



# FOOD AND ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT (FED) PROGRAM FOR LIBERIA

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**Photo Caption:** Farmers from the Mawah Vegetable Farming Group, Montserrado county, hold a group discussion about USAID FED's vegetable voucher program. The lead farmer shows his colleagues the illustration depicting how farmers can redeem their vouchers at Red Light market and other outlets.

## Acronyms

AEDE	Agency for Economic Development and Empowerment
APDRA	Association Pisciculture et Development Rural en Afrique
AYP	Advancing Youth Project
AWEP	African Women Entrepreneurship Program
BSTVSE	Bureau of Science, Technical, Vocational and Special Education
BWI	Booker T. Washington Institute
CARI	Center of Agriculture Research Institute
CFO	Community-based Facilitation Officer
CYNP	Community Youth Network Program
DAI	Development Alternatives, Inc.
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EMMP	Environmental Mitigation and Monitoring Plan
ENA	Essential Nutrition Actions
EO	Extension Officer
FED	Food and Enterprise Development
FTF	Farmer to Farmer
FtF	Feed the Future
FUN	Farmer Union Network
GBCCC	Grand Bassa County Community College
GCAP	Green Coast Agricultural Program
GPS	Global Positioning Systems
IFDC	International Fertilizer Developmental Center
IITA	International Institute for Tropical Agriculture
IP	Implementing Partner
ISFM	Integrated Soil Fertility Management
IQC	Indefinite Quantity Contract
LAUNCH	Liberia Agriculture, Upgrading Nutrition & Child Health
LCCC	Lofa County Community College
LIFE	Livelihood Improvement for Farming Enterprises
LMEP	Liberia Monitoring and Evaluation Program
LREC	Liberia Renaissance Education Complex
MDF	Market Development Fund
MIS	Market Information Systems
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
MoCI	Ministry of Commerce and Industry

MoE	Ministry of Education
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSME	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise
NAD	National Diploma in Agriculture
NCCC	Nimba County Community College
NGW	New Generation Women
NV	National Volunteer
PIDS	Performance Indicator Database System
PMP	Performance Management Plan
PUA	Peri-Urban Agriculture
R&RF	Rights & Rice Foundation
RRA	Rapid Rural Appraisal
STTA	Short Term Technical Assistant
TAMIS	Technical Administrative Management Information System
TVET	Technical, Vocational Education and Training
UDP	Urea Deep Placement
VAEO	Vocational Agribusiness Education Officers
WAAPP	West Africa Agricultural Productivity Program
ZOA	Dutch Aid Organization

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## Background

The 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 will be 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

FED works with the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), civil societies and the private sector in providing communities access to agricultural inputs (including improved seeds), extension services, nutritious food products, processing services, market information, transportation, credit, agro-business education, training, and enterprise services.

In five years, FED's thrust to expand market linkages is expected to lead to substantial increases in income and job opportunities. 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 the counties of Bong, Lofa, Nimba, Grand Bassa, Montserrado, and Margibi. FED focused 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.

FED's methodology is market-led and value chain-driven; it is committed to develop indigenous capacity building, with specific focus on Liberia's women and youth.

FED's approach is collaborative and catalytic. It is driven by the goals and objectives of our partner clients. It aims to increase incomes of rural households and create new employment and livelihood opportunities for Liberians; to improve access to food and household dietary diversity scores of food-insecure Liberians; and to promote the use of improved inputs, better farming practices, and technologies that boost agricultural productivity.

FED is implemented by five partners, namely: Development Alternatives, Inc. (DAI), Winrock International, International Fertilizer Developmental Center (IFDC), Louisiana State University (LSU), and The Cadmus Group.

## Executive Summary

FED has nearly completed the construction and outfitting of the three rice mill facilities in Boweh, Dounpa and Payee, Nimba county. The rice processing centers have been roofed, and the warehouse, milling room and a mini-store for processed rice are complete. Each site has a drying floor and a latrine. The processing centers are expected to be functional by the end of March. The three rice processing centers in Bong Mines, Totota and Garmue, Bong county are approximately three weeks from being completed.

FED initiated the first market linkages meeting between FABRAR and the Fuamah Multipurpose Cooperative Society in Bong Mines, one of FED's largest rice production areas. Over 30 farmers participated in the event to discuss key issues of pricing and the short and long term benefits associated with selling to FABRAR. In the meeting, FABRAR offered \$18.00 USD per 50kg of paddy rice after taking into consideration the associated costs of transport. The farmers countered with US\$20 per 50kg of paddy rice. Negotiations continue and the two parties expect to establish a contractual agreement based on a mutually agreed price in March 2014.

FED goat farmers from 32 communities sold 94 goats in the month of February worth a total of \$4,895 USD. Nimba county goat farmers led the way with \$2,945 USD, followed by Lofa with \$1,455 and Grand Bassa with \$495.

In Nimba county, FED facilitated the first Trader Support event with vegetable lead farmers, traders and local catering firms from Nimba and neighboring Grand Bassa county. At the end of the event the lead farmers and Liberian catering firm ROSNA agreed to enter into a purchase contract to formalize their relationships.

FED registered 300 of 354 FED vegetable farmers for the voucher program in Montserrado, Margibi, Nimba and Grand Bassa counties. In the registration, FED distributed vouchers as well as instructional material about the voucher program. FED will finish registration in March. Redemption of vouchers will commence in mid-March, and vegetable farmers have approximately three weeks to redeem their vouchers.

FED prepared two Global Development Alliance (GDA) concept notes to present in March to Chevron to expand FED's program to commercialize high value vegetables and to the Coca Cola Company to double FED's reach to women farmers through the Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) program.

The Grand Bassa Community College successfully acquired 30 acres from the community on which to locate the future demonstration farms and the rice mill and cassava processing operations towards creating a Center of Excellence for Agriculture. The location is accessible for students as well as the community.



## Component One: Increase agricultural productivity and profitability

### Task 1: Value Chain Development

#### Task 1A: Increased agricultural productivity and profitability of the rice value chain

##### Production, Harvests and Sales

###### *Lowland rice:*

FED completed the selection of the targeted 40 lowland rice production sites in Lofa County for the FY14 planting season and preparation is in progress. In Lofa county, the 36 FY13 farmer group demonstration plots have finished harvesting a total of 44 MT of rice from approximately 46.5 ha of land (Figure 1 & Table 1). Dry weight yields are forthcoming as the farmers thresh and bag the rice.



Figure 1: The Barzagezi Farmers Association in Lofa county

In Nimba County, FED demonstration farms harvested a total of 116 MT from 54.3 ha. The farmers sold 7.1 MT for \$4,615 USD at the local market. Farmers plan to market the recently harvested rice in the month of March.

In Bong County, FED finished recruitment for 40 lowland rice farmer groups (28 new groups, 12 FY13 groups). Group membership totals 2,262 farmers (1,171 male and 1,091 female), and the groups plan to plant 537.5 ha of lowland rice. In the reporting period, 33 of the 40 groups have signed MOUs with FED. FED established five lowland seed multiplication sites on 20 ha.

In Bong county, the Willing Women rice group sold 800 kg to Central Agriculture Research Institute (CARI) for \$1.00 USD per kilogram of rice. The Kwapagai in Garmue sold 10 MT to WFP for \$2.50 USD per kilogram of rice.

###### *Upland rice:*

In Bong county, FED signed up 3,230 farmers (2,345 men and 885 women) on 1,616 ha for upland rice cultivation in FY14. Each farmer is expected to cultivate 0.5 hectare. FED also signed up nine groups (four lead farmers per group) for rice seed multiplication. Each lead farmer is expected to cultivate 2.5 ha for a total of 90 ha for upland seed multiplication.

In Lofa county, FED upland rice farmers continue to harvest upland rice fields, and FED expects recorded results in the Q2 report.

Table 1: Lowland & Upland Rice Production, Harvest and Sales Statistics.

County	Total # of ha harvested	Total harvest to date (MT)	Remaining inventory (threshed and bagged)	Volume sold (MT) in Feb	Value of February Sale (US\$)
Nimba	54.3	135.75	116.1	7.1	\$4,615.00
Lofa	46.5	116.25	44		
Bong	119.8	299.5	184.2	10.8	\$4,800.00
Grand Bassa	15.2	38			
<b>Totals</b>	<b>220.6</b>	<b>589.5</b>	<b>344.3</b>	<b>17.9</b>	<b>\$9,415.00</b>

## Building Farmers' Capacity

### Lowland Rice Production ToT

FED held a 5-day ToT in rice production best practices and water management for Bong county lead farmers and NGO agriculture experts. The ToT sought to teach farmers new production methods, planting and maintenance and processing techniques while the water management aspect taught participants about distribution of water control in the paddy field. Participants totaled 48 people (45 men and 3 women), including 17 technicians—6 from Technocrats United for Reconstruction and Development, 3 from the Organization for the Development of Agricultural Farms Related Association and 8 from the Special Emergency Relief for Elderly. The trainers will provide oversight and training for 158 lead farmers at 158 sites in Bong, Lofa, Nimba and Grand Bassa counties. An additional 31 lead farmers from four clusters will provide training for 8,972 farm group members representing 1,356 hectares of lowland rice. The training was geared toward building the capacity of NGO extension technicians in rice production and marketing which will enhance the development of a sustainable rice production and water management systems.

### Water Management Infrastructure Training

FED conducted a three-day training exercise on Water Management and Structure Rehabilitation for 51 lead farmers (37 men and 14 women) in Gbarnga, Bong county. The training will provide farmers with the knowledge and skills to adequately manage water irrigation structures in order to harvest two rice crops in a one-year period. Participating lead farmers came from Bong, Nimba, Lofa and Grand Bassa counties.

The training included theoretical and practical exercises as well as field demonstrations.



Figure 2: The rice processing center in Payee, Nimba county, has a roof and is ready to receive a processor.

## Rice Processing Centers

### Rice Cluster Processing Centers

The construction of three rice mill facilities in Bong Mines, Totota and Garmue communities is ongoing. In Bong Mines, the foundation has been cast, walls erected and latrine walls completed. The structure awaits a septic tank and roofing in March. In Garmue # 2, roofing is ongoing while the septic tank has been dug and blocks inserted. In Totota,

the foundation has been completed and walls have been erected.

In Nimba county, the three community clusters rice processing sites—Boweh, Dounpa and Payee—have been roofed (Figure 2). Each site has a warehouse for unprocessed rice, a milling room and a mini-store for processed rice.

In addition, FED equipped each site with a drying floor and a latrine. The roofing has been completed and the sites will undergo finishing work like plastering and painting in March. The Nimba county sites are expected to be functional and receive training by the end of March.

#### *FABRAR: Commercial Rice Processing Activity*

In the period, FED began the renovation of the FABRAR rice warehouse in Kakata. The construction, which is expected to be completed in March, will provide FABRAR with the space to store an additional 126 MT of milled rice, bringing FABRAR’s storage capacity to 330 MT of milled rice.

#### **Private Sector Market Linkages**

FED initiated the first market linkages meeting between FABRAR and Fuamah Multipurpose Cooperative Society in Bong Mines, one of FED’s largest rice production areas. Over 30 farmers participated in the event to discuss key issues of pricing and the short and long term benefits associated with selling to FABRAR, such as a consistent year-round market, farm gate collection system, cash payments, forward-purchasing opportunities, and a higher availability of locally processed rice.

In the meeting, FABRAR offered \$18.00 USD per 50kg of paddy rice after taking into consideration the associated costs of transport offered to the farmers. The farmers countered with US\$20 per 50kg of paddy rice. Negotiations continue and the two parties expect to establish a contractual agreement based on a mutually agreed price in March 2014.

## **Task 1B: Increased production and profitability of the cassava value chain**

#### **Cluster Mapping**

FED started mapping 12,300 cassava farms and 17 processors in order to gather a precise measurement of the number of hectares being planted by project beneficiaries in FY14. The GPS mapping exercise was carried out by FEDs extension team (see Subtask 1.3 Extension Support) in Nimba and Grand Bassa county. Mapping will continue in March and April. FED will support strengthening or establishment of processors strategically located in these clusters.

In February 2014, FED reached its goal of signing up 12,000 cassava farmers. FED has recruited a total of 600 kuus representing these 12,000 farmers (Table 2). FED expects to complete signing MOUs with these groups in March. Also in the period, FED prepared 23 out of the targeted 40 cassava nurseries.

*Table 2: Year-to-date Farmer Recruitment, Processor Mapping and Cassava Nursery Preparation Table.*

County	# of Processors Mapped	# of Nurseries Prepared	# of Farmers Recruited
Nimba	5	8	4800
Bassa	6	4	3600
Bong	5	8	2400
Lofa	1	3	1200
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>12000</b>

#### **Improving Access to Markets**

FED and partner Dutch aid organization ZOA reviewed the final draft of the National Cassava Market Assessment Study from Agri-Impact. Feedback from both ZOA and FED has been consolidated and shared with Agri-impact. The report is expected to be finalized in March 2014.

## Task IC: Increased production and profitability of the goat value chain

### FY14 Activities

FED contracted 23 sawyers to saw wood for goat shelter construction at the various goat production sites in Bong, Lofa, Nimba and Grand Bassa counties. In the reporting period, at least six of the 23 sawyer groups commenced sawing in Nimba County.

A total of 77 of the 84 FY14 goat farmer groups signed MOUs with FED in the period.

### Production and Sales

In the period, FED goat farmers sold a total of 94 goats (76 bucks and 18 does) from 32 communities representing \$4,895 USD in sales (Nimba \$2,945, Lofa \$1,455 and Grand Bassa \$495). The price per goat was approximately \$52 USD per goat. On the current goat market, consumers pay approximately \$80 USD for an adult goat, however many farmers sell younger goats for less.

### CARI Livestock Quarantine Facility

FED conducted several site monitoring visits to the facility being renovated in order to provide technical oversight during construction (Figure 3). The fence around the perimeter of the quarantine area is still incomplete, and the chain link gates still need to be placed at the facility's two entrances. FED will follow up on both of these matters as well as the finishing work of the facility.



Figure 3: Workers paint Interior of the CARI Livestock Facility

The facility will be complete and ready for livestock in March. Partner USDA/Land O'Lakes (LOL) has planned the first shipment of goats to arrive in April. FED completed a Quarantine Facility Management Guide for CARI to provide guidance on the management needs of such a facility.

### Impact Story: Goat Farmers Use Team Work and Innovation to Grow and Improve Sales

The village Darfuwahta— located 10 miles off the main road through Bong county in central Liberia— is known for its goats. Every month, people who know about Darfuwahta make the two hour trek up the forested hills to reach Charles Rennie (Figure 4) and his fellow goat farmers.

“Our goats are the best kept, best tasting goats in Liberia,” he says proudly.

The reputation is in part due to the village's efforts to raise goats using fences and their team work to regularly feed and water the animals. Goats are common in the Liberian countryside, but seldom do entire communities adopt the rudimentary livestock principles of goat husbandry. This lack of awareness results in the disappearance of goats, spreading of diseases, confusion and neighborly disputes.

By 2010, goats became a nuisance at Darfuwahta, and people were tired of cleaning up goat droppings. The villagers built a small pen for nearly 20 goats, located far off in the forest, far from a reliable water source, which made watering the goats difficult.

In January 2013, the USAID Food and Enterprise Development (FED) Program for Liberia set off to assess goat farmers in Bong County and eventually landed in Darfuwahta. After seeing the pen they had built, USAID FED and the village partnered to increase goat production in the village and to expand the farmers' potential goat market.

USAID FED provided the village with the resources to build stronger fences and a series of goat shelters including one main shelter, one maternity shed and one small goat infirmary, each equipped with slatted floors and ventilation. USAID FED also provided a hand pump to ease the watering of the animals.

The 25 members built the shelter with their own hands and moved their goats to the new site next to the village. USAID FED then provided the farmers with training and new goat farming techniques, including training in animal healthcare worker and breeding and kid management.



*Figure 4: Charles Rennie feeds his groups' goats in Darfuwahta, Bong county.*

"We learned to recognize sick goats and separate them from the rest of the herd as well as better goat practices such as trimming hooves," says Charles Rennie. Thanks to five billy goats and a larger space, the village herd grew from 18 to 45 in the first year.

"The farmers have responded well to the deworming, maternity care, and efficient usage of forage feeders training, because they are well organized and have experience with goats. They already had a feeding and watering schedule and understand the importance of hygiene," explains USAID FED's livestock specialist, Morris Karnua.

Living up to their reputation, the village has also come up with new ways to market their livestock. When money is good, Rennie goes to the local radio station in Gbargna—one hour away by motorcycle—and buys air time on the radio to advertise their goats. One day's announcements cost \$1 USD and reaches far and wide.

The advertising has resulted in the total sale of six goats over the last three months, of which Rennie sold two of his goats at \$80 USD each. Rennie purchased two bundles of zinc with the proceeds from his goat sales. With the sale of just one more goat, he will transform his home into a much more durable structure protecting his wife and daughter from Liberia's relentless rainy season.

In addition, thanks to the growing herd, the village donates goats to the Christmas feast and other special events such as funerals and graduation ceremonies. "We meet every Saturday to talk about

how we can sell more goats and improve our village,” explains Rennie. “We are working hard on improving our road to attract more buyers from the main road.”

## Task 1D: Increased productivity and profitability of the vegetable value chain

### Production, harvesting and sales



Figure 5: A member of the Mawah vegetable cluster in Montserrado county harvests chili.

During the month of February, FED trained 49 farmers from seven clusters in Margibi County in plot layout. The farmers transplanted cayenne pepper, watermelon, lettuce and cucumbers on 8.7 hectares. In Grand Bassa County, FED trained 23 seedling producers in improved methods of vegetable seedling production (Table 3).

A total of 29 farmers from eight clusters cultivated 1.6 ha of land and harvested 3.3 MT of vegetables (Figure 5). At the market, FED farmers sold their harvests for a total of \$4,971 USD. Vegetables included lettuce, eggplant, cucumber, okra, radish, chili pepper, bitter ball, bell pepper, cabbage and Chinese cabbage.

Table 3: Year to Date February Vegetable Production Sales.

Cluster	Hectares Harvested	Volume harvested (kg.)	Sales (USD\$)
Bokays Town	0.13	213.6	167.41
CGCWEP Vegetable Group	0.13	184.5	524.69
Central White Plain	0.27	593	245.56
Low Cost Village	0.27	252	319.14
Nyankata	0.02	200	152.47
Weala	0.05	150	152.47
Horton Farm	0.08	375	348.46
Mawah Farmers Association	0.64	1376	3,061.73
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1.59</b>	<b>3344.1</b>	<b>\$4,971.91</b>

### Enterprise and Market Improvement Strategies

FED facilitated a trader support event between Peri-Urban Agriculture (PUA) cluster leaders and traders in Nimba County. The activity aimed to establish market linkages between the PUA clusters and identified markets for the sale of high value vegetables. The event gathered 15 participants (11 men and 4 women) consisting of lead farmers and aggregators from Nimba and Grand Bassa counties as well as the Liberian catering firm Rosna Services.

Participants also received training on basic record keeping and contract farming to help them fully understand relationships with the identified markets. Lead farmers negotiated with ROSNA on quality, quantity, prices, procedures, schedules and the consistency expected for a contractual agreement. At the

end of the event, both sides agreed to enter into a purchasing contract to formalize the partnership. The contract is now under development and will be completed in March.

All 20 PUA clusters identified the sites for the construction of their collection centers for sorting, grading and marketing of their vegetables. Construction will commence in March. Each group is expected to provide the material and labor to build the structure while FED provides ledgers, scales, wash tubs and a chalk board to monitor prices.



*Figure 6: The United Nations cooling facility in Montserrado county is Liberia's most advanced cold chain storage facilities.*

During the reporting period, FED hired Emmanuel Owusu, agronomist on horticultural crops, to develop a cooling facility strategy for Liberian vegetable producers and traders. Owusu visited markets and storage facilities in Montserrado, Margibi, Nimba and Grand Bassa counties to see how Liberian farmers and traders currently store their produce as well as to work with them to identify the challenges they face (Figure 6). Emmanuel Owusu is expected to present his research findings and recommendations to FED to improve post-harvest storage in March.

### **Subtask 1.1: Special Studies, and MoA data collection system**

FED is drafting a Rapid Rural Appraisal that will map lowlands according to size and identify major cassava, rice, vegetable and goat production areas in Bong, Nimba, Lofa and Grand Bassa Counties. The survey will also identify processing and storage facilities as well as donor interventions in these areas.

### **Subtask 1.2: Improve access to agriculture inputs**

#### **Seed Multiplication**

In the period, FED selected 10 lowland and 12 upland rice seed multiplication sites in Bong, Lofa and Nimba counties. The West Africa Agricultural Productivity Program (WAAP) has committed to provide FED with 8 MT of foundation rice seed (2 MT lowland and 6 MT upland seed) to support seed multiplication on 160 ha.

#### **Vegetable Voucher Program**

FED registered 300 of 354 FED vegetable farmers for the voucher program in Montserrado, Margibi, Nimba and Grand Bassa counties. During registration, FED distributed vouchers as well as instructional material about the voucher program. FED will finish registration in March.

The redemption of the vouchers will commence in mid-March, and vegetable farmers have approximately three weeks to complete the process. Each voucher is worth \$80 USD and requires farmers match the amount towards the purchase of agriculture inputs such as fertilizer and pesticides.

Twenty PUA lead farmers and agro dealers participated in an awareness training session on the registration, distribution and redemption processes. These lead farmers will assist the farmers in their groups with understanding the vegetable voucher program.

### Subtask 1.3: Agricultural Extension Support

#### *Rice Extension Support*

FED facilitated a Rice Value Chain Extension Training in Gbarnga, Bong County for 37 lead farmers and 15 NGOs working in FED's operation counties. Participants received training on improved technologies and methods in growing rice with a primary focus on rice production and best field practices.

#### *Cassava Extension Support*



Figure 7: Extension aides learn to use GPS mapping devices.

FED trained eight extension aides (EA) from Nimba and Grand Bassa counties on GPS mapping techniques and applications. The practical training (Figure 7) involved the mapping of six cassava farms in seven cluster communities.

By the end of April, the six EAs will map approximately 4,800 farms and also generate baseline information on cassava production, processing and marketing within the seven clusters in Nimba county.

Four EAs in Grand Bassa County will map 3,600 farms and collect baseline data on production, processing and marketing within 12 production clusters by April 2014.

#### *Farm Radio Partners*

FED selected four community radio stations from Grand Bassa, Nimba, Lofa and Bong counties for support in FY14.

The radio stations include LACSA Radio in Compound III, Grand Bassa; Super Bongese Radio, Gbarnga, Bong; Radio Kergheamahn, Ganta, Nimba; and Radio Tamba Taikor, Foya, Lofa. FED will support each radio station with a laptop computer, internet modem, USB drive and digital voice recorders. The support will help enhance their reporting on FED activities and extension messaging on improved agricultural practices in rice, cassava, vegetables and goat production as well as on the importance of diet diversity and improved nutrition in the counties. The partner radio stations will also participate in a "Stakeholder Round-table Forum on Agriculture Best Practices using Radio as a Primary Medium" planned for March and the MoCI small business conference in April.

## Component Two: Stimulate Private Sector Growth and Investment

### Task 2: Enabling Policy Environment for Private Sector Growth

FED hosted a second Policy Dialogue to discuss the findings of Rice Policy Expert, Dr. Eric Wailes. Dr. Wailes presented an economic analysis in order to 1) develop a plan and timeline on the gradual increase of rice tariff that the GoL can use to support their request for a waiver from the ECOWAS Secretariat; 2) demonstrate the impact of extending Executive Order #30 while supporting a gradual re-instatement of a rice import tariff (the gains and losses for the government); and 3) carry out a study of the price transmission/comparison of imported rice prices to farm-gate level production prices (up country).



According to Dr. Wailes, with the right coordination between donors and proper sequencing of policy initiatives, it is possible for Liberia to increase production enough to stabilize the self-sufficiency ratio by 2017. The Ministry of Finance (MoF) stated that there is a plan to reinstate Executive Order #30 but additional information is needed from FED and MoA about the specific terms to be included in the tax waiver. There is no consensus among government agencies on the timeline for the implementation of the rice import tariff to harmonize with the Common ECOWAS Tariff (CET).

In March, FED will meet with the Minister of Finance and Minister of Commerce and Industry to assess feedback and expects Dr. Wailes' final report.

FED also visited the Liberian Law Reform Commission (LRC) to introduce FED's mandate and project activities in advancing policy initiatives and legislation in agri-business and to identify possible ways of collaboration. LRC stressed that MoA should officially inform and invite them to participate in their initiatives and introduce FED as a partner in the process. Following the invitation, LRC will assign a counselor to assist FED and the MoA legal department to begin the process. Ultimately, the LRC will have to defend the legislation on behalf of the MoA once it is submitted to the President's Office for review. Based on the meeting with the ECOWAS Commission and the LRC, FED is following up with the MoA to discuss this process and finalize the statement of work for outside legal counsel to help with the drafting the proposals and legislation.

At the policy dialogue event, FED spoke with the Special Representative of the President of ECOWAS in Liberia, Hon. Ambassador Tunde Ajisomo to confirm the compliance process for Liberian laws with ECOWAS guidelines. Ambassador Ajisomo confirmed that the MoA should enact their own policy which adheres to ECOWAS guidelines as other West African countries have done and said his organization will provide FED with information on the countries that have complied with this legislation.

### **Public, Private Partnerships (PPP)**

FED drafted two Global Development Alliance (GDA) concept notes to submit to Chevron and the Coca Cola Company. In March, FED will formally present the GDA proposals to Chevron to expand FED's program to commercialize high value vegetables and support enterprise development in the Centers of Excellence. FED's proposal to the Coca Cola Company plans to double FED's reach to women farmers through the Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) program. The Coca Cola Company's 5 by 20 program helps women start their own businesses.

### **2014 National MSME Conference**

FED has started providing the MoCI with planning and organizing support for the National MSME Conference 2014 scheduled to take place April 29-30<sup>th</sup>, 2014. FED will use the forum as a mid-year platform to promote/announce current policy issues that affect agri-business: The extension of Executive Order #30 and the rice import tariff, rice seed policy, national standards laboratory, crop protection chemical policy, and livestock policy.

FED will also use the conference to spotlight agri-businesses and youth. There will be one plenary session and four to five break-out sessions dedicated to the agriculture sector, while one plenary session and an additional 10 break-out sessions will be dedicated to more general MSME topics such as the up-coming export strategy, local procurement and impacting investing. The overarching theme of the Conference is "Access to Finance and Access to Market."

FED developed a concept for the FED booths, which will display materials on FED's four value chains and success stories. The team also identified four agriculture breakout sessions that will be held during the conference. FED plans to create break-out sessions targeting the following subjects:

- Youth Opportunities in Agriculture
- Value Chain Financing
- Market Intelligence
- Policy Dialogue in Agriculture

### **Impact Story: Policy Makers Dialogue about Rice**

The major players in Liberia's rice value chain gathered in Monrovia (Figure 8) in early February 2014 to discuss the future of Liberian rice. The 'Public/Private Policy Dialogue' was organized by USAID Food and Enterprise Development program for Liberia (FED) to discuss strategies to increase local rice production. Increased local rice production would ultimately give Liberian rice a chance to compete with inexpensive rice imports from Thailand and India.

In his presentation, FED Rice Policy Advisor, Dr. Eric Wailes, contended that an enabling policy environment was required to shift the supply from imported to local rice. This shift would help Liberia become more self-sufficient. Partnering with clusters of rice farmers, FED has trained and provided improved seeds and other inputs to farmers.

"FED has successful experiences with lowland rice which can be replicated," he explained.

Dr. Wailes stated that contrary to popular school of thought, accessing the ECOWAS Common External Tariff (CET) is not as crucial as renewing Executive Order # 30, a temporary government measure that waived import duties on all agriculture seeds, tools, and machinery. Executive Orders of this type have been implemented since 2007 as a way to encourage agricultural development and revitalize the agricultural sector. The ECOWAS CET, on the other hand, would harmonize Liberia's import duty rates on all commodities

with other West African member states. Adopting the ECOWAS CET rates would therefore mean imposing a 10% import tariff on rice. If Liberia moves forward with its adoption, it is expected that the ECOWAS CET would take effect January 2015. Dialogue intensified when the Ministry of Agriculture proposed implementing the ECOWAS CET and reactivating Executive Order #30. "Why don't we do both at the same time; because then we address the issue of supporting supply shifting and at the same time earn revenue for the government?" said Deputy Minister for Technical Services, Ministry of Agriculture, Dr. Sizi Subah. Revenue generated from the reactivation of Executive Order #30 would be ploughed back to support advancements in the agricultural sector.



*Figure 8: From Left to Right Liberian Minister of Commerce and Industry and USAID Mission Director.*

The participants were surprised to hear from the Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MOCI) that the Liberia National Seed Policy has not been passed. Implementation of the policy is one of the incentives required for the shift in supply. ‘We need to move from paper to action,’ said Sophieatou Colliee, West Africa Venture Fund. Colliee challenged Liberian policy makers to speed things up. ‘Other countries are progressing, but we are still at paper work level. Implementation is still a problem,’ she said.

Four of Liberia’s most important rice importers attended the Policy Dialogue. Liberia-based trader Supplying West Africa Traders Inc. (SWAT), who imports 50% of rice coming into Liberia, participated in the policy dialogue and is willing to invest in local production, milling and distribution of paddy rice.

‘To do this properly, we need appropriate coordination amongst key players,’ explains SWAT CEO, George Nehme.

## Subtask 2.1: Access to Credit and Business Development Services

### Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA)

FED and partners Liberia Initiative for Development Services (LIDS) and Educare continue to work with the 26 Village Savings and Loan Associations in FED farming groups in all six counties (Table 4).

Table 4: Year to Date VSLA group results in February and January FY14.

Date	# of Groups	# of Active Members*	Shares Purchased (\$USD)	Loans (\$USD)	Interest Recorded (\$USD)	Total # of Members with Loans
Jan. 2014	0	15	\$6,789	\$9,331	\$933	243
Feb. 2014	0	59	\$10,111	\$17,742	\$1,725	286
<b>Total*</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>701</b>	<b>\$35,417</b>	<b>\$44,038</b>	<b>\$4,205</b>	<b>972</b>
<i>*Totals are year-to-date and include Q1 FY14. Active members are counted when they regularly attend meetings and add to savings pool.</i>						

Table 5: Break down of VSLA loans, ag-loans versus non-ag loans for February and January 2014.

Date	Ag-Loans (\$USD)	Non-Ag Loans (\$USD)	# Members with Ag-Loans	# Members with Non-Ag Loans
Jan. 2014	\$5,826	\$3,421	153	90
Feb. 2014	\$11,375	\$6,682	180	106
<b>Total *</b>	<b>\$27,743</b>	<b>\$16,295</b>	<b>612</b>	<b>360</b>
<i>*Totals are year-to-date and include Q1 FY14.</i>				

In the reporting period, FED has asked VSLA members to start reporting what the loans are being used for (Table 5). Every group keeps a fund used for emergencies and many groups have social funds to pay for food and drinks at meetings. Those farmers using loans for agriculture purposes spent loans on hiring labor to brush and maintain fields, purchasing seeds, agro-chemicals and tools, and transporting goods to the market.

#### *Community-Based Facilitation Officers*

In the period, FED recruited 20 community-based facilitation officers (CFO) in the six counties and conducted a five-day VSLA ToT (Figure 9) in Gbarnga, Bong County. The 20 CFOs will support new VSLA groups among FED FY13 and FY14 farming clusters. FED aims to create 98 VSLA groups consisting of 2,940. The VSLA awareness phase will take place in the first week of March.



Figure 9: ToT for VSLA Expansion Program Participants

#### **Business Training and Mentorship to Access Finance**

FED met with the Enterprise Development Specialist at Liberia Investing in Business Expansion (IBEX) to coordinate efforts to deliver training and mentorship services to M/SMEs on accessing credit. IBEX agreed to begin their training with FED's 26 VSLA groups from FY13. Once officially registered with the Central Bank, these groups may be eligible for low interest loans to expand their loan pools. Micro-enterprises which started with the help of VSLA loans and wish to expand could also qualify for commercial loans. FED and IBEX will create customized training and mentorship modules for the VSLA groups. Other stakeholders in the value chain such as

processors, aggregators and traders may also benefit from the program.

## **Component Three: Build local technical and managerial human resource capability**

### **Task 3.0: Develop Existing Vocational Centers into Centers of Excellence**

#### **ECOWAS Accreditation of the National Diploma in Agriculture Curriculum**

In the reporting period, FED provided technical assistance to the Ministry of Education (MoE) to help move the approval process of the National Diploma in Agriculture (NDA) forward. The Physical Education and ROTC components have been completed. The NDA curriculum statisticians presented the first draft of the mathematics and statistics courses for the vocational syllabus. FED recommends that Firestone be consulted before the finalization of the statistics course since they encouraged the course's inclusion. FED still awaits the development of student learning activities connected to agriculture.

Nimba County Community College (NCCC) has beta tested eight courses during the first and second semesters of the current academic year. The courses are: 1) The Principles of Animal Production; 2) Introduction to Soil Science; 3) Annual Crops; 4) Crop Protection; 5) Agricultural Marketing; 6) Soil Fertility and Crop Nutrition; 7) Poultry Production; 8) Agriculture Extension.

The NCCC faculty reviewed eight of the courses using a FED-provided template. In March, the MoE and FED will review the overall results of the curriculum testing.

### **Nimba County Community College (NCCC)**

FED configured 13 desktop and four laptop computers for the NCCC. As a next step, FED will deliver three projectors, 13 Central Processing Units (CPU), 13 power transformers/surge protectors and a scanner. The equipment, which will be ready for delivery in March, will be set-up by FED's IT Department to ensure that the computers and network are properly installed.

### **Lofa County Community College (LCCC)**

FED completed renovations of the LCCC's admissions office and teachers' lounge, and continues to renovate the library, agriculture science laboratory, career and internship center, finance and administration office, the IT office and computer server room and other essential infrastructure required to support the CEA.

### **Grand Bassa Community College (GBCC)**

Grand Bassa Community College successfully acquired 30 acres from the community near Big Joe Town on which to locate the demonstration farms and the rice mill and cassava processing operations. The location is accessible for students as well as the community. The property will be apportioned according to the four food value chains as follows:

- Cassava: 15 acres
- Goats: 3 acres
- Vegetables: 5 acres
- Rice: 7 acres

The College Board of Trustees agreed to move the institution from its current location to the Paysberry Campus in stages, commencing with the departments of Agriculture, Nursing and Health Sciences, Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and Information Communication Technology (ICT). The move is expected to be completed before the end of the current semester.

According to the Board of Trustees' evaluation of the project construction, FED will begin creating the Center of Excellence in Agriculture at the building designated for this purpose.

### **Booker T. Washington Institute (BWI)**

Booker T. Washington Institute students rebuilt lowland paddy rice bunds at the demonstration site to prepare the rice field for approximately 25 kg of the seed rice harvested from last year's rice crop. The students expect to plant approximately 0.5 ha of lowland rice.

Three overhead ceiling fans were installed in the library.

### **Kakata Rural Teachers Training Institution**

Kakata Rural Teachers Training Institution (KRTTI) started preparing 2 ha of land for cassava cultivation



*Fig. 10: Workshop Participant Presenting Vision, Mission and Value Statement*

and 1 ha of land for vegetables. FED supports the demonstration plot activity by providing tools and equipment. Students already planted cassava on 0.5 ha, and 10 local laborers have begun preparing the vegetable beds. Land preparation was contracted out by KRTTI because the students are in classes and teaching exercises.

### **Capacity Building**

FED held a series of training sessions for seven agriculture teachers from the four CEAs and seven agriculture student organization leaders from the NCCC. The teacher workshops covered Working with Colleagues and Families, Syllabus Construction and Leadership Development. A combined teacher and student workshop presented the material in Integrating Instruction and Leadership and Service Learning.

FED held its first session of Strategic Business Planning for Organizational Stability training for 15 participants from Grand Bassa and Lofa community colleges (Figure 10).

The workshop gathered community college staff to focus on developing Vision, Mission and Values statements for each institution. In addition, participants recognized critical issues that need to be addressed for the CEAs to move forward in regard to sustainable planning for the future.

FED has scheduled strategic planning workshops for administrators and teachers from the BWI and NCCC CEAs in March.

### **Agriculture Post-Graduate Studies Activity**

FED is assisting four Liberian graduate students to capitalize on an opportunity to study either plant pathology or soil science in the United States at FED partner universities: Louisiana State University (LSU) and the University of Arkansas. Liberian student, Wooklee Payee, started his studies in soil science at University of Arkansas in January 2014, and the second spot at LSU is still being recruited. FED offers up to \$10,000 USD for each student to help cover travel and moving expenses. In return, the grad students will complete one year of research in Liberia as part of their Master's thesis. Tuition, accommodation and other expenses are covered through the assistantships by the partner universities.

### **Vocational Agribusiness Education Officers**

FED has hired three Vocational Agribusiness Education Officers (VAEO) to support FED's activities at BWI, Lofa and Nimba Community Colleges. The VAEO position is designed to be a vital link between FED and the community college administration as well as to provide support for implementation of FED activities. The VAEO at BWI has already shown value in supporting BWI agricultural students in the formation of the Agricultural Student Leadership Organization which has now grown to 125 members. This activity is in line with FED's mandate to encourage agriculture students to participate in service learning activities and to search for opportunities to showcase their accomplishments, abilities and contributions to local schools, organizations and the community.

### **Subtask 3.1: Enterprise Service Centers**

FED prepared the Terms of Reference (ToR) needed to conduct a feasibility assessment of the conceptual design for a proposed National Business Development and Advisory Center, which would be established in Monrovia in collaboration with the IBEX program.

In February, the identification of areas of collaboration between the Centers of Excellence in Agriculture and the Enterprise Service Centers began. To date, mobile video training services, mobile classroom

training services and tractor hire services hold the most promise. FED will issue Expressions of Interest once the Strategic Planning Workshops have been completed.

## Component Four: Cross-Cutting Activities

### Task 4.1: Gender

FED conducted Gender Equality and Awareness training for four FED extension officers and 51 group leaders and lead farmers as part of the Improved Water Management Training in the rice value chain. FED also conducted the same training for 25 leaders from FED's FY13 Village Savings and Loan groups. The training provided participants skills and knowledge to ensure that gender related issues are addressed during these activities. FED expects these types of trainings to ensure gender sensitivity and equality in project activities.

In March, FED will launch a Gender Leadership Training activity with all 711 women members from the 26 VSLA groups.

### Task 4.2: Youth

FED and Advancing Youth Project assigned 28 National Agriculture Volunteers to mentor 148 AYP agriculture youth clubs at 148 schools in Bong, Margibi, Nimba, Lofa and Montserrado counties. AYP's youth clubs consist of adult learners who have gone back to school. Gardeners at some of the selected sites have already begun clearing land, de-stumping, nursery preparation, and field layout for vegetable and cassava production.

Also in the period, FED and AYP organized a county alliance meeting with the four youth extension agents assigned in Bong, Lofa, Nimba and Grand Bassa counties. The training showed each participant the importance of forming alliances at the county level and highlighted the necessary criteria to be eligible for FED's and AYP's support in the school garden activity. During the meeting, all parties agreed upon the following:

- Invite the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Youth and Sports, and Ministry of Education to be part of the process.
- Work closely with school administrations and Parent Teacher Associations to improve ownership of the school garden program.
- Present progress activity reports at every quarterly meeting including achievements and challenges in order to create a platform for information sharing.

### Task 4.3: Nutrition

FED integrated nutrition awareness messages into the Rice Production and Best Practices ToT, Improved Water Management Infrastructure workshop and VSLA Methodology ToT (Table 6). A total of 126 trainees (18 female, 108 male) received information on improved diets from the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare's Essential Nutrition Action package.

Table 6: Nutrition Trainings Conducted in February 2014.

No	Value Chain	Training Title	Type of Participant	# of people that received nutrition messages.			Location
				F	M	T	
1	Rice	Rice Production and Best	Lead Farmers	2	50	52	Gbarnga, Bong County

		Practices ToT Workshop					
2	Rice	Improved Water Management Infrastructures	Lead Farmers	14	40	54	Gbarnga, Bong County
3	VSLA (Access to Finance)	VSLA Methodology	Community Field Officers	2	18	20	Gbarnga, Bong County
	<b>Total</b>			<b>18</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>126</b>	

#### Task 4.4 Coordination with Partners

The Rice Policy Dialogue event gathered the country's most important rice stakeholders from government agencies, international donors, civil society and the private sector. The event was attended by 42 representatives from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Agriculture, the National Investment Commission, USAID, the World Food Program, Wienco, Fabrar Rice, West Africa Venture Fund, the European Union, Supporting West Africa Trade (SWAT), United Commodities, Inc., Fouta Corporation, Fouani Brothers, and K&K Trading.

In addition, FED has worked with the Ministry of Finance, Bureau of Customs and Excise to quantify the number of waivers that have been granted in the agricultural sector under Executive Order #30. FED compiled a list of Harmonized System Codes (HS) specific to the agricultural sector to be used to compile the data which is currently being vetted by the MoA. The HS is an internationally standardized system of classifying traded products. FED expects to finalize the EO #30 waiver data in March.

In addition, FED partner IBEX have coordinated efforts to deliver business-related training and mentorship on accessing credit for micro and small agri-businesses. FED and IBEX will begin by focusing on FED's already trained and proven 26 VSLA groups, which have been generating revenues through loans since the beginning of FY14. If IBEX and FED can assist these groups with registering with the Central Bank, they may be eligible for low interest loans to expand their funds.

#### Task 4.5: Monitoring and Evaluation

##### Improving Data Collection Systems

FED continued to modify the Performance Management Plan (PMP) in updating targets, modifying indicator definitions, Performance Indicator Reference Sheets (PIRS), restructure FED's Result Based Framework, and amend the Performance Management Plan to reflect Mission and Custom indicators that were included in FY 2014 work plan.

M&E county staff continues to work with the extension officers and selected NGOs in gathering and updating farmer group information and gathering of GPS coordinates for selected implementation locations in order to create a database and to better map FED sites across all the value chains.

Internally, FED has improved the county level monitoring framework to capture activities carried out towards fulfilling targets set out in the FY14 work plan, specifically reporting actual activities versus planned activities by FED extension officers. As a result of these county level meetings, monitoring and reporting templates were developed at the county level to collect timely and accurate data for reporting.



### **Monitoring Activities**

M&E staff worked with extension officers and farmers in the process of effectively tracking production, yields and sales for the reporting period.

M&E team participated in a series of trainings including irrigation of lowland rice, goat shelter, trader support and cassava clusters extension mapping in order to explain and mentor FED staff on the project's monitoring system, data collection responsibilities, surveys and follow-up activities with M&E.

In the period M&E collected data on:

- Sales records for vegetable, goats and rice
- Village Saving and Loans Association Training
- Goat shelter training
- Construction of rice processing centers
- Rice Training of Trainers for FED Extension officers and partners.
- PUA Voucher distribution program
- Trader's Support
- Solar Dryer construction and training
- Strategic business planning
- Completed MOUs

END OF REPORT