's office to monitor the health and productivity of distributed goats;

### ***Nutrition***

- ✓ Training beneficiaries on goat milk processing techniques;

- ✓ Implementation of behavior change activities using community empowerment principles;
- ✓ Training sessions on the eight Essential Nutrition Activities (ENA);
- ✓ Activities to promote the eight ENA & “ANJE” practices during all village ceremonies and ECOOUT activities;
- ✓ Training of community outreach workers and health district agents;

***Community based early warning system***

- ✓ Training of CEWS coordinators;
- ✓ Establishment of new CEWS in the two other communes of the department to fill the gap of planned CEWS (at Simiri and Tondikuindi);
- ✓ Finalization of two local strategies as responses to different recurrent shocks faced by communities;
- ✓ Distribution of CEWS equipment to make them operational;
- ✓ Support CEWS in the development of their DRR plan;

***Agriculture***

- ✓ Implementation of the 2015 lean season activities (food for work);
- ✓ Distribution of microcredits and monitoring of their use by the beneficiaries;
- ✓ Strengthen the link between the activities of CEWS and the 2015 lean season activities

***Cross cutting activities***

- ✓ Gender Analysis and implementation strategy;
- ✓ Sessions of training on gender to the partners, staff and community;
- ✓ External evaluation of the effects of “red goats’ distribution” on households’ resilience.