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FOOD AND ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT (FED) PROGRAM FOR LIBERIA

QUARTERLY REPORT: APRIL - JUNE 2014



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Authors: Sandra Okoed and Nicholas Parkinson

Photo Caption: Bags of paddy rice in a storage facility located in Foya, Lofa County, await Liberian rice processor, Fabrar Liberia, for pick up. The firm made a 25 percent down payment on the rice in early May to motivate rice farmers.

DISCLAIMER

The authors' views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

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
FUN	Farmer Union Network
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
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

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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 societies 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 societies and the private sector in providing communities access to agricultural inputs—including improved seed varieties—extension services, nutrition messages, processing services, market information, transportation, credit, agro-business education, training, and enterprise 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

USAID FED verified rice surplus available in Lofa County and provided this information, including where these inventories are located, to local processor Fabrar Liberia. FED facilitated the negotiation between Fabrar and the farmers by providing information on costs and the markets, and helping the processor and the farmers to agree on \$19 USD price per 50kg bag of paddy rice. Fabrar Liberia made a 25 percent down payment of \$5,785.50 USD for 1,200 bags of paddy rice, or 60.9 MT. Fabrar made it clear to rice farmers that they plan to purchase up to 40,000 bags of paddy rice, and as a result, Foya-based farmers reported another 1,500 bags of paddy rice in their inventories.

USAID FED in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) formally inaugurated and officially turned over three community-based Rice Business Hubs in Nimba County (Doumpa, Payee and Boweh) to beneficiary farming groups.

The Rice Business Hubs, which are intended to support the community's ability to process and store their rice, are equipped with a storage facility, mill, de-stoner, thresher, solar dryer, parboiling machine, water source and latrines. These hubs will also be equipped with power tillers and rice threshers, which are managed by the farmers themselves. The hubs offer mechanized and storage services to rice farmers for a fee, and also serves as platform for rice trading where larger buyers can buy rice in bulk.

USAID FED and CARI inaugurated the CARI Livestock Quarantine Facility in Suakoko, Bong County. US Ambassador to Liberia, Ms. Deborah Malac, cut the ribbon at the inauguration attended by Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Ms. Seklau Wiles, the Head of Livestock Research at CARI, Dr. Arthur Karnuah, Land O' Lakes Acting Chief of Party, Ms. Allison Williams, and USAID FED staff. Program partner Land O' Lakes imported 209 goats for its goat restocking program throughout June 2014.

In May, USAID FED supported a goat trading event in Nimba County to pilot a marketing platform that aims to provide a formal and regular venue for traders and goat farmers to carry out buying and selling transactions. Traders expressed positive feedback and look forward to future similar such events. Goat sales generated \$965 USD at this inaugural event.

In April, USAID FED supported the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI) to hold the National M/SME Conference. This year's conference highlighted agri-business and youth; USAID FED supported the event by providing human resource, logistical and technical support. USAID FED showcased its activities in the trade fair and produced a rice video documentary which was aired during the USAID FED sponsored policy forum and at the awards dinner.

The President of Liberia signed Executive Order #64, suspending import tariffs on "essential equipment, agricultural seeds, live animals for breeding, and other goods directly related to agricultural development." USAID FED began to lobby for this in November 2013 and put together the list of agro-inputs and corresponding HS codes for MoCI to use to lobby for the measure.

During the quarter, USAID FED and partners launched the Liberia Agriculture Business Enabling Environment Inter-agency Policy Group (LABEE IPG), an executive level policy group that will focus on improving the business enabling environment for agriculture.

Component One: Increase Agricultural Productivity and Profitability

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

FY13 Rice Crop Sales

During Q3 FY14, a total of 144.53 MT of FY13 rice paddy crop was sold at a cumulative value of \$56,021.50 USD (Table 1). In total, 940.13MT of FY13 rice paddy valued at \$383,707.50 USD was sold during FY14.

Table 1: Rice crop sales in Q3 FY14.

County	Inventory Threshed and Bagged Q3 (MT)	Value of Inventory Q3 (USD)	Q3 Sales Volume (MT)	Q3 Value of Sales (USD)	Total Rice Sales Volumes YTD (MT)	Total rice Sales Value YTD(USD)
Lofa	138.18	53,506.50	138.18	53,506.50	144.28	57,263.50
Nimba	0.75	225	0.75	225	69	35,669.00
Bong	11.54	8,817.00	5.55	2,270.00	726.15	290,515.00
Grand Bassa	-	1,412.00	0.05	20	0.7	260
TOTAL	150.47	\$63,960.50	144.53	\$56,021.50	940.13	\$383,707.50

FY14 Lowland Rice Production Expansion

Farmer Mobilization and Recruitment

By the end of Q3 FY14, USAID FED mobilized and recruited a total of 10,794 (5,652 male and 5,142 female) lowland farmers from 191 groups across the four counties compared to the FY14 target of 8,972 lowland farmers (Table 2).

Table 2: Lowland rice production groups FY14.

County	Groups Recruited FY14 Production	FY14 Farmer Recruitment Target	Total # of Farmers Recruited YTD	# of Male Farmers	# of Female Farmers
Lofa	44	2,058	2,680	1,280	1,400
Nimba	75	4,434	4,672	2,603	2,069
Bong	58	2,130	3,092	1,574	1,518
Grand Bassa	14	350	350	195	155
Total	191	8,972	10,794	5,652	5,142

Lowland Site Selection and Land Preparation

USAID FED selected a total of 205 lowland sites across the four counties against a target of 158 anticipated sites for FY14. A total of 123.44 hectares were prepared for rice production in Q3 FY14 reaching a total of 1,310.4 ha prepared of the targeted 1,356 hectares (Table 3). To date, 205 sites have prepared rice seedlings and will be transplanting in July.

Table 3: Lowland site selection and preparation by county.

County	Target Sites for FY14	Total Sites Identified YTD	Ha Targeted for FY14	Total Ha Prepared YTD
Lofa	40	44	150	170
Nimba	72	75	405	377.9
Bong	32	58	757	737.5
Grand Bassa	14	28	44	25
Total	158	205	1356	1310.4

FY14 Upland Rice Productivity

Farmer Mobilization and Recruitment

USAID FED mobilized and recruited a total of 8,595 (5,342 male and 3,253 female) upland farmers, compared to the FY14 target of 10,177, from 206 groups across the four counties (Table 4).

Table 4: Upland rice production groups FY14.

County	Groups Recruited FY14 Production	FY14 Farmer Recruitment Target	Total # of Farmers Recruited in Q3 FY14	# of Male Farmers	# of Female Farmers
Lofa	33	3,600	2,478	1,137	1,341
Nimba	37	2,385	2,385	1,432	953
Bong	85	3,667	3,207	2,337	870
Grand Bassa	51	525	525	436	89
TOTAL	206	10,177	8,595	5,342	3,253

Upland Site Selection and Land Preparation

A total of 206 upland sites have been selected across the four counties against a target of 184 anticipated sites for FY14. A total of 2,345.32 ha from the targeted 1,863.20 ha have been cleared, measured, and farmers have commenced planting (Table 5).

Table 5: FY14 Upland site selection and land preparation by county.

County	Target Sites for FY14	Total Sites Identified by Q3 FY14	Ha Targeted for FY14	Total Ha Cleared and Planted as of Q3 FY14
Lofa	65	46	129	140
Nimba	43	37	90.2	95.32
Bong	66	85	1600	1620
Grand Bassa	10	56	44	490
Total	184	224	1,863.20	2,345.32

Increasing Productivity and Building Capacity

Distribution of Inputs

By the end of Q3 FY14, USAID FED completed rice seed distribution and delivered a total of 34.7 MT of rice seeds consisting of 22.55 MT of upland rice seeds (NERICA 14) and 11.7 MT of lowland (NERICA - LI9) (Table 6). In addition, USAID FED distributed 4.09 MT of peanuts and 2.05 MT of cowpeas for planting (Table 7).

Table 6: Distribution of rice seed to the counties.

County	Upland Seed Required FY14 (MT)	Upland Seed Delivered (MT)	Lowland Seed Required FY14 (MT)	Lowland Seed Delivered (MT)
Lofa	6.08	6.08	1.85	1.85
Nimba	4.523	4.523	5.8	5.80
Bassa	1.61	1.61	0.35	0.35
Bong	10.337	10.337	3.70	3.70
Total	22.55	22.55	11.70	11.70

Table 7: Input distribution to the counties, peanut and cowpeas seeds.

County	Peanut Seeds Required FY14 (MT)	Peanut Seeds Delivered (MT)	Cowpea Seeds Required FY14 (MT)	Cowpea Seeds Delivered (MT)
Lofa	0.252	0.252	0.126	0.126
Nimba	0.185	0.185	0.093	0.093
Bassa	0.043	0.043	0.022	0.022
Bong	3.608	3.608	1.804	1.804
Total	4.088	4.088	2.045	2.045

Upland Rice Production

In Q3, USAID FED facilitated a Trainers of Trainers (ToT) workshop in Bong County for four youth agriculture NGOs on strategies for cassava and upland rice production. Representatives from Community Youth Network Program (CYNP), Green Coast Agriculture Program (G-CAP), Liberia



Figure 1: A lowland rice site assisted by USAID FED in Bayers, Lofa County.

Integrated Professional Agriculture Service (LIPAS), Evangelical Children Rehabilitation Program (ECREP) and 36 technical and extension staff (32 male, 4 female) participated.

Rice Seed Production

USAID FED conducted rice seed production workshops for 33 farmers (27 male, 6 female) in Gbarnga, Bong County. The farmers learned about pre and post-harvest operations, seed quality, testing and certification, seed production protocols, as well as iron toxicity management. The farmers will work together with 984 farmers in rice seed production at 22 rice seed multiplication sites (10 lowland, 12 upland) in Bong, Nimba and Lofa counties. The training's overall goal is to assist farmers in producing quality rice seed in FY14. FED is providing improved seeds to new farmer beneficiaries in the hope that when they experience better yields from these seeds, the beneficiaries will be convinced to buy and plant higher quality seeds from seed producers trained by FED.

Urea Deep Placement

USAID FED conducted the evaluation of potential sites for the Urea Deep Placement (UDP) and System for Rice Intensification (SRI) FY14 field trials (Figure 1). As a result of the evaluation, three sites in Nimba and one site in Bong have been selected for the UDP-SRI field trials under the technical oversight of a UDP/SRI activity manager.

Construction of Water Management Infrastructure

During Q3 FY14, nine spillways were completed in Lofa, Bong and Nimba counties by communities with the support of Tallobenku Construction (Figure 2). It is anticipated that the 12 targeted spillways will be completed and operational by the end of July.



Figure 2: Spillway construction at Marmei Farm, Nimba County.



Figure 3: USAID FED trained operators mill rice at Doumpa, Nimba County.



Figure 4: Fabrar Liberia CEO, Fabio Lavelanet, weighs a bag of paddy rice with a farmer in Kolahun, Lofa County.

Community Rice Business Hubs

USAID FED, in collaboration with the MoA and USAID, formally inaugurated and officially turned over three community rice business hubs to farming groups in Nimba County: 1) From God to Man Farmers Association in Doumpa; 2) Payee Kolaheh Farmers Association in Payee; and 3) Boweh Lolewon Farmers Association in Boweh. The Rice Business Hubs will serve as a one-stop shop for services to rice farmers and will be owned and managed by rice farming groups. USAID FED is providing training and coaching on the management of these rice business hubs so they will be properly run and generate profits.

USAID FED is providing power tiller, rice thresher, solar dryer, parboiling tank, hand-pump well, de-stoner, rice mill, gender-friendly latrine, storage and store outlet for input supply and milled rice (Figure 3). They are centrally located to serve several communities with a critical mass of rice farmers. The rice business hub is a platform by which mechanized services (e.g., power tiller, rice mill), storage and input supply are made available and accessible to the rice farmers. At the same time, the hubs also serve as outlets for milled rice to increase the availability and marketability of local rice.

During the reporting period, the rice processing center at David Selma Town, Lofa County was completed. The construction work and equipment installation for the remaining six community rice business hubs in Lofa, Bong and Grand Bassa counties will be completed by the end of July 2014.

Once completed and operational, the ten rice hubs—Bong (3), Nimba (3), Lofa (3) and Bassa (1)—will have created 15 new jobs in addition to the 58 existing jobs.

Rice Processing

Construction at the Liberian owned Fabrar Liberia's rice processing facility is expected to be completed by the end of July 2014. This includes a new warehousing facility, the installation of the milling lines, and the hiring and training of machine operators. The inauguration of the facility will take place during August 2014.

At Fabrar Liberia's request, the program assisted in recruiting rice mill technicians to work at the Fabrar's Kakata-based rice mill. Fabrar selected 12 graduates from BWI to work at the rice mill.

Market Access for Rice Producers

USAID FED verified the availability of surplus rice in Lofa County and helped facilitate an agreement with rice farmers on the sale of rice paddy to Fabrar Liberia (Figure 4). The processor and the farmers agreed on \$19 USD per 50kg bag, and Fabrar Liberia made a 25 percent down payment of \$5,785.5 USD on 1,200 bags of paddy rice, or 60.9 MT. The balance of \$17,356.50 USD will be paid during the first week of July when Fabrar Liberia collects the rice from multiple storage facilities in Lofa County.

By the end of June, an additional 1,500 bags valued at \$28,500 USD had been aggregated by farmers in Foya for Fabrar to buy. Fabrar has allocated sufficient funds to procure 2,000 MT of rice from Liberian rice producers during the FY14 period.

Task 1B: Increased Production and Profitability of the Cassava Value Chain

FY14 Cassava Production & Preparation

A total of 1,169.7 ha were prepared for FY14 crop production across the four counties during Q3 of FY14 (Table 8) while 792.1 ha were planted during the same period. Year to date, 2,069.7 ha have been prepared and 792.1 ha planted during FY14. Farmers will plant the remaining hectares in Q4 FY14.

Table 8: Cassava land preparation and planting in Q3 FY14.

Counties	FY14 Targets, Land Preparation (ha)	Total Ha Prepared in Q3 (ha)	Total Ha planted in Q3 for FY14 crop	Total land prepared YTD (Ha)	Total # ha planted YTD for FY14 crop
Nimba	840	490.7	100	490.7	100
Grand Bassa	630	-	630	900	630
Bong	420	469	15	469	15
Lofa	210	210	47.1	210	47.1
Total	2,100	1,169.7	792.1	2,069.7	792.1

Cassava Harvests and Sales

During Q3 FY14, a total of 3.36 MT of raw cassava tubers from the FY13 crop were harvested and sold for \$283 USD (Table 9). In total, 62.36 MT have been harvested and sold for \$356 USD during FY14. The majority of farmers have yet to start harvesting. The cassava crop is ideally left in the ground for 15 to 18 months in order to ensure proper maturity.

Table 9: Cassava harvest and crop sales in Q3 FY14.

County	FY14 Production Targets, Raw Tuber (MT)	Total Volume of Raw Tuber Harvested in Q3 (MT)	Sales Value in Q3 FY14 (USD)	Total Volume Harvested YTD (MT)	Total Sales Value YTD (USD)

Nimba	2,130	-	-	-	-
Grand Bassa	1,598	3.36	283	13.86	321
Bong	1,065	-	-	39	-
Lofa	532	-	-	9.5	35
Total	5,325	3.36	\$283	62.36	\$356

FY14 Farmer Mobilization and Recruitment

USAID FED completed site selection and the recruitment of a total of 12,000 farmers in Grand Bassa, Nimba, Bong and Lofa counties. USAID FED also signed MoUs with *kuu* leaders located in 40 cluster communities. These farmers have been provided with tools and trained on improved practices to include application of mounds and ridges on 600 demonstration plots, each measuring 0.25ha established across the 4 counties (Table 10).

Table 10: Breakdown of cassava production cluster progress by county in Q3 FY14.

Activity Description	Cassava Value Chain FY14 Targets	Q3 FY14 Achievements (April – June)				Achievement YTD
		Nimba	Grand Bassa	Bong	Lofa	
Farmers recruited and trained	12,000	4,800	3,600	2,400	1,200	12,000
Demonstration sites established	600	240	180	120	60	600
Demonstration sites under improved technology	150 ha	60 ha	45 ha	30 ha	15 ha	150 ha

Cassava Nursery Establishment

During the reporting period, the International Institute for Tropical Agriculture (IITA) delivered a total of 44,000 cassava cuttings of 11 improved varieties to the Central Agriculture Research Institute (CARI). Of these, 34,000 cuttings are under screening in two controlled sites in Lofa County, and 10,000 cuttings are at CARI in Bong County. CARI technicians will provide technical oversight while the inspections for adaptability, environmental stress tolerance, disease resistance and suitability for further multiplication will be conducted by experts from IITA.

By the end of Q3 FY14, a total of 60 ha of land were brushed and cleared to establish commercial nursery farms in the four counties. A total of 40 commercial nurseries will be established to boost availability of improved planting material for an estimated 12,000 cassava farmers. The nurseries are located in Nimba (24 ha), Grand Bassa (18 ha), Bong (12 ha) and Lofa (6 ha). Each nursery will be owned and managed by 40 USAID FED-trained commercial cutting producers (33 men, 7 women) who were trained on commercial cutting production during the reporting period.



Figure 5: Women processing by hand at a processing site in Brewerville, Montserrado County.

Cassava Processing

During the reporting period, USAID FED hired a Processing Enterprise Specialist and a Cassava Enterprise Development Officer to support market development and linkages interventions in the value chain.

USAID FED evaluated 23 rural cassava processing enterprises across the four counties to assess their ability to support the proposed cassava business hub concept at the county level (Figure 5). A total of 16 processing enterprises have been pre-selected for MoU engagements and technical support based on their geographical location and their hardware and technical needs. In addition, 11 SMEs based in Monrovia were assessed as potential buyers of cassava. Three of these companies expressed interest in buying cassava from USAID FED supported farmers, and are potential targets for Global Development Alliance (GDA) arrangements.

Task 1C: Increased Production and Profitability of the Goat Value Chain



Figure 6: Completed goat shelter at Zodoie Farmers Association site in Nimba County.

Establishment of Goat Shelters

USAID FED distributed goat shelter construction materials to 56 goat production intensification sites in Bong, Lofa, Nimba and Grand Bassa counties. Materials include zinc for roofing, nails and fencing. To date, six shelters have been fully constructed in Nimba County (Figure 6). In total, 84 goat shelters will be constructed—Nimba (30), Lofa (20), Bong (25) and Grand Bassa (9)—in FY14. All shelters are expected to be completed by end of September 2014.

USAID FED trained and contracted 23 sawyers and 28 carpenters (all male) to help farmers source the lumber locally and to oversee the construction of the shelters.

Goat Farmer Recruitment

During this period, a total of 2,060 farmers (1,260 male, 800 female) in 84 goat groups were recruited for FY14 activities. All 84 goat groups have signed MoUs with USAID FED to support the construction of goat shelters for improved animal husbandry. By the end of June, these farmers had a cumulative animal stock of 4,803 goats (Table 11). A total of 1,217 goats (365 in Bong, 512 in Lofa and 340 in Nimba) belonging to 624 farmers (218 in Bong, 126 in Lofa and 280 in Nimba), were dewormed during Q3 FY14.

Table 11: FY14 Goat farmer recruitment as of Q3.

County	FY14 Farmer Target	# of Farmers Recruited by Q3	# of Male Farmers	# of Female Farmers	Total # of Goats Q3 FY14	# Does	# Bucks	# Kids
Nimba	600	693	341	296	717	527	140	59
Grand Bassa	180	275	166	111	782	452	184	146
Bong	500	596	493	179	1,723	1,297	388	38
Lofa	400	496	260	214	1581	1083	148	350
Total	1680	2060	1,260	800	4,803	3,359	860	593

Community Animal Health Worker (CAHW) Training

During the quarter, USAID FED trained 168 Community Animal Health Workers (1 male, 167 female) on the identification, prevention and treatment of various goat diseases (Figure 7).

The training exercise took place at a pre-selected goat production intensification site located in each county and was conducted by USAID FED staff and a voluntary veterinary medicine graduate student from Cornell University.

At the close of the training, all the participants received start-up kits comprised of a cool box, needles, syringes, multivitamins and drugs to treat common goat diseases. The trained CAHWs were also linked to agro-pharmacists in their areas through a voucher program.

Goat Sales

During the reporting period, goat farmers across the four counties reported that 932 goats were sold for a total of \$58,158 USD. Year to date, 1,218 goats have been sold for a total of \$74,253 USD (Table 12).

Table 12: Goat sales for Q3 FY14.



Figure 7: Newly trained CAHW vaccinates a goat during practical session during the training event.

County	# of Goat Farmer Groups	# of goats sold in Q3	Value of goats sold in Q3 (USD)	# of Goats sold YTD	Total Value of Goats Sold YTD (USD)
Nimba	30	31	1,425	98	6,805
Grand Bassa	9	137	8,735	166	10,555
Bong	25	372	30,190	520	36,100
Lofa	20	392	17,808	444	20,793
Total	84	932	\$58,158	1,228	\$74,253

CARI Livestock Quarantine Facility

US Ambassador Deborah Malac inaugurated the CARI Livestock Quarantine Facility located in Suakoko, Bong County on April 4, 2014. The Deputy Minister of Agriculture Ms. Seklau Wiles, the Head of Livestock Research at CARI Dr. Arthur Karnuah, and Land O' Lakes (LOL) Acting Chief of Party, Allison Williams were in attendance.

USAID FED created and distributed a Quarantine Park Management Guidelines manual in order to provide guidance in quarantine management for CARI staff and LOL.

In the month of June, LOL imported 209 goats from Guinea and Ivory Coast. The goats were transported by truck over the border and quarantined at CARI. CARI is observing the animals, which will be distributed to LOL and FED beneficiaries after the required quarantine period if they demonstrate good health and readiness for distribution.



Figure 8: A Nimba County goat farmer makes a deal with a Montserrado-based livestock trader.

Goat Trading Event

USAID FED piloted a goat trading event in Nimba County to facilitate linkages between goat production clusters and traders from Ganta and Monrovia. A total of 13 lead farmers from goat production clusters in Nimba County and six goat traders participated in the event in which 20 goats were sold for \$965 USD (Figure 8).

Both traders and goat farmers responded positively to regularly holding such events to enable regular access to markets for producer groups, and access to goat supply in Liberia for animal traders. USAID FED will roll out similar events across the four counties in the coming months, and take lessons learned into consideration to improve participation and governance aspects of trade negotiations.

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

Production, Harvest and Sales

During Q3 FY14, the second vegetable production season commenced with a total of 379 vegetable farmers (267 males, 112 females) in 21 clusters in Montserrado, Margibi, Grand Bassa and Nimba counties.

The vegetable clusters carried out land preparation, field layout and vegetable nursery construction, and are currently carrying out field maintenance on 116.23 hectares of land (Figure 9). In this period, USAID FED trained and provided technical coaching to each of the clusters and linked the clusters to a voucher program for 50 percent cost share on inputs.



Figure 9: Nursery maintenance at White Plane

Integrated Pest Management

During the reporting period, USAID FED monitored pest and disease prevalence in 15 districts in Montserrado County and two districts in Nimba County. The farmers noted infestations were largely responsible for the significant yield reduction.

Some of the recommendations that arose from the evaluation included sourcing a broader range of pesticides and chemicals that farmers can use, as the existing broad spectrum chemicals such as *Decis* seem to be ineffective. During Q4 FY14, the 21 clusters will receive training on Integrated Pest Management (IPM) as well as new chemicals to test on their fields.

Vegetable Sales

In Q3 FY14, the 21 vegetable clusters sold a total of 37.85 MT of vegetables valued at \$29,405.89 USD. In addition, during the same period, the Monrovia Vegetable Sellers Association traded a total of 18.5 MT of vegetables valued at \$15,472.30 USD. Sales from FY13 vegetable groups that are participating in VSLA activities amounted to 106.8 MT valued at \$31,805.63 USD (Tables 13, 14). Total sales for FY14 YTD comes to \$85,784.51 USD.

Table 13: Vegetable sales for Q3 FY14 of the 21 clusters.

County	Q3 Volume of Sale in (kg)	Q3 Sales in USD	YTD Volume of Sales (kg)	Total Value of Sales YTD (USD)
Montserrado	14520.4	\$13,049.28	22695.7	\$22,170.78
Nimba	10444.7	\$7,054.26	11024.7	\$7,585.26
Margibi	12399	\$6,317.35	14777.5	\$8,083.36
Grand Bassa	486.87	\$2,985.00	641.87	\$667.18

Total	37,850.97	\$29,405.89	49,139.77	\$38,506.58
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Table 14: FY14 vegetables sales by FY13 groups participating in VSLAs and traders associations.

Group	Volume Sold (kg)	Sales Value (USD)
Monrovia Vegetable Traders Association	18,549	15,472.30
Total	18,549	\$15,472.30
VSLA -United Farmers Association (UFA)	28,350	14,959.38
VSLA - Zoedoar Farmers Association	57,450	10,761.25
VSLA –Menlehkoyee	21,000	6,085.00
Total	106,800	\$31,805.63

Installation of Drip Irrigation Kits

During Q3 FY14, USAID FED distributed and installed a total of 360 drip irrigation kits on 360 farmers' fields in the four counties. Farmers also received training on irrigation kit installation and effective utilization. These kits will demonstrate the effectiveness of irrigation technology in vegetable production during the dry seasons (Figure 10).



Figure 10: Drip irrigation technology at White Plane Cluster. Montserrado County.

Community Collection Centers

A total of 18 out of 20 collection centers have been established across the vegetable clusters for the aggregation and sorting of vegetables. The 18 collection centers are located in Montserrado, Margibi and Nimba counties; the two remaining collection centers are expected to be completed during the month of July.

During the reporting period, USAID FED coached 104 (54 male, 49 female) participants from farming groups on record keeping, focusing on the importance of maintaining records, analyzing running costs and profits generated. The mentorship is part of USAID FED's strategy to ensure profitability and sustainability of operations in the collection centers.

Solar Dryer Construction and Training

During the reporting period, USAID FED trained four carpenters and six lead farmers (all male) from the Buchanan and Tubmanville clusters in Grand Bassa County on how to use and construct solar dryers. The trainees also received simplified illustrated fabrication guides to help them with their work. The solar dryers will be used to dry chili pepper and preserve its shelf life.

Trader Support Activities

During the reporting period, USAID FED facilitated a meeting between the Monrovia Vegetable Sellers Association and vegetable farmers to formalize contractual business relationships between the two parties. The purpose of the platform is to stimulate purchase agreements and information sharing between supported clusters and traders. A total of 20 formal contracts have been signed between 20 members of the Monrovia Vegetable Sellers Association and 21 USAID FED supported vegetable clusters to regularly supply vegetables.

Market Linkages

During the quarter, USAID FED facilitated the signing of purchasing contracts between ROSNA, a firm which provides catering services to Arcelor Mittal, and seven farmers representing the Yekepa Vegetable Production Cluster in Nimba County. Since the agreement was signed, the farmers have generated a total of \$3,345 USD in revenue from supplying vegetables to ROSNA. ROSNA has also signed a similar agreement with the Tubmanville vegetable cluster in Buchanan, Grand Bassa.

Subtask 1.1: Special Studies and MoA Data Collection Systems Development

Rapid Rural Appraisal

USAID FED sub-contracted DEN-L, a local NGO, to carry out rapid rural appraisal (RRA) with the following objectives:

The RRA will first identify four categories of lowland areas (both cultivated and with potential for cultivation) within Lofa, Bong, Nimba and Grand Bassa counties outside of areas already supported by USAID FED, and then categorized them as follows:

- Lowlands less than 2 hectares
- Lowlands that are more than 2 ha but less than 5 hectares
- Lowlands that are between 5 and 10 hectares
- Lowlands that are above 10 hectares

The RRA will also identify all the major production areas outside of areas already supported by USAID FED for rice, cassava, vegetables and goats in Lofa, Bong, Nimba and Grand Bassa counties with emphasis on the following:

- a) Mapping of production for value chain clusters that have the potential to sufficiently feed raw materials to processing mills or deliver bulk produce to large buyers. Production Clusters are classified as:
 - Rice: approximately 150 hectares of historically cultivated upland and lowland located within close proximity (areas with rice production concentration) to each other.
 - Cassava: approximately 100 hectares of land planted within close proximity (high cassava production areas) to each other.
 - Vegetable: a minimum of 3 hectares of land planted by a minimum of 15 farming households within close proximity.
 - Goat: location of communities with a minimum of 100 goats within close proximity (high goat concentrated areas) to each other, indicative of the goat owners

- b) Mapping of locations where active and regular markets exist for rice, cassava, vegetable and goat commodities with distance measurements. These should include USAID FED supported areas.
- c) Determine selling patterns of rice, cassava, vegetable and goat, for example how much of each commodity is sold, how often each commodity is sold, when the sales of these commodities take place, how many people are estimated to sell each commodity, the buyer's profile and whether there is unmet demand for each commodity. These should include USAID FED supported areas.
- d) Determine buying patterns for household consumption for each of USAID FED's commodities, i.e., how much of HH income is spent on rice, cassava, vegetables, goats? How often do they buy these commodities and where?
- e) Who are the donors operating in the area and what are their interventions? These should include USAID FED supported areas.

The RRA will identify all the processing and storage facilities for the value chains in Lofa, Bong, Nimba and Grand Bassa counties with emphasis on the following:

- a) Rice: Identify location, determine size (cubic meters), current state (operational or not), and map locations of storage facilities.
- b) All value chains: Identify location, determine capacity (output capacity), current utilization and prepare a map of processing facilities (including slaughter houses for goats).
- c) All value chains: Identify location, determine size (cubic meters), current use, and map locations of collection centers, trading hub, aggregation points or buying stations for the USAID FED value chains, specify which commodities they are used for, and who owns the center.

Finally, the RRA will identify support services for agriculture, especially for the value chains, in the four counties. Such support services include: mechanized services, input suppliers/agro-dealers, and financial lending institutions that support agriculture. Identify private entrepreneurs and others involved with bulk buying of rice, cassava, vegetable and goats in Lofa, Bong, Nimba and Grand Bassa counties.

The study is expected to be completed at the end of September 2014.

Subtask 1.2: Improve Access to Agriculture Inputs

Rice Seed Multiplication

During the reporting period, 10 lowland sites (40ha) and 12 upland sites (120ha) were prepared for planting. The nurseries were constructed and transplanting is expected to take place during the third week of July. Construction of irrigation spillways is also taking place at seven of the sites.

USAID FED delivered all rice seed requirements for seed multiplication in FY14. A total of 1.8 MT of Nerica14 and 4.2 MT of Lac 23 were supplied to the upland sites, and 2 MT of Nerica L19 was distributed to Bong, Nimba and Lofa counties for the lowland sites. The ten lowland sites were also supplied with 40 UDP applicators.

During the reporting period, USAID FED distributed 4.2 MT of fertilizer (2.4 MT NPK and 1.8 MT urea granules) to Bong, Nimba, Lofa and Grand Bassa counties. The fertilizer will benefit the 22 rice seed multiplication sites in these areas.

USAID FED trained 30 seed inspectors, 17 non-FED staff (12 male, 5 female) and 13 FED staff (10 male, 3 female), in May and contracted them to conduct inspections on the rice seed multiplication sites during the upcoming growing season. Each inspector has been allocated a schedule indicating sites to inspect. In July 2014, the research organization Africa Rice will assess the inspection standards to ensure that seed certification protocols are being followed.

UDP Technology Demonstration

USAID FED is demonstrating urea deep placement (UDP) as a more efficient and productive method of fertilizer use. Two approaches for demonstrating this technology are being carried out in FY14. One approach is demonstrating UDP alongside urea broadcasting and zero fertilizer application. Another approach is demonstrating UDP only. Each approach will be carried out at 50 sites, for a total of 100 sites. In FY15, a follow up study will determine which approach is more effective in terms of adoption rate.

As of the end of Q3, USAID FED prepared 50 UDP 3-treatment trial sites, or 150 ha of land, for the FY14 season. Of the 50 sites, 29 sites are in Nimba, 14 sites are in Bong, and seven sites are in Lofa. These sites will demonstrate the effects of three treatments pertaining to soil fertility management and their impact on yield. Treatment 1 (T1) will receive all improved technologies, but no fertilizer. Treatment 2 will receive all improved technologies as in T1, plus muriate of potash (MoP), triple superphosphate (TSP) and urea granules applied via broadcasting. Treatment 3 will receive all improved technologies as in T1, plus MoP, TSP and urea in briquette form that will be applied through deep placement.

In addition, 89 sites are undergoing preparation and will receive all improved technologies and UDP. Fifty of these 89 sites are included in a UDP study for FY15, which is mentioned above.

Soil Sample Analysis

Per the recommendations from Dr. Upendra Singh's UDP technology application study submitted in April, USAID FED commenced soil sample collection for testing to determine the soil's nutrient levels. The results of the tests will inform future rates of fertilizer applications.

During the quarter, USAID FED collected soil samples from 132 lowland sites, including the 100 UDP study sites. USAID FED sent 20 samples of 100g each (2kg) to the IFDC Laboratory in Alabama, USA for micronutrient requirement testing. A further 300 samples of 100g each (30kgs) were sent to the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) in Ghana for testing. Triangulation of results from two laboratories will ensure that the proper fertilization needs are determined. The results of the tests are expected in July 2014.



Figure 11: Participants in a practical session during the soil sample collection training in Nimba County.

USAID FED developed a training manual and conducted training in Montserrado, Bong and Nimba counties for 58 participants (57 male, 1 female) (Figure 11) on soil sample collection.

USAID FED has also contracted a soil chemist to train both USAID FED and non USAID FED personnel on soil testing and fertilizer rate computation based on soil test results. A total of four HACH test kits were procured and are expected to arrive in Liberia in July 2014.

PUA Dry Season II Voucher Program

During the reporting period, USAID FED, through Wienco and its network of agro-dealers, distributed 354 input vouchers meant to stimulate the demands for inputs in the 21 USAID FED supported clusters. The composition of the voucher includes fertilizers, pesticides and seed varieties valued at \$160 USD. To purchase the package, each farmer must pay \$80 USD out of pocket. By the end of the closing voucher window period in May, 97 vouchers were redeemed, representing a 28 percent redemption rate (Table 15).

Table 15: Vegetable voucher reconciliation for PUA Dry Season II.

County	# of Vouchers Distributed	# of Vouchers Redeemed
Montserrado	112	61
Margibi	145	11
Grand Bassa	23	1
Nimba	72	24
Total # of Vouchers	352	97

USAID FED and input supply company Wienco conducted a rapid assessment to determine the reasons for the low redemption rate, and established that the package composition of vouchers, the cost of the voucher, as well as the limited cash flow of farmers influenced their inability to redeem vouchers for the dry season production. A lessons learned workshop that includes the input supply company, the agro-dealers and vegetable farmers will be held during July 2014 to discuss the low redemption rates and how best to design a future program, especially for the wet season. The USAID FED team is strategizing other options to stimulate demand for inputs.



Figure 12: Nimba County based agro-pharmacist helped distribute material.

Goat Voucher Program

During the reporting period, USAID FED trained 42 extension staff (2 male, 40 female) on voucher distribution and the voucher redemption process.

A total of 103 goat health kits, valued at \$107 USD each, were distributed through eight identified agro-pharmacists to 206 trained Community Animal Health Workers (CAHW) in the four counties. USAID FED partner, BRAC Liberia, identified the agro-pharmacists (Figure 12).

The starter kits will ensure that rural farmers have access to affordable animal health care material and services. The subsequent voucher subsidy will cover 75 percent of the cost for CAHWs. In the future, CAHWs would turn to the selected agro-pharmacists to secure their drug requirements.

Subtask 1.3: Agricultural Extension Support

Development of Documentary

During the reporting period, USAID FED produced a rice video which was aired at the MSME Conference's Policy Forum and the MSME Awards Dinner at the Monrovia City Hall in May 2014. The video focusses on the challenges surrounding the competitiveness and profitability of Liberia's rice value chain.

Development of Extension Material

USAID FED developed four fact sheets on the major diseases affecting cassava production in Liberia. The fact sheets, which are integrated with nutritional messages, are part of a new "Cassava Disease ID and Management" series intended for use by USAID FED, MoA and NGO field extension staff working on the cassava value chain. Simplified versions of these materials are being produced for farmers.

Nutrition Messaging

USAID FED produced four nutrition jingles to be tested in Bong and Grand Bassa counties. The jingles were translated into two local languages, Bassa and Kpelle, as well as simple Liberian English. The jingles were tested in Grand Bassa during June 2014 on a rural radio station. The jingles are promoting diet diversification and the importance of animal based protein nutrition for pregnant women and children under the age of two.

Radio Extension Program

During the month of May, USAID FED organized a one-day round table event to discuss the role of radio in agriculture extension. Throughout the event, USAID FED signed MoUs with four community

radio stations from Lofa, Bong, Grand Bassa and Nimba counties towards the production and airing of 30-minute agriculture radio shows on a weekly basis. County radio stations Radio LACSA of Grand Bassa, Radio Bongese of Bong, Radio Kergheamahn of Nimba and Radio Taikor Lofa, together with farmers, the Press Union of Liberia, MoA and other agri-business stakeholders participated in the event.

During the event USAID FED made a commitment to provide four laptop computers, digital voice recorders, rain gear and internet modems to enhance the work of the four partner radio stations. The Deputy Agriculture Minister for Planning and Research, Dr. Charles McClain, stressed the need for the media to exert more effort in reporting on the agriculture sector and to bring to the public's attention challenges involved in food production in Liberia and the work of the MoA and its development partners in improving production systems in Liberia. According to Dr. McClain, there is a lot happening in the sector but the information is not getting to the public.

Component Two: Stimulate Private Sector Growth and Investment

Task 2: Enabling Policy Environment for Private Sector Growth

Policy Reform Activities

In May, USAID launched the Liberia Agriculture Business Enabling Environment Inter-agency Policy Group (LABEE IPG) to facilitate moving forward with policy initiatives that stimulate growth in the agriculture sector. The LABEE IPG consists of key technical personnel from Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI), MoA, National Investment Commission, the Governance Commission, the National Legislature, World Food Program, International Finance Corporation and private sector partners such as Weinco, Gro Green, Fouta Corp, Liberia Fruits Company, among others. The group adopted its terms of reference in June. The follow up meeting is scheduled for July 3, 2014.

Seed Certification, Crop Protection Chemical, and Livestock Policy

In April, USAID FED held a multi-stakeholder consultative meeting at the Ministry of Agriculture to determine the next steps in the process for creating legislation and implementing the National Seed and National Crop Protection Chemical policies. The MoA confirmed that policies existing at the ECOWAS level simply need to be adopted through publication and promulgation in the National Gazette. Minister Florence Chenoweth also stated that MoA can move forward with the implementation of the policies without the policies being passed into legislation through the National Legislature. The Liberia Law Reform Commission (LLRC) also confirmed that MoA has the jurisdiction to implement its own regulations without a national law.

In the interim, regional representatives from the West Africa Seed Project (WASP), West Africa Fertilizer Project, and ECOWAS re-confirmed the need to adopt the ECOWAS regulations. A team consisting of the ECOWAS Commission, the World Bank, and the Mano River Union Secretariat will pay a high level visit to Liberia for a discussion with Minister Chenoweth in July.

2014 National MSME Conference

To facilitate the communication and adoption of policies promoted by the project, USAID FED supported the MoCI to convene the MSME Conference 2014, April 29-30, 2014. This year's conference highlighted agri-business and youth. USAID FED supported the event by doing the following:

- Supported planning and implementation of the event;
- Procured a live radio show, catering, public announcement systems, conference banner, and conference hall rental;
- Promoted the event through county-based radio announcements as well as staff participation in a live radio show on the national radio station, ELBC;
- Exhibited all four value chains from input supply to consumer at the conference trade fair. The exhibition also included new value chain marketing material and value chain infographic posters (Figure 13);
- Produced a documentary style video explaining the rice value chain, subsector constraints, implementation strategies, and policy initiatives;
- Transported and lodged 18 USAID FED farmers, agri-businesses, and county-based radio journalists who attended the conference; and
- Promoted local agri-business through the participation of major input suppliers such as Wienco, Gro Green, Price Trading, Arjay Farms, and Arise and Shine and Fabrar Liberia, who exhibited their products in the trade fair exhibition.



Figure 13: USAID FED's stall at the MoCI conference.

USAID FED led four breakout sessions at the conference including

- *The Other Side of Agriculture: Opportunities for Business* showcased youth and women engaged in profitable agricultural activities.
- *Value Chain Financing: Solutions for Liberia* presented embedded financing schemes that enable formal financing to reach marginalized farmers that involve more bankable downstream value chain stakeholders, such as agro-input suppliers, aggregators, and buyers.
- *Market Intelligence* presented the topic within the Liberia context among donors, ICT providers, private sector investors, and MoCI to find solutions.
- *Policy Dialogue Session* focused on a small number of strategic policies that will encourage private sector investment and support for overall growth of the agriculture sector, particularly rice, cassava, goats and vegetables value chains.

Overall, the MSME Conference was a success for USAID FED's work based on the following results:

- The 25 percent local procurement regulation (Small Business Empowerment Act) is expected to be ratified into law by July. The law will require the GoL to procure at least 25 percent of their goods and services from locally registered businesses.
- The President of Liberia signed Executive Order #64, suspending import tariffs on “essential equipment, agricultural seeds, live animals for breeding, and other goods directly related to agricultural development” on April 25, 2014. USAID FED began to lobby for this in November 2013 and put together the list of agro-inputs and corresponding HS codes for MoCI to use to lobby for the measure.
- Deputy Minister for Industry, Ameh Bah, agreed to champion the effort to recruit members for the TWG for LABEE. Deputy Minister Bah also committed his team to lead the TWG in partnership with USAID FED. The group drafted terms of reference in June.

Subtask 2.1: Access to Credit and Business Development Services

In Q3 FY14, USAID FED and the Loan Extension Agents (LEA) completed the following tasks:

- Completed introduction to VSLA in the six counties and signed MoUs to carry out a VSLA program with 93 groups;
- Assisted in the development of a USAID FED-specific VSLA curriculum; and
- Recruited 20 Community-based Facilitation Officers (CFOs) in the six counties and conducted a five-day VSLA Training of Trainers in Gbarnga. The 20 CFOs will support new VSLA groups among FED FY13 and FY14 farming clusters.

As of Q3 2014, the 26 FY13 VSLA groups and the 96 new VSLA groups have provided approximately \$150,000 USD in loans to members (Table 16).

In FY14, USAID FED set targets to disburse loans to 124 VSLA groups, support over 3,300 farmers to access loans, disburse \$149,000 USD in loans to farmers, and disburse \$89,000 USD in loans to M/SMEs. The project aims to disburse an overall total of \$240,000 USD in loans.

Table 16: VSLA group results for Q3 FY14.

Date (FY14)	# of Groups	# of Active Members	Shares Purchased (USD)	Total Ag Loans (USD)	# of Members with Ag Loans
Nov-Dec	26	627	\$18,516	\$10,542	443
Jan	26	642	\$6,789	\$5,826	243
Feb	26	701	\$10,111	\$11,375	286
Mar	26	705	\$10,972	\$8,908	259

Apr	26	836	\$9,332	\$7,737	133
May	120	3,116	\$34,531	\$21,533	589
Jun	122	3,246	\$28,835	\$24,201	679
Total	122	3,246	\$119,086	\$90,123	2,632
FY14 Targets	124			\$149,982	3,318

VSLA members reported utilizing loan funds for agriculture activities such as hiring labor to brush and maintain fields; purchasing seeds, agro-chemicals and tools; and for transporting goods to the market.

The VSLA program includes mentorship in group leadership, managing conflicts, and record keeping over a nine month period until the groups' final payout (disbursement of savings and accrued interest).



Figure 14: The Zoedoar Women's Group pays back their loan in full.

The pilot of 26 groups will 'graduate' and are expected to make payouts in July 2014. The groups that make a payout are encouraged to begin a new cycle, typically recruiting more members or splitting into two groups to accommodate higher numbers. USAID FED will follow the progress of these groups.

Micro Finance for Farmers

In the first quarter, Liberia Entrepreneurial & Asset Development (LEAD), a local microfinance institution (MFI), signed loan agreements totaling \$1,630,000 LD (\$20,375 USD) for individual vegetable farmers in Montserrado and Margibi who were part of FY2013 demonstration plots. In the second quarter, LEAD issued small loans to four

USAID FED PUA vegetable clusters to purchase water pumps for a total of \$221,000 LD (\$2,600 USD) inclusive of 16 percent interest.

At the end of Q3 FY14, five of the initial seven groups paid off their loans in full as a result of successful sales of vegetables, while other groups have made partial payments. The remaining four PUA group loans are due in September. In total, 89 percent of the amount loaned in Q1 has been paid off.

As a result of the successful pay off rate, LEAD has increased its loan offer to USAID FED farmers to LD \$3 million (approximately \$36,000 USD). Three groups have already been approved for new loans: Menlehkoyee for \$500,000 LD and Zoedoar for \$1,000,000 LD, who received loans in June and UFA for \$500,000 LD, who will receive the loan in July (Figure 14).

The results through June are as follows (Table 17).

Table 17: Loans and associated sales as of June 2014.

Group	Loan Principal (USD)	Loan + Interest (USD)	Amount Repaid (USD)	Associated Sales (USD)	Ex Rate (LD/USD)	Disbursement	Maturity
United Farmers Association (UFA)	\$2,630	\$3,131	\$3,131	\$14,247	80	Oct 2013	May 2014
Zoedoar	\$5,229	\$6,225	\$6,225	\$10,249	80	Nov 2013	May 2014
Menlehkoyee	\$2,614	\$3,112	\$3,112	\$5,795	80	Nov 2013	May 2014
Money in the Bush	\$1,882	\$2,241	\$2,241	TBD	80	Nov 2013	May 2014
Kukatnonon	\$1,559	\$1,856	\$1,856	TBD	81	Dec 2013	Jun 2014
Kuwikai	\$1,559	\$1,856	\$1,135	TBD	81	Dec 2013	Jun 2014
Welekema	\$1,559	\$1,856	\$309	TBD	81	Dec 2013	Jun 2014
Cinta Horton	\$137	\$163		TBD	85	Mar 2014	Sep 2014
Kollie Kan Ta	\$137	\$163		TBD	85	Mar 2014	Sep 2014
Weala	\$137	\$163		TBD	85	Mar 2014	Sep 2014
Kpoya	\$137	\$163		TBD	85	Mar 2014	Sep 2014
Zoedoar (#2)	\$9,545				88	Jun 2014	Dec 2014
Menlehkoyee (#2)	\$4,773				88	Jun 2014	Dec 2014
Total USD*	\$31,879	\$37,973	\$18,010	\$30,291			
FY14 Targets	\$89,736						

* Loans disbursed in Liberian Dollars. USD Calculation based on average exchange rate for the month in which the loan was disbursed.

In addition, from April to May a local agro-input supplier, Wienco Liberia, provided agro-inputs on credit to nine rural agro-input dealers for a value totaling \$56,320 USD. This was as a result of the FED voucher program for PUA farmers to offer vouchers to 352 farmers.

Through VSLA, microfinance loans, and embedded financing USAID FED-supported farmers and businesses have accessed a total amount of \$178,340 USD in FY14 (Table 18).

Table 18: Total loans in USD accessed by farmers through VSLA, LEAD, and Embedded Financing to date.

Type	Q1	Q2	April	May	June	Q3	Total	FY14 Target
LEAD	\$17,033	\$546	-	-	\$14,318	\$14,318	\$31,387	\$89,736
VSLA	\$10,542	\$26,109	\$7,737	\$21,533	\$24,201	\$53,471	\$90,123	\$149,952
Wienco*	-	-	\$56,320	-	-	\$56,320	\$56,320	\$ 87,312
Total	\$27,575	\$26,655	\$64,057	\$21,053	\$38,519	\$124,110	\$178,340	\$327,000
*Represents embedded financing (in-kind credit given between value chain stakeholders)								
Note that Indicator Progress Report uploaded in PIDS for Q1 and Q2 Total Loans show a variance of +%9,766 and -\$14,607 respectively from quarterly reports. This is due to post quarter adjustments from gathering loan data from the field. In the IPR, the total difference of +\$4,842 has been added to Q3 in order to reconcile the variances.								

Business Training and Mentorship to Access Finance

USAID FED, in collaboration with the Enterprise Development Specialist at Liberia Investing in Business Expansion (IBEX), created customized training and mentorship modules for VSLA groups. Upon graduation, the VSLA groups will be eligible to receive loans. A pilot training with the six groups from Montserrado and Margibi took place in Monrovia in June.

Each group was represented by the five management committee members. In addition, four USAID FED CFOs from Montserrado and Margibi attended.

USAID FED signed a MoU with each of the six VSLA groups. The purpose of the MoU is for USAID FED to train and mentor VLSA groups, and for the groups to utilize these types of business development services to access larger loans to reinvest back into agriculture.

The training covered:

1. VSLAs as informal financial service providers for micro-agribusinesses
2. Agri-business investment
3. Requirements and strategies for accessing credit
4. Basic record keeping for small businesses
5. Options for VSLA expansion

In July, the program will be rolled out to the remaining 20 pilot VSLA groups that are graduating from their first year of savings and lending. The training program will include a short ceremony on day one that will include participants from USAID FED, IBEX, the Central Bank, Educare, and local banks such as Ecobank.

Component Three: Build Local Technical and Managerial Human Resource Capability

Task 3.0: Develop Existing Vocational Centers into Centers of Excellence in Vocational Agriculture Education (CoE)

Lofa County Community College

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In Q3, USAID FED delivered materials and completed renovations of the Career and Internship Center, computer lab and Agriculture Dean's office at the Lofa County Community College (LCCC). The LCCC contributed 38 days of labor towards the renovations.

Nimba County Community College

In Q3, Nimba County Community College (NCCC) contributed approximately 38 labor days for the renovation of the Center of Excellence (CoE) in the following: installation of air conditioners, overhead fans, window glass, electrical wiring, security window bars and doors and assembling office furniture.

Booker Washington Institute

USAID FED held several meetings to clarify their relationship with the Accelerated Vocational Training Program (AVTP) located at the Booker Washington Institute (BWI), a secondary educational institution. These meetings were to ensure that the support of FED benefits the AVTP students who are the target beneficiary for the development of a CoE in vocational agriculture education.

As a result of the clarification, it was agreed that USAID FED will coordinate both with BWI and the AVTP Coordinator of the MoE. The NDA curriculum will be implemented in the AVTP, but all facilities that FED will establish within BWI will benefit both the students of the AVTP and the secondary school of BWI. Since BWI is in charge of the facilities, USAID FED will continue to support BWI in generating income from additional sources in order to ensure that the facilities continue to be used to support effective learning of agricultural theories and development of skills needed to support agriculture in Liberia.

Grand Bassa Community College

In Q3 FY14, USAID FED assessed the suitability of locating VSAT Internet service and a science laboratory to Grand Bassa Community College's (GBCC) Paynesberry campus. All of the CoE's main activities will be housed at the facilities on the Paynesberry campus. A large classroom in the Science & Technology building has potential for renovation for offices while the laboratory and other classrooms are available. By August 2014, the GBCC expects to be completely moved to the new facility.

USAID FED assisted the college management with shaping a business plan that will help the business activities of the college to operate profitably. GBCC's goal is for the CoE to be self-funded by 2016. The GBCC administration has identified and designated staff to oversee the CoE's business development and management.

National Diploma in Agriculture (NDA) Curriculum

USAID FED assessed the capacity and background of 60 individual instructors from the Departments of Agriculture, Business, IT and English at the four CoEs to determine availability of instructors to teach the seven NDA courses that will be rolled out in September 2014. Twenty instructors have been selected to work on the syllabi and lesson plans, and will also teach the following courses during Semester I of the 2014/15 academic year.

1. Principles of Animal Production
2. Communication in English (I)

3. Principles of Crop Production
4. Intro to Farm Woodland Management
5. Introduction to Soil Science
6. Agricultural Math (I)
7. Computer Applications (I)

Development of Lesson Plans for NDA Fall Semester 2014 Courses

In Q3, USAID FED and partner institutions completed the development of the syllabi and lesson plans for the seven courses that will be taught during the fall semester. USAID FED worked with 28 instructors at the CoEs during this exercise, took stock of the textbooks and teaching resources that are currently available, and made recommendations for other resources that are needed for proper delivery of each course.

NDA Curriculum Roll-Out and Coordination

In the follow-up meeting to the March NDA Curriculum Review Session, each CoE appointed a focal person in charge of shaping and improving the CoE's business plans. The action is in response to USAID FED's request that CoE's submit an operational plan to support the additional teachers that will be required to teach the NDA courses. Representatives from the CoEs, the Ministries of Education, Youth and Sports, and National Commission on Higher Education participated in the meeting.

USAID FED and the Ministry of Education agreed to begin promoting the upcoming NDA rollout in Q4. Jingles and talk shows will be aired on radio stations in Monrovia, as well as the partner rural radio stations in the counties. USAID FED plans to hold an event at BWI in September to officially launch the NDA program.

In Q3, USAID FED held an orientation session with the VAEOs to help them better understand their roles and responsibilities. Topics handled during the session included USAID FED FY14 work plan, NDA roll-out, and the preparation of individual VAEO work plan and monthly targets.

ICT Support at CoEs

The servers for the Lofa and Nimba CoEs arrived in May, and were configured by USAID FED and delivered to the CoEs in June. The addition of these servers will have a major impact on increasing the internet speed for these CoEs.

USAID FED inspected the internet installation at the LCCC. The 1.8 m VSAT C-Band antenna was delivered to LCCC, enabling the internet to function properly. A team of contractors completed the running of internet cables in all of the designated areas of the CoE, including the agriculture faculty lounge, the library, and the administration building.

USAID FED developed an operational strategy for the fee-based internet and photocopying services in collaboration with the NCCC's president. The USAID FED VAEO will support NCCC's librarian to improve recordkeeping. Additionally, campus-wide policies regarding internet access will need to be instituted once the server and the cyber management software have been installed. USAID FED will help

NCCC formulate the policy and procedures and procure the cyber management software and teach the relevant staff to use it.

In regards to (VSAT) bandwidth and provision for Internet Service Provider (ISP), the GBCC has included internet expenses, including bandwidth payment and routine maintenance of equipment such as servers, VSAT disc and accessories in the 2014/2015 fiscal budget, amounting to approximately \$16,700 USD. The selection of an ISP will be done through competitive bidding. USAID FED will assist in developing technical specifications for Internet equipment and in evaluating the qualification of bidders.

Agriculture Science Laboratories

USAID FED hired a Science Laboratory Specialist and an engineer to assess the equipment list for the agriculture science labs and assess the facilities with a special focus on the electrical and clean water supply. The assessment team completed the assignment and created a blueprint of the laboratory that shows the placement of major equipment and fixtures, as well as a budget.

USAID FED is in the process of hiring an architecture and engineering firm to assess the agriculture science lab blueprints provided by each institution and the cost estimates to complete the renovation. Upon completion of the assessment, USAID FED will begin procurement of the equipment for the agriculture science labs.

FED obtained a list of recommended apparatus/equipment from project partner, Louisiana State University, for the CoEs Agriculture Labs. USAID FED hired Soil Science Expert Emmanuel Lincoln to review all technical specifications and costs, and to submit an evaluation to finalize the equipment for procurement.

USAID FED prepared reporting templates to capture information on the usage of the agriculture science labs by faculty and students for both teaching activities and fee-based services to community farmers. Once the labs are established, the VAEOs will be expected to help train the faculty and lab technicians to utilize this recordkeeping system.

In addition to completing the development of the courses, USAID FED is considering procuring textbooks from neighboring West African countries that will be used in the NDA. USAID FED has received a proposed list of textbooks and instructor reference textbooks from each of the four CoEs. In July, USAID FED will complete a final list of textbooks to procure.

USAID FED trained two staff from each of the CoEs on soil sampling techniques during a week-long soils sampling training workshop. In addition, USAID FED will hire a soils chemist to carry out further soils analysis training in July to further build the capacity of the future laboratory technicians and soils instructors.

Flash Web Design for E-Library Development

In Q3, USAID FED developed a Scope of Work (SOW) to engage a local consultant to create a Flash Website to incorporate soft copy reference instruction materials, publications, factsheets, videos,

photos, graphics and any other material needed by the CoE instructors to improve the content of their courses.

Once the website and content have been uploaded in a Flash multimedia software platform, it can then be downloaded onto Flash Players so that the contents can be accessible on a wide range of computer systems and devices off-line with no need for Internet access. The players will be made available to CoE faculty and the libraries.

Establish Demonstration Farms at CoEs

In May, the GBCC successfully acquired 158 acres of land from the community near Big Joe Town where the CoE will establish its demonstration farms and the future rice mill and cassava processing operations. The establishment of the goat demonstration enterprise and a greenhouse vegetable demonstration enterprise will be adjacent to the Paynesberry campus.

In addition, USAID FED has proposed following demonstration farm activities for Q4 FY14.

- BWI: vegetable production, open and protected with drip irrigation and commercial composting
 - LCCC: SRI of lowland rice with UDP and goat production
 - NCCC: SRI in lowland rice with UDP, cassava, and goat production
- GBCC: vegetable production, both open and protected with drip irrigation, commercial composting, and goat production.

KRTTI Vegetable and Cassava Production Workshop

USAID FED organized a two-day ToT training in cassava and vegetable production at Kakata Rural Teachers Training Institute (KRTTI). Ten of the institute's production staff members and 256 students participated in the training which was 80 percent practical. At the end of the training, participants were able to demonstrate improved vegetable and cassava production practices. The participants have requested an additional training on farm irrigation.

NCCC Fish Farming

During the quarter USAID FED organized several meetings with the USAID FED sub-contractor Association Pisciculture et Development Rural en Afrique (APDRA) Catalyst Liberia (APDRA/CATALYST) to identify the steps required to complete the fish farming project.

In Q3 FY14, USAID FED provided seed rice (SUAKOKO-8) to plant rice in pond #1, NCCC provided the labor, and APDRA Catalyst Liberia has committed to providing technical assistance and monthly visits.

APDRA/CATALYST led two harvests in conjunction with NCCC in June to gauge whether the NCCC Rice and Fish project was successful and is worth another investment. The June harvest resulted in 178 fish, of which 130 fish were sold for approximately \$225 USD. The rest of the fish were returned to the ponds for restocking. Since November 2013, the fish ponds have reported sales of approximately \$665 USD (Figure 15). As a next step, USAID will facilitate the engagement of a Farmer-to-Farmer volunteer

to help improve the fish pond business of NCCC. However, NCCC will need to commit resources to manage and operate the fund for this enterprise to succeed.



Figure 15: A student shows his catch from the NCCC fish project.

NCCC Demonstration Sites

NCCC agriculture students have taken over the agricultural labor activities and planted 60 improved palm seedlings on one hectare of land and intercropped with cassava. A total of 138 agriculture students completed the planting of approximately 3.5ha of land with cassava using mounds and ridges.

A total of 35 NCCC agriculture students commenced working on the 2.5ha of swamp land. NCCC faculty provided inputs such as files, cutlasses and 25kg of rice seed. The students have cleared eight standard plots in the swamp. They expect to finish planting rice in July.



Figure 16: USAID FED staff meets with BWI leaders to prepare a strategy for the NDA roll-out and student orientation prior to the semester.

A group of women farmers from the nearby community planted 1.5 ha of cassava, and NCCC students cleared 3 ha of land for the cassava demonstration farm which will be supported by USAID FED.

NCCC students and instructors started composting in an outdoor pit during the month of May and shifted the production inside of the composting building following a USAID FED compost training. USAID FED plans to prepare a composting activity for FY15 to ensure that CoE faculty members receive hands-on training at

BWI's commercial composting facility.

BWI Demonstration Sites

USAID FED conducted an assessment (Figure 16) of the Booker Washington Institute (BWI) campus and worked with the head of AVTP, teachers and the Agriculture Department to determine what activities have potential for income generation in order to assist in making the institute financially sustainable and strategize plans for the NDA roll-out in September.

According to the findings, it is unlikely that instructors will immediately develop new lecture notes for the NDA courses. As a result, the NDA and former agriculture courses may result in a "hybrid" course during the first few years of implementation.

Establish Career, Resource and Internship Centers at CoEs

In May, USAID FED worked to integrate activities for student career development and exploration into each of the seven NDA courses that will be rolled-out in the fall semester. The activities include career days, guest speakers, field trips and interviews with agriculture and agribusiness leaders. This effort coincides with the development of program partnerships and internships that will allow the CoEs to leverage external resources and ensure program sustainability. A list of general partners for each institution was developed including 67 partners near the CoEs (LCCC, 31 partners; NCCC, 11 partners; GBCC, 11 partners; and BWI, 14 partners) and another 27 nationwide partners that are relevant for specific courses.

Agricultural Extension Curriculum and Community Outreach Programs

Two agriculture student leadership organizations are currently active. The Future Farmers Association (FFA) of BWI has 125 members, and the Agriculture Students Association of NCCC currently has 130 members (75 male, 55 female). The VAEO at LCCC have worked to recruit students to create an organization at LCCC. The group held their first general meeting in June.

Agriculture Scholarship Fund Established at NCCC

With fundraising assistance from USAID FED, the Agnes Nenah Teakpah Scholarship Fund was established at Nimba County Community College during April. Agnes Teakpah is the first scholarship recipient for the first semester of the 2014-15 academic year. The scholarships are for adults who have gone back to school to get an education in agriculture and who best embody the values of the CoE: hard work, teamwork, integrity, service, commitment to excellence, and a welcoming hospitality. To date, \$200 USD has been collected and another \$200 USD pledged. At NCCC, each credit hour costs \$3 USD, and the CoE expects to award four scholarships next semester.

Agriculture Students Benefitting from USAID FED Assistance

USAID FED commenced work on the development of a comprehensive record of all students currently enrolled in the agriculture faculties at each CoE. The number of enrollees fluctuates from semester to semester since many of the students await scholarships from the Government of Liberia and other organizations before completing the registration process. A completed census of enrollees has been completed for the current semester and shown that 770 students have benefitted from USAID FED support to the CoEs. The breakdown among the four CoE is:

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LCCC: 248 students (197 males, 51 females)
GBCC: 76 students (49 males, 27 females)
NCCC: 144 students (96 males, 48 females)
BWI: 302 students (212 males, 90 females)

CoE Energy Consumption Analysis

In line with the principle of sustainability, USAID FED helps CoEs to understand their operating cost and to find solutions to optimize operations. USAID FED engaged a local engineer to assess the generators and their fuel consumption at each CoE in order to develop a cost-benefit analysis for potentially switching to a renewable energy source to provide electrical power. Engineer, Prince Stryker, assessed the generators and their fuel consumption and has presented his findings summarized below:

BWI: A fairly new generator is consuming around five gallons of fuel per hour (1600 gallons per month) at an annual cost to BWI of an estimated \$96,000 USD in fuel plus the cost of maintenance and manpower estimated at an additional \$5,800 USD.

GBCC: There is an 88KvA generator on GBCC's new Paynesberry campus that supplies energy to three workshops, however since the GBCC continues to operate at the former campus, the demand assessment was made based on a 60KvA generator. This generator is operating at 47 percent capacity or 16.8KvA at an annual operational cost of around \$35,360 USD.

NCCC: The generator is in very poor condition, unreliable and with a faulty monitoring device so the voltage, current, frequency, and temperature are not known. The generator has had two repairs in the last year. The annual operational cost for the current generator is \$27,705 USD. The NCCC has learned it could potentially connect to the local power grid and is working on the possibility.

LCCC: The college has two new generators: a 65KvA and an 88KvA. The generators are operated in turns, and the maximum current on each generator is 10 amps per phase. The 88KvA is operated at 7.9 percent capacity or 4KvA while the 65 KvA generator is operated at 10.6 percent capacity. Each generator should support a heavier load since it is unsafe to operate the machines without a load. Each machine consumes one gallon of fuel per hour for an annual operational cost of \$24,550 USD.

In Q4, USAID FED will discuss with CoE administrators the results of the analysis and the CoE's capacity to provide power to the new facilities that will be put in place.

Agriculture Students in Post-Graduate Studies

Mr. Wooiklee S. Payne commenced his graduate studies in soil science at LSU in January 2014 and has returned to Liberia to begin his thesis research project which will support FED's soil fertility program, specifically the evaluation of the UDP technology introduced to Liberia by FED. His research trial is set up at CARI in Bong County where he is presently collecting both plant and soil samples from the trial field for later analysis in the U.S.A. after he returns to LSU in August to complete the second year of the program. The results of his analysis will document the measurement of the advantages of UDP over Urea broadcast and the traditional farmer practice with respect to the individual contribution of each practice to soil fertility and their respective impacts on the environment.

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Mr. Randolph Kolleh, a graduate of Cuttington University, has been informed that his application to the University of Arkansas to study plant pathology has moved to the next phase of assessment, bringing him one step closer to advancing his study of rice which was the subject of his extensive study during his undergraduate work. To help cover travel and moving expenses, FED will be providing up to \$10,000 USD for each student provided they fulfill one year of research work after returning to Liberia. Tuition, accommodation and other relevant expenses are covered through the assistantships from the partner universities.

Task 3.1: Enterprise Service Centers

Investors and Business Plans

USAID FED issued a Request for Expression of Interest to pre-qualify potential investors for the establishment of Enterprise Service Centers (ESC) in Bong, Grand Bassa, Lofa and Nimba counties. A total of 56 potential investors attended the information workshops where they learned more about sustainable fee-based enterprise development services for farmers and rural entrepreneurs and USAID FED's requirements for ESC investors.

USAID FED raised \$7,000 USD in seed capital from the Warsaw International Church (WIC) Youth Enterprise Fund to help youth access finance for their share of the investment in an ESC. WIC has committed to provide no-interest/no-collateral five-year loans to ESC applicants meeting the following criteria:

- The beneficiary must be a registered Liberian enterprise or NGO, owned or led by youth management between the ages of twenty-five and thirty-nine years old who are citizens of the Republic of Liberia;
- The beneficiary must have evidence of an executed Memorandum of Understanding or similar agreement with USAID-FED Liberia for the delivery of business development services to pre-venture individuals and existing businesses, including commercial farm businesses within the agreed-upon service area; and
- The beneficiary must demonstrate through a business plan that its approach and business model for the delivery of said services will be viable.

The loan size depends on the type of service to be financed but the maximum loan limits range from \$1,750 to \$2,500 USD. Repayment of the loans will be made into a local seed capital fund, managed by the ESC for future lending to other youth-led enterprises within the ESC's service area.

The following four applicants, including three youth led organizations, expressed their interest to invest in an Enterprise Service Center:

- Bong County – Green Coast Agriculture Project, Inc.
- Grand Bassa County – Community Youth Network Program
- Lofa County – Jacob Tomei Enterprise
- Nimba County – Nimba County Community College

In June, USAID FED entered the second round of the selection process reviewing ESC business plans, which gives applicants an opportunity to develop and propose their strategy and approach to deploying small business development services.

During the period, USAID FED organized a three-day workshop entitled “Planning the Business of a Rural Enterprise Service Center” at the Nimba County Community College in Sanniquellie to review the Business Plan requirements, introduce the participants to ESC business planning concepts and tools, and provide an opportunity for the participants to network and share strategies and approaches to ESC start-up and development. The group worked on a needs assessment questionnaire that will help them conduct market research among USAID FED-supported farmer groups.

The results of the market research, along with the first draft of their respective business plans, are due July 11. Candidates will then have a week to receive feedback and modify business plans before final submission July 18. USAID FED will set up a panel of evaluators for evaluation.

Business Registration

Two of the prospective ESC investors: Jacob F. Tomei Enterprises (Lofa County) and the Community Youth Network Program (Grand Bassa County) have registered new for-profit enterprises to spearhead the ESC development. Green Coast Agriculture Project (GCAP) proposes that their existing non-profit operate the ESC in Bong County. The NCCC is in discussions with the International Liberia Christian College in Ganta to create an ESC partnership while also looking to partner with the student agriculture association at NCCC which is in the process of legally registering its organization.

Sidley Austin LPP, a U.S.-based law firm, has offered to provide pro-bono assistance to ESC investors, to assist them with legal advice in the construction of public-private partnerships and/or inter-firm relationships for the establishment of the ESCs.

Business Development Services for FY13 Program Farming Groups

In Q3, USAID FED developed a scope of work and advertised for local consultants to conduct a capacity needs assessment of 56 farming groups, which USAID FED assisted in FY13, but who are not being assisted this year because they fall outside of the geographic areas of the clusters. The needs assessment will identify and explore what each group needs from USAID FED in regard to capacity-building and strengthening commercial farming and/or agri-businesses. Only one consultant, ODAFARA, has answered the advertisement.

USAID FED decided to conduct the capacity needs assessment as part of the market research requirement of potential ESC investors as part of the preparation of business plans.

Component Four: Cross-Cutting Activities

Task 4.1: Gender

Leadership and Business Incubation for Women Entrepreneurs

USAID FED conducted two 2-day training sessions focused on leadership, effective communication, effective negotiation, and public speaking in Margibi (18 women), Lofa (22 women), and Bong (23 women) counties (Figure 17). USAID FED will conduct the trainings in Grand Bassa County in July. The training will then continue through August and include strategic planning and goal setting, record keeping, and business registration.



Figure 17: USAID FED facilitates a workshop session in Margibi County.

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

Mentorship and virtual incubation mean that the Women in Business Officer will mentor the women both on a scheduled and on an as needed basis, traveling to the field to support the women. When the Enterprise Service Centers are functioning, it is envisioned that they will provide such a service in the future.

USAID FED met with Annette Kiawu, Deputy Minister of Research and Technical Services, Magdalene Dadgoseh, Assistant Minister for Planning and Administration, and Parleh Harris, Director Women Empowerment Division from the Ministry of Gender, to discuss USAID FED's gender programming. The representatives were pleased to learn more about USAID FED and urged the program to share information regarding the VSLAs and leadership workshops and to collaborate with county-based gender representatives in order to help recruit more women for FED activities.

Task 4.2: Youth

Youth Agriculture NGOs

In Q3 FY14, USAID FED engaged four local youth NGOs to provide technical extension services and supervision for approximately 12,000 cassava farmers and 10,177 upland rice farmers. USAID FED trained four youth NGOs Community Youth Network (CYNP), Green Coast Agriculture Program (G-CAP), Liberia Integrated Professional Agriculture Service (LIPAS), and Evangelical Children Rehabilitation Program (ECREP) on cassava and upland rice best practices. The 39 youth extension aids recruited during January FY14 are currently under the direct supervision of the youth NGOs.

In Bong County, G-CAP worked with USAID FED to identify and provide extension support to 3,215 upland farmers and 2,158 cassava farmers. In Grand Bassa, CYNP provided extension support to 2,517 kuu members under the cassava value chain and 545 upland rice farmers. In Lofa County, LIPAS worked

with the USAID FED County Office to provide extension support to 1,512 rice farmers and 565 kuu cassava members. While in Nimba County, ECREP and the youth extension aides reached a total of 1,593 cassava farmers and 2,385 upland rice farmers.



Figure 18: Students weeding the school garden at C.B. Harris Memorial School, Montserrado County

Back to School Garden Program

USAID FED, in collaboration with USAID Advancing Youth Project (AYP), identified and selected a total of 100 schools (20 schools per county) interested in participating in the FY14 Back to School Garden Program. Over the next seven months, a total of 4,500 students (900 per school) are expected to begin cultivating vegetables in school gardens. All of the selected schools have finished clearing their land.

The transplanting of seedlings was completed at the special project sites at the Zorzor Teacher Training Institute (ZRTTI) in Lofa

County. Corn, cucumbers, water melons, okra, cabbage, tomatoes and eggplants were planted on 0.71 ha, and cassava was planted on 0.5 ha using improved planting methods. The in-service teachers at the institute are learning how to grow vegetables and cassava while they are in school. The first harvest of watermelons, corn, and cucumber is scheduled for July 2014. It's expected that these teachers will take the knowledge gained from the project to the institutions where they will be assigned.

During the quarter, the C. B. Harris Memorial Elementary school garden expanded from 0.15 to 0.25 ha of vegetable beds. The student field practice continues even during school vacation (Figure 18).

Task 4.3: Nutrition

FED estimates that at least 10 percent of its total number of farmer-beneficiaries, i.e. more than 4000 individuals, have received nutrition messages. In Q4, a rapid survey of beneficiaries will be carried out to determine a more definite number of individuals who have received nutrition messages through the USAID FED efforts. Nutrition messages are also being aired through FED's partner radio stations.

Task 4.4: Coordination with Partners

BRAC Liberia

USAID FED partner BRAC Liberia identified eight agro-pharmacists in the counties who will assist USAID FED with distribution of animal health kits to 206 trained Community Animal Health Workers. The partnership is part of USAID FED's voucher program for the goat value chain and is expected to give goat farmers the necessary contacts to source their own health supplies in the future.

IBEX

USAID FED collaborated with Liberia Investing in Business Expansion (IBEX) to create customized training and mentorship modules for VSLA groups. Upon graduation, the VSLA groups will be eligible to receive loans from the Central Bank and may be eligible to apply for loans from conventional banks such as Ecobank and International Bank of Liberia. FED and IBEX delivered a pilot workshop to the six VSLA groups in Montserrado and Margibi counties in June.

Land O'Lakes

USAID FED first created a collaborative relationship with Land O'Lakes Liberia in October 2013, in an effort to coordinate USDA and USAID resources in addressing specific development needs of the goat sector in Liberia. While the LOL Food for Progress Grant focuses on the importation, transport, and distribution of goats to farmers who lost their animals in the war, USAID FED focuses on improving the productivity and marketing of indigenous existing goat herd enterprises in Liberia. In the period, USAID FED completed the rehabilitation of the livestock quarantine facility at CARI, which will first be used to house goats imported through LOL's importation program and later as a goat nucleus breeding center.

USADF

During Q3 FY14, FED collaborated with the United States Africa Development Fund (USADF) to offer grants that cover assistance for expansion of agri-businesses to farming groups. The grants cover up to \$50,000 USD for capacity building, equipment purchase, and operating expenses. USAID FED provided USADF with a list of 20 potential farming groups. By the end of the quarter, nine groups completed the applications. For eligible groups, funding is expected to be made available by October 2014.

WAAPP, WAFP, WASP, and CILSS

USAID FED partners with the World Bank-funded West Africa Agriculture Productivity Program (WAAPP), the USAID-funded West Africa Fertilizer Program (WAFP), the West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development-supported West Africa Seed Program (WASP), the Permanent Interstates Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS), and ECOWAS to establish national seed, pesticide and fertilizer laws and regulations, which will facilitate implementation of improved seed and agro-chemical inputs in Liberia. In June, the partners collaborated to organize an ECOWAS-led Task Force with the Minister of Agriculture to discuss the regional harmonization process for these policies. The next meeting will take place in July.

Task 4.5: Monitoring & Evaluation

During the quarter, USAID FED continued working on finalizing revisions made to the Performance Management Plan in order to reflect new indicators, reporting frequencies, indicator definitions and data collection methods.

USAID FED recruited an M&E Coordinator for Lofa County. The new staff member participated in orientation sessions, and was briefed on M&E activities and other related documents including data collection and reporting tools.

USAID FED completed the Results Based Management for Value Chains Monitoring and Reporting training for 18 staff members. This training was to help value chain leads to better plan, implement and report their program activities in FY15 and FY16. At the end of the training, component leads and other staff members clearly understood strategic management review that will address the need to establish a results-oriented and accountable style of operation. Results Based Management will improve the transparency of reporting in line with USAID requirements.

Task 4.6: Environmental Compliance

In Q3 FY14, USAID FED recruited an Environmental Monitoring Assistant to report on the Environmental Monitoring and Mitigation Plan (EMMP) from Bong County. The assistant will provide more oversight to activities in Nimba and Lofa counties.

USAID FED reviewed the agro-chemicals recommended by STTA Vegetable Cold Chain Specialist, Emmanuel Owusu, to establish whether the recommended chemicals were considered under the existing USAID FED Pesticide Evaluation Report and Safer Use Action Plan (PERSUAP). The review shows that some of the agro chemical products contain active ingredients likely to be approved in an updated PERSUAP, as well as products that would not be approved for use by USAID. USAID FED is working on the next steps to enable USAID FED beneficiaries' access to additional chemicals for control of major pests and diseases in vegetables.

USAID FED recruited an environmental consulting firm to conduct an environmental impact assessment on the use of a bio mass generator with Fabrar Liberia. The EPA's acceptance of this document will fulfill USAID FED's compliance with Liberian environmental regulations before the introduction of the generators.

Task 4.7: Communications

USAID FED released five press releases in Q3 FY14 and was featured in local and online media at least 100 times (Table 19). Note the difficulty in tracking news that appears on radio stations throughout Liberia.

Table 19: USAID FED in the news in Q3 FY14.

USAID FED News	Newspapers	Online News Outlets	Radio and Other Media
CARI Livestock Facility Inauguration (April)	3	3	3
National Diploma in Agriculture	5	4	-
Rice Seed Inspector Training	4	2	1
Fabrar Liberia makes Historic Rice Purchase in Lofa County	7	10+	-
New Policy Group to Improve Business Enabling Environment for Agriculture Sector	4	4	-

Local Procurement Law to Benefit Liberian Rice Farmers (released at the end of April)	3	3	-
Youth in Agriculture (MoCI)	2	-	-
Rural Radio Partnership	1	-	4
Microfinance Loan for United Farmers Association	-	1	-
FED/LEAD Loans: 96 percent Payback and 2 nd Round of Loan	7	10+	1
Nimba County Rice Hub	1	1	-
School Gardens Initiative	2	-	-
Miscellaneous	5	-	-

**Miscellaneous includes press stories about CARI's quarantine facility, goat farmers sourcing local wood, cassava nurseries among others.*

Success Stories in Q3

USAID approved eight success stories in Q3 FY14. The success stories approved in the month of June are attached.

- 1) Small Amounts of Financing Earn Big Rewards for Vegetable Farmers
- 2) Vegetable Farmers Strike a Deal
- 3) Microfinancing Helps Women Expand Farms and Increase Sales
- 4) Goat Market Day Unites Farmers & Traders
- 5) Food Processing Gives Single Mothers and Outcasts a Support System
- 6) Vegetable Farming Revolutionizes Low Cost Village
- 7) Improved Irrigation Persuades Farmers from Upland to Lowland Rice Production
- 8) Goat Farmers Harness Local Resources

UNMIL Radio Partnership

In Q3, USAID FED made a verbal agreement with UNMIL Radio to produce a farmer-focused radio program with the intent to broadcast useful information to Liberian farmers. UNMIL Radio covers all of Liberia, and the agriculture radio program is transmitted once a week from 5 to 5:30AM. At the outset, USAID FED will produce two 30 minute programs each month. Programming will include food crop prices as well as

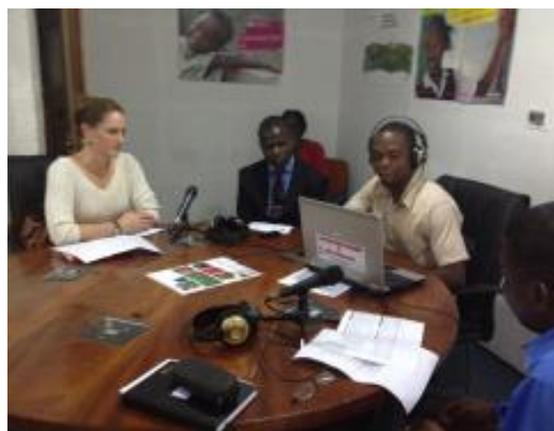


Figure 19: USAID FED Staff members and Allen Gweh from LEAD were invited to a Radio Veritas talk show.

information on agriculture best practices. The program will also feature USAID FED partners who would like to send useful messages to Liberian farmers. USAID FED expects the first program to go out on the air in August 2014.

Component Five: Management & Operations

Market Development Fund (MDF)

MDF Disbursements

In Q3 FY14, the Market Development Fund (MDF) expended \$1,290,055.04 USD on fifty-five MDF activities across FED's three components. Please reference the annexed MDF Table 1 for a breakdown of these activities and disbursements by component.

MDF Commitments

MDF continued activity design for the 2014 agricultural season. The MDF technical committee reviewed and approved nine activities under CLIN01, three activities under CLIN02, and one activity under CLIN03, which total \$431,045.40 USD. Please refer to the annexed MDF Table 2 for a list of on-going MDF activities that were reviewed and approved in Q3 FY14.

Local Non-Governmental Organization (LNGO)

The following list of LNGOs was awarded fixed-price purchase orders during Q3 FY14 under the MDF.

- Evangelical Children Rehabilitation Program (ECREP)
- Development Education Network – Liberia (DEN – L)
- Liberia Integrated Professional Agriculture Services (LIPAS)
- Community Youth Network Program (CYNP)
- Green Coast Agricultural Program (G-CAP)
- Center for Women Agriculture Program (CWAP)

Please review the annexed MDF Table 3 for a detailed list of current LNGOs contracted during Q3 by FED under the MDF.

FY14 MDF Expenditures as of June 30, 2014

MDF Table 4 illustrates the amount of MDF funds expended compared to the estimated FY14 budget for every activity stated in the FY14 work plan. The estimated FY14 MDF budget for all three CLINs is \$8,953,966.34 USD and as of June 30, 2014 \$3,002,017.74 USD has been expended.

Overall Project Finance

During the period, USAID FED invoices to USAID increased by 29 percent from \$3,149,660 USD in Q2 FY14 to \$4,073,304 USD in Q3 FY14. New USAID FED finance staff participated in Financial Accounting Software (FAS) training facilitated by HQ.

During the period, USAID FED automated payroll processing for nationals.

USAID FED streamlined process flows to enhance operational efficiencies, such as electronically recharging airtime, using fuel fleet cards to refuel vehicles, and online uploading of payroll instead of the conventional procedure of taking the document to the bank.

Operations and IT

USAID FED operations accomplished the following:

- Received 18 new Yamaha motorcycles in April
- Received shipment on May 28 for operations and the community colleges.
- Transported materials to USAID FED field offices in Bong, Nimba, Lofa & Grand Bassa Counties

USAID FED received and configured three servers for the community colleges which are ready for deployment. USAID FED also received 12 desktops and 4 laptops for the Lofa County Community College, which are ready for deployment in July.

At the Lofa County Community College, USAID FED deployed VSAT material and completed infrastructural cabling for the CoE.

USAID FED received and configured four laptops for four partner community radio stations. The laptops were configured with recording software Adobe Audition.

USAID FED received four additional desktops and five laptops during the quarter. A total of four desktops were deployed in the field offices to enhance the work for the extension workers. USAID FED configured five laptops for use by new staff.

The server in the Grand Bassa Field Office went down due to controller card failure and swift action was taken to replace the card.

USAID FED conducted regular monthly maintenance at the Monrovia and field offices.

Human Resources

During the period, USAID FED organized a training session for writing better scopes of work and supporting documents. USAID FED also conducted an employee's focus group to assess employee satisfaction.

Short Term Intermittent Hires

- Steve Atkinson – Processing Enterprise and Composting Specialist
- Duke Burruss – Acting Chief of Party
- Suhair Ibraheem – Acting Deputy Chief of Party, Finance and Operations
- Leigh McCurdy – Acting Deputy Chief of Party, Finance and Operations
- Carl Motsenbocker – Vocational Agricultural Education Specialist (LSU)
- Bradley Leger – Vocational Agricultural Education Specialist (LSU)
- Don Breazeale – Vocational Agricultural Education Specialist (LSU)

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- June Lavelle – Senior Business and Capacity Development Expert
- Emmanuel Owusu – PUA Specialist for the Vegetable Value Chain
- Dr. Upendra Sighn--UDP and SRI Specialist (IFDC)

Short-Term ICA Contractor

- Abdul C. Daniels- M&E Coordinator – Lofa
- Robert Zoma- VAEO- Grand Bassa
- Ansu Bility -Environmental Officer- Bong
- Guggie Tamba- Cassava VC- Enterprise Development Specialist
- Judoemue Kollie -Communications Assistant

ICA Contractors Recruited

- 19 ICAs, Goat Value Chain Lead Farmer Extension Assistants
- 1 ICA, Graphic Designer
- 17 ICAs, Seed Inspectors
- 19 ICAs, Lead Farmers
- 19 ICAs, Power Tiller Operators
- 10 ICAs, Power Saw Operators
- 2 ICAs, Construction & Laboratory Assessment Specialist
- 21 ICAs, NDA Course Developers
- 1 IC-Electrical Engineer

LTTA Staff Recruited

- Richard Sherman, Sr. VAEO

Promotions

FED has decentralized procurement in order to facilitate delivery of support to program implementation at the Counties. The county Admin/Logistics Assistants have been very-well trained on procurement procedures and USAID rules and regulations. They have done very well, but need help in order to effectively support scaling up of programming. These Admin/Logistics Assistants were all promoted to Administrative and Procurement Officers. FED will hire Admin/Logistic Assistant to replace them in their previous role.

Eric Yeasu, former Rice Enterprise Development Officer was promoted to Rice Value Chain Manager replacing Patrick Farnga, who moved to the position of Irrigation Specialist in order to focus on USAID FED's initiative to develop improved irrigation infrastructure.