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Program Title: Emergency Agriculture Rehabilitation 2004 (Margibi, Bong, Grand Kru, Nimba, and Sinoe Counties)

USAID/OFDA Grant No: DFD-G-00-04-00094-00

Country/Region: Liberia/West Africa

Type of Disaster/Hazard: Complex

Time Period Covered by the Report: February 20, 2004 – September 30, 2004

I. Executive Summary

In late September 2003, the Catholic Relief Services, Liberia Program (CRS/L) contracted Jackollie and Associates Consultancy for the assessment of the Agriculture Sector of post-war Liberia. The results of this assessment gave rise to a proposal entitled “Emergency Agriculture Rehabilitation 2004” which was presented to OFDA in late December. This project was designed to ensure that the food security of vulnerable farm family heads in post-war affected counties (Bong, Margibi, Nimba, Lofa and Sinoe) was durably improved, through strengthening the farming systems. The original request was for 26,573 farm family households, but was subsequently increased, with donor approval to 35,073 farm families.

The donor tentatively approved the project on the 26th of February 2004 when OFDA issued a PAL (pre-authorization letter) allowing CRS/L to spend approximately 25% of the total grant. CRS / HQ committed funds to cover that amount until the grant was signed. It was decided that the two priorities for this funding would be: a) to provide operational funds to the eight implementing partners in order for them to conduct the necessary registration of farmers in their assigned areas; and, b) to proceed with an overseas order for the farm tools (with the exception of the scratching hoes), asking that 25% be shipped by air, the balance by sea. Both of these activities were initiated immediately.

On April 9th CRS/Liberia received word the grant had been signed. CRS immediately began soliciting bids for seed (both local and imported) and making contacts with the local suppliers for scratching/dibbling hoes. As shown later both tools and seeds have been delivered to CRS and were distributed by our implementing partners to the beneficiaries in the various counties.

With prices being lower than anticipated for purchase of inputs, CRS increased the targeted number of families from 26,573 to 30,573 for seeds and tools. CRS also submitted a request for a no-cost extension for this program in late July. The extension was requested in order to provide agricultural tools to an additional caseload of 4,500 farm families in Grand Kru County. Until recently, Grand Kru County has been cut off from assistance due to the difficulty of travel to the area and insecurity. The no-cost extension was approved by OFDA for two months (October and November). As of the end of August, CRS was in the process of purchasing farming tools from local suppliers for Grand Kru, for distribution in October, the time clearing of farmland begins in that region. The tools will be distributed through Caritas Cape Palmas, a local implementing partner operating in the southeast of the country.

II. Program Overview

This food security intervention is within the context of agricultural rehabilitation in Liberia to cover the period from February 2004 through November 20, 2004. Beneficiaries of this agriculture assistance (rice seed and farming tools) include 35,075 rice farming residents and returnees in Bong, Nimba, Margibi, Sinoe and Grand Kru Counties. The initial target for the project was 26,573 farming households living in Lofa, Bong, Nimba, Margibi and parts of Sinoe County. In coordination with other intervening agencies, however, it was agreed that the ICRC would distribute agricultural inputs to a large caseload of farmers in Lofa and CRS therefore

redirected inputs allocated for Lofa to assist additional caseloads in the other targeted counties. Grand Kru County was added in the extension request, and will benefit from tools distributions only.

Women head of households made up a large percentage of the population that has to date received agricultural inputs under this grant. CRS mandated the local implementing partners to specifically target women head of households, as they have been especially vulnerable during the civil conflict and also play a central role in agriculture within the Liberian family. Women are traditionally tasked to assist in clearing the fields and are central to the planting, maintenance and harvesting of rice farms.

There is no doubt that the security situation was a concern for all stakeholders in light of the delicate state of affairs in Liberia at the time this project was being developed. The project initially targeted only 25% of the Ministry of Agriculture's 2001 baseline farmer population estimates in Lofa, Bong, Nimba, and Sinoe Counties and 50% of the baseline estimate for Margibi County (was more secured than the other counties), which totaled 26,573. With some level of flexibility from the donor, CRS was able to successfully reach the initial targeted number of farmers plus an additional 24% increase in the total beneficiaries without any security hindrance.

Coordination and collaboration among the agriculture sector agencies, implementing partners, and the Ministry of Agriculture was vital to the success of this project. CRS continued its key role in encouraging cooperation among international (INGOs) and local non-governmental organizations (LNGOs), and other agencies in the agriculture sector in Liberia. CRS' Agriculture Manager regularly attended and provided briefings to members of the Agriculture Coordinating Committee (ACC), which is headed by the FAO. This forum has allowed the sharing of updated information on each agency's operation including geographic location, local partners, input types, etc.

III. Program Performance

The goal of the project is for the food security of vulnerable farmers in post-war affected counties of Liberia to be durably improved. The strategic objective of the program was for staple crop production to be increased in the targeted project counties of Lofa, Bong, Nimba, Margibi and Sinoe Counties. Grand Kru was later added to the target counties. The project targeted farm families that had been adversely affected by the war. This included farmers in areas where there had been persistent hostilities over the past two cropping years, and where crop production had been adversely affected as a result. Areas of high return were also given priority.

The following table provides the project results framework, with a brief description of results achieved as of the end of this reporting period.

Program Results Framework [specific comments on each level on Progress]

Objectives Statements	Performance Indicators	Data Sources	Critical Assumptions
<p>Goal:</p> <p align="center">The food security of vulnerable farmers in the post-war affected counties is durably improved.</p>			
<p>Strategic Objective # 1 (SO1): Staple crop production is increased in targeted project counties of Bong, Nimba, Margibi, and Sinoe.</p>	<p>Beneficiaries report an average 50% increase in rice production over previous season</p>	<p>Beneficiary survey as part of final evaluation</p>	<p>1. Security conditions allow for continued return of IDPs to villages and sustained farming; conditions allow for evaluation of results and planning for 2nd phase of support for next season.</p> <p>2. Seeds and tools provided were of appropriate type/ quality and quantities to allow some sustainability (keep as seeds for next season)</p>
<p>PROGRESS - A total of 30,573 vulnerable farm families, representing over 150,000 beneficiaries, received seed and tool assistance from CRS under this project by September 30, 2004. The majority of the recipient farmers were generally pleased about the donations and have indicated to CRS that the assistance came at a time when they needed it most. Field reports from both our agriculture and monitoring officers indicate that the beneficiaries used the tools that were distributed, and that the seeds provided were planted. Harvest began in September in Sinoe and Margibi Counties where distribution started much earlier. Many of the farmers reported satisfactory yield from the seeds they received from CRS. The harvests in Sinoe and Margibi counties are reported to be good and farmers in other counties anticipate good harvest also. Because of their excellent germination performances, most of the recipient farmers like the varieties of seeds they received and said they will save some of their harvest for the next farms. In addition to some of the local partners conducting their own field tests and farm assessments, CRS' agriculture field office are reporting that the increase in rice production in the project counties is slightly higher than last year production.</p>			
<p>Intermediate Result 1 Farmers in targeted counties have cleared their fields with the tools received.</p>	<p>Targeted farmers report a 50% or more increase in fields cultivated in 2004 as compared to 2003</p>	<p>Beneficiary survey as part of final evaluation (pre- & post- questions). Rapid field assessments</p>	<p>1. CRS is able to procure and distribute the tools in time. 2. Beneficiaries have sufficient manpower (including nutrition) to cultivate fields in time. 3. Security conditions prevail – no loss of tools of looting or fleeing.</p>
<p>PROGRESS: Field reports indicate that the tools distributed by CRS contributed to the increase in the number of people who were able to cultivate farms this year and the assistance also enhanced the size of land area cultivated by the recipient farmers. Initial post-distribution monitoring surveys indicate that over 80% of respondents receiving tools packages to date from CRS used the tools to cultivate rice fields during the main planting season, while another 14% indicated that they are storing or using the tools for other agricultural activities. These farm families were able to increase land clearing for their rice fields with less difficulty. Many recipient farmers reported that their 2004 farm sizes were increased by about 50% compared to their 2003 farm sizes. According to the beneficiaries, the increase in farm size was primarily due to the tool and seed assistance provided by CRS and the additional manpower realized from the return of family members from IDP camps to the farming communities. In addition to improved security and sufficient manpower in the communities, the beneficiaries made maximum use of the inputs provided by CRS. There were no reports of looting or other losses. Although there was one problem with half of the cutlasses being of a type that was not in conformity with the supplied specifications, the delivery of the first shipment was prompt and the action taken by the main supplier was proper. The local purchase of</p>			

Objectives Statements	Performance Indicators	Data Sources	Critical Assumptions
scratching/dibbling hoes was likewise acceptable and nearly all of the hoes were purchased and delivered on time. The actual cost of the projected project materials was less than budgeted and a Notification was sent to OFDA Washington for using those funds to cover an additional 4,000 farm families (20,000 beneficiaries) in Nimba County and the no-cost extension has allowed the addition of 4,500 more vulnerable farmers (22,500 beneficiaries) in Grand Kru County.			
Intermediate result 2 Farmers in targeted counties have planted the seed rice received.	At least 80% of the seed-rice distributed was planted (vs sold or eaten).	Rapid field assessments Seed security assessment.	1. CRS is able to procure and distribute seeds in time; 2. Targeted farmers have sufficient land cleared/ prepared to plant seeds 3. Beneficiaries have manpower (including nutrition) to plant all seeds received in due time 4. Seeds distributed meet beneficiary preferences / knowledge
PROGRESS: CRS was fortunate to be able to utilize the services of a local firm to procure suitable varieties in Guinea and import them into Monrovia. This was added to with a more limited local purchase to reach the 764 MT needed to cover the 30,573 targeted farm families. Two seed technicians were hired and they performed checks on the seed to confirm the variety, quality and viability. All of the germination tests performed by the seed technicians in the warehouses and in the rice fields, after planting, proved to meet high standard. A post-distribution monitoring survey undertaken in July, before nurseries had been completed, indicated that 86% of lowland farmers had planted their seed rice, and most farmers have indicated that they are happy with the variety they received. They had sufficient manpower and were able to complete the planting in line with the farming calendar. It was also reported that all of the recipients cleared sufficient land to plant the seed and a good number of them cleared even more land but they could not acquire additional seed to cover the entire field. Initial results on yield tests seem to be very encouraging. A post-distribution monitoring survey undertaken in July, before nurseries had been completed, indicated that 86% of lowland farmers had planted their seed rice.			

IV. General Information To Date

A. Beneficiaries and Locations

CRS originally anticipated targeting 26,753 families in the counties of Lofa, Bong, Nimba, Sinoe and Margibi through this project. At the time of implementation, in coordinating its agricultural activities with other actors on the ground, CRS adjusted its target locations to allow for a large-scale agricultural recovery project being implemented by ICRC in Lofa County. During the beginning of the distribution process, field officers noticed that most of the communities in Nimba County included a fairly large number of unregistered farmers, also in need of inputs. CRS and implementing partners seeing the need, made a request to OFDA for the use of some balance funds from the initial purchase of inputs to extend seed and tool assistance to an additional 4,000 farmers.

This request was endorsed by OFDA and CRS HQ gave approval to purchase the additional seeds and tools locally. This was the same as the earlier purchases except that the cutlass, hoe, file and axe were purchased from local suppliers of imported tools. The project was also able to

utilize the cutlasses from Townsend that did not meet the original specification but proved acceptable by many farmers.

CRS/Liberia submitted a request to OFDA for a three-month no-cost extension for this program in late July. The extension was requested in order to complete tool delivery in Sinoe, as well as for an additional caseload of 4,500 farm families in Grand Kru County. Until recently, Grand Kru County has been cut off from assistance due to the difficulty of travel to the area and insecurity. Roads are in poor condition and the most direct access is not possible due to fallen bridges. In the first week of July the CRS Agriculturist and a field officer visited the County to evaluate farming activities and constraints as well as security implications. Their findings were that the need for farm inputs was great and the opportunity to make a difference was now.

The following table provides an overview of beneficiary families targeted by location.

Table 1: Beneficiary Families by Location

County	Number of Farm Families Targeted	Package
Margibi	4,217	Seed Rice and Tools
Bong	7,409	Seed Rice and Tools
Nimba	11,093	Seed Rice and Tools
Sinoe	7,854	Seed Rice and Tools
Grand Kru	4,500	Clearing Tools only
Total	35,073	

B. Packages Supplied

CRS planned to provide  following inputs to each farm family targeted through the project.

Table 2: Inputs per Farm Family

Input type	Approved Allotment Per Farm Family
Upland Cutlass	1 (One)
Lowland Cutlass	1 (One)
File	2 (two) farm families to one file
Axe	2 (two) farm families to one axe
Scratching Hoe	2 (two)
Regular Hoe	1 (One)
Seed Rice- Upland/Lowland variety	25 Kilogram

For the main planting season distributions, CRS  chased and received assorted pieces of farm tools from Townsend International in South Africa. The tools were brought into the country through the Roberts International Airport and Free Port of Monrovia. The total consignment of tools received by CRS from Townsend during the reporting period are 64,565 cutlasses, 13,320

files, 10,884 axes, and 13,296 regular hoes. An additional 13,000 cutlasses, 4,250 axes, 4,250 files and 2,000 regular hoes were purchased locally.

One problem that developed was with the design and specifications of one of the desired cutlasses. Although the supplier (Townsend, South Africa) had received the specifications, complete with a drawing, the cutlass supplied was incorrect. This was not noticed until the air shipment had arrived on March 19. CRS immediately notified the supplier and proceeded to obtain a reaction from farmers as to the design. The supplier acknowledged receiving the specifications and agreed that the cutlass sent did not meet those specifications. The farmers stated that while the design would not be suitable for upland brushing, it would be good for lowland brushing. Later, CRS also learned that farmers in Nimba also felt they liked the design for use in sugar cane fields.

Given these results, we then agreed with the supplier to accept all of the air shipment and a portion of the sea shipment, which would result in approximately 50% of the overall order being rejected. They appreciated our willingness to work with them, sent a sample of another cutlass of the correct specification for our inspection, and also accepted our order for the correct tools for the balance shipment. The shipment arrived in September and tools were to be distributed to farmers in Sinoe County in October 2004. The rejected cutlasses from Townsend that did not meet the original specification but have proven acceptable by many farmers have been utilized for the additional request from Nimba County.

For Grand Kru, tools packages for clearing land will be given, consisting of 2 cutlasses per farm family and a garden hoe, file and ax for every two families to share. The 3,519 cutlasses remaining from the Townsend purchase will be allocated for this distribution and in September, CRS made a local purchase of assorted tools to cover the remaining needs for Grand Kru County. This consignment included 5,481 cutlasses, 2,250 garden hoes, 2,250 files and 2,250 axes. CRS, through Caritas Cape Palmas, will distribute these tools in November. This is the time farmers in Grand Kru begin to brush their farmland and it is also anticipated that the rain would have ceased to allow improvement in the road condition.

As of the end of September, a total of **30,573 resource poor farming households** targeted in four counties (Bong, Nimba, Margibi and Sinoe) received seed rice and farm tools supplied by CRS. The tools distributed by CRS were as follows: **61,146 cutlasses, 15,274 files, 13,333 axes, 61,086 Scratching hoes and 15,274 regular hoes**, while CRS and its implementing partners also distributed **764 metric tons** of seed rice. The breakdown of distributions by county and partner are given in the following tables.

Table 3: Tools Delivered as of Sept 30, 2004 by County

COUNTY	PARTNER	DISTRICT	# OF FARMER SERVED	CUTLASS Upland	CUTLASS Lowland	Reg. Hoes	FILE	AXE	Sc or D Hoe*
Margibi	LECO	Mamba	222	222	222	111	111	111	444
		Kakata	2308	2308	2308	1154	1154	1154	4616
	IRDO	Gibi	1687	1687	1687	844	844	844	3374
SUB-TOTAL			4,217	4,217	4,217	2,109	2,109	2,109	8,434
Bong	IRDO	Salala	700	700	700	350	350	350	1400
		Fuamah	733	733	733	367	367	367	1466
		Sanoyea	766	766	766	383	383	383	1532
	LECO	Jorquelleh	1338	1338	1338	669	669	669	2676
		Kokoyah	110	110	110	55	55	55	220
	SDP	Panta	785	785	785	393	393	393	1570
		Kpaii	633	633	633	317	317	317	1266
		Suakoko	808	808	808	404	404	404	1616
	CARITAS	Zota	1536	1536	1536	768	768	768	3072
SUB-TOTAL			7,409	7,409	7,409	3,706	3,706	3,706	14,818
Nimba	ARS	Gbelay-Geh	2288	2288	2288	1144	1144	1144	4576
		Sanniq-Mah	2428	2428	2428	1214	1214	1214	4856
		Zoe-Geh	2569	2569	2569	1285	1285	1285	5138
	ZADC	Saclep-Mah	3108	3108	3108	1554	1554	1554	6216
		Yarwen	700	700	700	350	350	350	1400
SUB-TOTAL			11,093	11,093	11,093	5,547	5,547	5,547	22,186
Sinoe	LAS	Tariuwon	464	464	464	232	232	232	928
		Butaw	519	519	519	260	260	260	1038
		Sanquin	558	558	558	279	279	279	1116
		River Dugbe	1400	1400	1400	700	700	700	2800
		Kpanyan	1000	1000	1000	500	500	500	2000
		Juazon	1650	1650	1650	825	825	0	3300
		Pyne Town	500	500	500	250	250	0	1000
		Gbeapo	773	773	773	386	386	0	1546
		Greenville	200	200	200	100	100	0	400
		Jeadeapo	790	790	790	395	395	0	1520
SUB-TOTAL			7,854	7,824	7,824	3,912	3,912	1,971	15,648
GRAND TOTAL			30,573	30,573	30,573	15,274	15,274	13,333	61,086

- Scratching or Dibbling Hoe

Table 4: Seed Rice Delivered as of Sept 30, 2004 by County

COUNTY	PARTNER	DISTRICT	# OF FARMERS SERVED	TOTAL 50 KG BAGS	TOTAL MTs
Margibi	LECO	Mamba	222	111	5.55
		Kakata	2308	1154	57.7
	IRDO	Gibi	1687	843.5	42.2
SUB-TOTAL			4,217	2,108.5	105.45
Bong	IRDO	Salala	700	350	17.5
		Fuamah	733	366	18.3
		Sanoyea	766	383	19.15
	LECO	Jorquelleh	1338	669	33.45
		Kokoyah	110	55	2.75
	SDP	Panta	785	392	19.6
		Kpaii	663	316	15.8
		Suakoko	808	404	20.2
	CARITAS	Zota	1536	768	38.4
SUBTOTAL			7,439	3,703	185.15
Nimba	ARS	Gbelay-Geh	2288	1144	57.2
		Sanniq-Mah	2428	1214	60.7
		Zoe-Geh	2569	1284.5	64.2
	ZADC	Saclepea-Mah	3108	1554	77.7
		Yarwen	700	350	17.5
SUB-TOTAL			11,093	5,546.5	277.30
Sinoe	LAS	Tarjuwon	464	232	11.6
		Butaw	519	259	12.95
		Sanquin	558	279	13.95
		Riv. Dugbe	1400	700	35.0
		Kpanyan	1000	500	25.0
		Juazon	1650	825	41.25
		Pyne Town	500	250	12.5
		Gbeapo	773	386	19.3
		Greenville	200	100	5.0
Jeadeapo	790	395	19.75		
SUB-TOTAL			7854	3927	196.35
GRAND TOTAL			30,573	15,287	764.33

C. Seed Quality and Viability

To provide a quality control on the seed being purchased and distributed, CRS employed two seed technicians to check the seed for cleanliness, age, freedom from inert materials and other seeds, as well as to check on the viability through germination testing.

In total the technicians conducted 44 germination tests showing an overall average germination percentage of over 93%. All of the seed provided by the suppliers was deemed acceptable and none had to be refused. The following table shows the various germination test results by seed variety. Above 85% is considered acceptable.

Table 5: Seed Sampling Survey (% Germination)

Date	LAC-23		ROK-3		Suacoco-8		Gissi		Local upl	
	Sample	% Germ.	Sample	% Germ	Sample	% Germ	Sample	% Germ	Sample	% Germ
Apr 27	1	89	1	88	1	95			1	88
	2	89								
May18	1	89	1	88	1	95	1	92	1	93
	2	89								
	3	90								
May24	1	92	1	95	1	98	1	98		
	2	91								
	3	92								
	4	91								
	5	96								
June 2	1	96	1	97	1	98	1	98		
	2	94								
	3	95								
	4	96								
	5	97								
	6	95								
	7	94								
	8	94								
Ave.	12	91.4%	16	94.4%	11	97.1 %	3	96%	2	90.5 %

To further verify the seed quality test performed during purchasing, on-farm visits were done to confirm that seed germination was satisfactory in the field. In each location, three separate samples of seedlings (from a 4 m² area) were taken, to determine average germination rates for the site. Reports of seed performance conducted in Bong and Margibi counties indicated that the average percentage on farm germination results were 85.4% for Bong and 81.5% for Margibi. The results are summarized in the following table.

Table 6: On Farm Seed Germination Results for Bong and Margibi Counties

District	Clan	Town	Ecology	On Farm Germination Result					Visual observation on Initial Germination/Seedling growth performance	
				Sample						
				1	2	3	Total	Ave.		
BONG COUNTY										
Zota	Banama	Pelelei	UPL	185	215	300	700	84%	Good	Vigorous Growth
			UPL	192	192	205	737	88%	Good	Vigorous Growth
			UPL	179	222	298	699	93%	V. Good	Vigorous Growth
			UPL	306	232	165	703	94%	V. Good	Vigorous Growth
			UPL	301	200	270	771	92%	V. Good	Vigorous Growth
			UPL	253	261	159	673	80%	Good	Very vigorous
		UPL	296	300	170	756	90%	V. Good	Vigorous Growth	
		UPL	188	210	209	687	82%	Good	Vigorous Growth	
	Gwelipolo	Kpoloyah	UPL	302	290	188	780	89%	Good	Vigorous Growth
			UPL	196	401	175	772	92%	V. Good	Vigorous Growth
		Yowee	UPL	288	194	275	757	90%	V. Good	Vigorous Growth
			UPL	170	300	602	676	81%	Good	Vigorous Growth
	Gweipolu	Kpo	UPL	204	188	307	699	93%	V. Good	Vigorous Growth
			UPL	304	260	159	723	86%	Good	Vigorous Growth
			UPL	205	301	206	712	85%	Good	Vigorous Growth
	Gwaolapolu	Melequah	UPL	207	261	259	727	87%	Good	Vigorous Growth
			UPL	229	207	281	777	86%	Good	Vigorous Growth
			UPL	231	252	173	656	79%	Fair	Vigorous Growth
		Kpoloyeah	UPL	263	109	247	619	74%	Fair	Vigorous Growth
			UPL	239	261	198	689	84%	Good	Vigorous Growth
UPL			229	253	208	690	83%	Good	Vigorous Growth	
UPL			241	250	209	700	84%	Good	Vigorous Growth	
Kokoyah	Botota	UPL	229	288	208	675	81%	Good	Vigorous Growth	
		LL	229	207	281	717	89%	Good	Vigorous Growth	
		LL	306	232	165	703	84%	Good	Vigorous Growth	
MARGIBI COUNTY										
Kakata	Bainda	26 Gate	LL	208	253	238	699	84%	Good	Vigorous Growth
			UPL	200	210	240	650	78%	Fair	Fairly Growth
	Borlorla	Gbar-biegan	UPL	225	200	223	658	80%	Good	Vigorous Growth
			LL	100	218	230	548	66%	Fair	Fairly Growth
Mamba	Garnee	Gull Farm	UPL	240	160	300	700	84%	Good	Vigorous Growth
			LL	200	312	198	710	85%	Good	Vigorous Growth
Gibi	Gbenfen	Worhn	LL	225	325	197	747	89%	Good	Vigorous Growth
			UPLL	198	202	350	750	90%	V. Good	Vigorous Growth
		Peter town	UPL	250	249	200	703	83%	Good	Vigorous Growth
			LL	129	280	250	659	79%	Fair	Fairly Growth
UPL	280	290	278	748	78%	Fair	Fairly Growth			

* Formula used: Average Germination = ((Total seedlings) * (Total area sampled in m²) * (100%))/(10,000 m²)

D. Project Supervision and Technical Support

CRS/Liberia Agriculture field officers continuously visited the beneficiary communities to guide and provide technical support to the local partners as well as the farmers that benefited from the Seeds and Tools assistance package. During these follow-up visits, the Field Officers were able to gather first hand information on the status of the project (i.e. use of seeds and tools, extent of farming activities, stages of the farming, number of family members participating, etc) and

determine other needs of the farming communities as well as evaluate the return of IDP in these communities.

A key component of the field officer's activities, after the distribution of inputs to farmers, was to also offer technical guidance such as weed and rodent control methods in order to improve rice yield. The beneficiaries were also provided relevant post-harvest information in advance to educate them on the need to properly and adequately save seeds for the next farming season.

E. Monitoring

The verification of the distribution of inputs to the registered farmers was accomplished with monitoring officers traveling to Nimba, Margibi, Bong and Sinoe Counties to participate in the distributions activities. In July, the CRS/Liberia monitoring department conducted post distribution monitoring of the tools and seed-rice distributed to target farmers. The monitoring focused on gathering information on the appropriateness of the tools being ideal and durable for the farmers' agricultural activities. Field germination rates of the seed rice distributed were also conducted.

Overall, the monitoring exercise found that 98% of the 424 beneficiaries interviewed in the four counties received seed rice varieties based on the approved allotment of 25 kilogram. Eighty percent of the respondents indicated planting some or all of their seed rice; 6% indicated that they kept some of the seed for future planting and 6% indicated that they had given some of the seed to other needy farmers. Approximately 10% indicated that they had eaten all of their seed. Reasons given for consumption included hunger, late delivery of inputs (primarily in Sinoe) and mixed varieties of seed within a bag. From the same group of respondents, 81% indicated that they had used their tools for clearing of farms for the main planting season. Tool supplies had been delayed in some areas, due to problems with vendors and transport once the rains commenced, and deliveries of tools were still ongoing at the time of the monitoring visit, especially in Sinoe. In addition, there were issues experienced in some areas regarding the sharing of files and axes, resulting in a family receiving either one or the other. Over 90% of the respondents indicated that they were either currently using the tools for farming, or were storing them for upcoming agricultural activities. In general, beneficiaries were satisfied with the quality of the inputs.

The Monitoring Department began discussing a project evaluation planning process during the period. This process will continue and the Monitoring Department, in collaboration with the Programming Department and local partners agencies, will conduct a Final Project Evaluation in November.

V. Resource Use / Expenditures

A. Budget Adjustments

When the plans were made for this project it was anticipated that CRS would be able to use its own trucks for much of the internal transport necessary for moving the tools and seeds from the warehouse to the various district centers for distribution to the farmers by the local partners.

