



GIPSA News

A newsletter for the employees of the Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration

January 2004

2003 Administrator's Awards

Donna Reifschneider

Congratulations to the recipients of the 2003 Administrator's Awards.

These individuals and groups have made significant contributions to GIPSA over the course of this last year. It is my pleasure to present these awards to such deserving individuals. It is especially meaningful because their contributions to the Agency were recognized and applauded by their coworkers and colleagues.

This year's recipients are:

Distinguished Group: Swine Contract Library Team; Freida Achtentuch, Washington, DC; Gerald Bromley, Washington, DC; Mark Dickson, Washington, DC; Stuart Frank, Des Moines, Iowa; Deirdre Holder, Washington, DC; Robert Kayne, Washington, DC; William Kelly, Washington, DC; Stefanie Osterman, Des Moines, Iowa; Gayle Pounds-Barnett, Des Moines, Iowa; and Steven Rigden, Washington, DC. **Superior Group:** Irene Omade' and Morris Johnson, Washington, DC

Distinguished Individual: Janina Milaknis, Montreal

Superior Individual: Eurvin Williams, Kansas City, MO

EEO/Civil Rights: Vanette L. Stewart, Denver, CO

EEO/Civil Rights: Janet Walton, New Orleans, LA

Safety: Ronald Bicsak, Kansas City, MO

Safety: Larry Giles, New Orleans, LA

Non-GIPSA Support: Frank Martin, Washington, DC

Congratulations to all of the awardees for their contributions to GIPSA through the year. Your work has helped all of us deliver better service to our customers and colleagues.

Making this selection from the large number of outstanding employees of the Agency is a difficult task. Many thanks to the awards committee for all of their hard work in assessing the large number of nominations.

Names in the News

Issuances

Fred Kelley, Washington, D.C.

PERSONNEL

Richard Freudenthal, agricultural commodity grader, Portland field office, retired on January 3, 2004, after 42 years of government service. His retirement comes after serving 4 years in the United States Navy, 12 years with the State of Oregon Department of Agriculture, and 26 years with the Federal Grain Inspection Service. Richard has decided that it is time for some well deserved rest and relaxation with his family.

CONDOLENCES

Robert Mau, retired manager of the Kansas City field office, passed away on December 19, 2003. He had been living in Minneapolis, Kansas.

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30-YEAR SERVICE AWARDS

Robert Daniel, League City, TX
 Michael Eiswirth, New Orleans, LA
 Patrick Wright, Toledo, OH

25-YEAR SERVICE AWARDS

Bob Baker, Portland, OR
 Arthur Boline, Jr., Duluth, MN
 Florence Hamm, New Orleans, LA
 Henry Jackson, Jonesboro, AR
 Andrew Kuyendall, League City, TX

20-YEAR SERVICE AWARDS

Michael Clem, Jonesboro, AR
 Vicki Lacefield, Washington, DC

15-YEAR SERVICE AWARDS

Cathleen Brenner, Kansas City, MO
 Gertrude Curry, Kansas City, MO
 Denise Ruggles, Cedar Rapids, IA
 Mark Wooden, Kansas City, MO

10-YEAR SERVICE AWARDS

Walter Cox, Stuttgart, AR
 C. M. Lusk, Stuttgart, AR
 Shane Minden, Moscow, ID

New Issuances

- GIPSA Directive 4451.1, "Employee Recognition Program," dated December 5, 2003 (Distribution: FGIS, P&SP).
- FGIS Program Notice 04-03, "Statement for Non-Transgenic Wheat," dated November 24, 2003 (Distribution: A, C, E).

Cancellations

- GIPSA Directive 4451.1, "Incentive Awards Program," dated June 1, 1999.

Please call me at 202-720-0259, fax to 202-690-2755, or e-mail to Fred.H.Kelley@usda.gov if you have any concerns or suggestions.

Regulatory Info

Tess Butler, Washington, DC

Federal Register Publications

- Request for Public Comment on the United States Standards for Sorghum, 12/17/03.
- Request for Extension and Revision of a Currently Approved Information Collection, 12/08/03.
- Designation for the Frankfort (IN), Indianapolis (IN), and Virginia Areas, 12/01/03.
- Opportunity for Designation in the East Indiana (IN), Fremont (NE), and Titus (IN) Areas, and Request for Comments on the Official Agencies Serving These Areas, 12/01/03.

Travel Bits & Pieces

Peggy Smith, Washington, DC

New Rates for Privately Owned Vehicles. On December 8, 2003, the Administrator of General Services signed Federal Travel Regulation (FTR) Amendment 2003-06, FTR Case 2003-308, Privately Owned Vehicle (POV) Mileage Reimbursement. The mileage rates for use of privately owned vehicles on official Government travel have changed.

The mileage allowance for advantageous use of a privately owned automobile increased from 36.0 to 37.5 cents per mile; airplane from 95.5 to 99.5 cents per mile; and motorcycle from 27.5 to 28.5 cents per mile.

Additionally, the current reimbursement rate for use of a POV when a Government Owned Vehicle (GOV) is authorized has been decreased from 28.5 cents per mile to 27.0 cents per mile. The current reimbursement rate of 10.5 cents per mile for use of a POV by an employee committed to use a Government automobile remains the same.

The rates were effective January 1, 2004.

Disputing a Travel Card Transaction. A transaction dispute is a disagreement between the cardholder and the merchant with respect to a transaction. A cardholder may start the dispute process for any charges listed on the statement they believe to be incorrect. All disputes must be initiated within 60 days of the statement date on which the transaction is posted. Although calling Bank of America will provide a provisional credit within 24 business hours, additional information is very often still required from the cardholder. By faxing a completed dispute form, Bank of America can issue provisional credit to the cardholder's account and immediately begin the dispute process. The first attempt to resolve a dispute should be made directly with the merchant. To verify transaction data, each transaction should be reconciled with receipts. Verify the merchant information, amount of the transaction, and date of the transaction. If the issue cannot be reasonably resolved by the merchant, or the problem is an unresolved transaction or "billing error," the cardholder should initiate the dispute process. Cardholders receive temporary credit for any transaction in dispute. In order to initiate a dispute, you must obtain a copy of the dispute form by clicking on <http://www.gcsuthd.bankofamerica.com/forms/gsaforms/doc/C12A1198.doc>. For quickest resolution of a dispute, follow the instructions on the form and fax the completed form to Bank of America.

SCL Up and Running

The Swine Contract Library (SCL) is up and running on the web (<http://scl.gipsa.usda.gov/>). The library is a tool to help producers, industry members, and the public understand the hog market by providing information about hog contracts and contract terms available in one place.

The Swine Contract Library was mandated by the Livestock Mandatory Reporting Act of 1999, and requires the Secretary establish a contract library or catalog of types of contracts used to purchase hogs by packers. The law further requires that information be made available to hog producers and other interested parties on a "real time" basis if practicable. The SCL also will report the number of hogs under contract to packers on a monthly and regional basis.

GIPSA began collecting data from packers with the publication of the SCL final rule in the Federal Register on August 11, 2003. GIPSA then extracted relevant contract terms and categorized them by geographic regions and contract type. The contract information is published according to the various contract terms, including pricing formulas, premium/discount grids, ledger account terms, noncarcass premiums/discounts, and other provisions. No individual producer or packer can be tied to a specific contract.

This on-line library of hog contract terms provides an efficient and effective way of getting timely and accurate information to hog producers and other members of the industry.

Employee Assistance Program

For confidential assistance,
call your Employee
Assistance Program

Washington, DC personnel,
call 301-570-3900
or 1-800-222-0364

Field personnel,
call 1-800-222-0364

Training Opportunities

ASPIRING LEADER PROGRAM 2004

A Leadership Development Program for GS 5 -7 Federal Government Employees

The Aspiring Leader Program (ALP) is part of the Leadership Development Academy of the Graduate School, USDA. A 6-month inter-agency program designed for **full-time, permanent** GS-5/6/7 federal employees, it is designed for self-starters with a career plan that includes leading and working with teams. The Aspiring Leader Program provides personal assessment, residential classroom sessions, individual development, a developmental assignment, skill building, and learning team activities. The program requires the participant to be absent from their position for approximately 45 days.

A competitive process is used to select GIPSA participants for the ALP. The application package includes:

- A current, complete, signed and dated OF-612 or Federal Resume (a Federal Resume must include all components specific to a Federal Resume format).
- Your written statement explaining your achievement goals for participation in the ALP, that is, how this will fit your career goals.
- A written statement from your first-line supervisor assessing your potential and your motivation to complete all requirements and to fully participate in all requirements of the ALP.

The application deadline for the ALP is January 30, 2004. Submit a complete application package to Mary McCoy, USDA GIPSA, Training Staff, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Stop 3649, Washington, DC 20250-3649. Additional information is available on the Graduate School's Leadership Development Academy website at: <http://www.alp@grad.usda.gov> or from Mary at 202-720-1734.

SENIOR LEVEL LEADERS EXECUTIVE POTENTIAL PROGRAM 2004

An Interagency Leadership Development Program for GS 13-15 Federal Government Employees

The Leadership Development Academy, USDA Graduate School, offers this 12-month program for **full-time, permanent** GS 13-15 Federal employees who have demonstrated significant leadership potential. The Executive Potential Program is designed to develop senior-level public leaders into more effective leaders and is based on the OPM Executive Core Qualifications. It focuses on self-awareness and refining leadership skills.

This demanding and challenging program consists of four 1-week residential sessions of classroom training and two 60-day developmental work assignments away from the current position. In total, the EPP participant is away from his or her current position for a minimum of 6 months over the course of the program.

A competitive process is used to select GIPSA participants for the EPP. The application package includes:

- A current, complete, signed and dated OF-612 or Federal Resume (a Federal Resume must include all components specific to a Federal Resume format).
- A written statement explaining your achievement goals for your participation in the EPP, that is, what you plan to achieve in terms of your career goals.
- A written statement from the first-line supervisor assessing your potential based on demonstrated performance, and assessing your motivation to complete all requirements and fully participate in all components of the EPP.
- A completed Mobility Clause form and Graduate School EPP application form. (The Mobility Clause form is available from the GIPSA Training office. The application form is available online at the Graduate School's Leadership Development Academy website: <http://epp@grad.usda.gov>.)

The application deadline for the EPP is January 28, 2004. Submit the complete application package to Mary McCoy, USDA GIPSA Training Staff, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Stop 3649, Washington, DC 20250-3649. For additional information, call Mary McCoy at (202) 720-1734 or check the above website.

New Forms on the Web

FGIS recently posted the following four forms on the web at <http://www.usda.gov/gipsa/reference-library/gipsaforms/forms.htm> for public downloading.

1. FGIS-907, Application for Inspection and Weighing Services (New Title). The November 2003 edition of this new form **replaces** three previous forms: Form FGIS-907, Application for Inspection and Weighing of U.S. Grain (2/95); **FGIS-908**, Application for Appeal Inspection or Board Appeal Inspection and Review of Weighing (7/93); and **FGIS-955**, Application for Inspection Under the AMA 1946 (11/95). The latter two forms are now obsolete.

2. FGIS-938, Report of Grain Inspected and Weighed for Export. The April 2003 edition replaces the October 1998 edition.

3. FGIS-944, Application for License Under The United States Grain Standards Act (USGSA) and/or The Agriculture Marketing Act (AMA) of 1946 (New Title). The October 2003 edition of this new form consolidates two previous forms and replaces **FGIS-943**, Application for License Under the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 (6/91), and FGIS Application For License Under The United States Grain Standards Act (USGSA) and/or The Agriculture Marketing Act (and) of 1946 (5/92).

4. FGIS-983 Contract Service Agreement. The September 2003 edition replaces the August 1993 edition of this AMA (rice) contract service agreement.

Until the Department completes its e-signature authentication project, which will allow for electronic "signing" and submission for forms, users must continue to submit hard copies of these FGIS forms. We will discontinue carbon copies for these forms.

Are EEO/CR issues or concerns affecting your employment with GIPSA? Do you have questions? Need help? Then let your voice be heard.

Call the EEO Advisory Committee at...

1-800-639-5167

Civil Rights Hotline

DC Chili Cook-Off

*Deborah Shipman,
Washington, DC*

On December 2, 2003, GIPSA headquarters, Washington, DC, held its annual Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) chili cook-off. It was an exciting event that raised \$360. Administrator **Donna Reifschneider** and approximately 80 employees attended.

Shana Love, Market Analysis and Standards Branch, and fellow contestants hosted the event with various delicious samples of chili, along with breads and desserts. The overall participation was highly visible in the empty chili pots. All chili was gone by 12:00 noon.

The blind taste tests by secret chili judges and door prize tickets for all participants were the highlights of the event.

The Chili winners were:

First Place - **Bob Lijewski**

Second Place - **John Edmond**

Third Place - **Torrez Holmon**

People's Choice -

Bob Lijewski (Bob's two chili recipes were outstanding)

The door prize winners were: **Doug Lacefield**, Hecht's gift certificate; **John Edmond**, Ruth's Chris gift certificate and movie passes; **John Giler**, Best Buy gift certificate; **Susan Martin**, Harry Potter game; and, **William Kelly**, administrative parking.

Thanks to everyone who made this year's CFC Chili Cook-off a great success.

For Your Health

Mavis Rogers, Washington, DC

Seven Secrets to Living Longer. Want to live to be 100? Consider these basic rules longevity experts recommend:

1. Keep learning. Join a book club, take a class, and attend a lecture. Research shows that the more you know, the longer you may live.
2. Nurture your network. People with strong social ties weather life's challenges better and lead healthier lives.
3. Try for five servings of fruits and vegetables a day. It is like taking a daily youth pill.
4. Watch your weight. You will cut your risk of heart disease, diabetes, and other life-limiting diseases.
5. Watch your wallet. Experts say your financial health affects your physical and psychological health.
6. Be active. Your body was designed to move. So, engage in physical activity at every opportunity. It is good for your body and your mind.
7. Stay hopeful. Fuel your will to live by reaching new goals. Both researchers and centenarians say a sense of purpose can be powerful medicine.

The Flu: What's New? If you want a flu shot but haven't gotten one yet, it's not too late. True, October and November are the best months to receive the flu vaccine to allow your body time to build antibodies. But you can still benefit from vaccination, especially if you are at high risk.

Older adults, people with diabetes or chronic illnesses, and women who will be more than three months pregnant during flu season should be vaccinated. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) sug-

gests people 50 to 65, especially those with chronic diseases, also are at increased risk and should get the shot. They also recommend that healthy children 6 months to 23 months old be immunized because of their high risk of severe illness if they catch the flu.

If you missed the vaccine and get the flu, antiviral drugs can be prescribed to treat it. The four now available include amantadine (Symmetrel), oseltamivir (Tamiflu), rimantadine (Flumadine) and zanamivir (Relenza).

To help keep your immune system flu-resistant, eat healthy foods, exercise regularly and get adequate sleep. Wash your hands frequently and avoid touching your eyes or mouth.

To find out where to get vaccinated, call your doctor's office or the CDC immunization hotline at 800-232-2522. Doctors recommend that those at high risk also get the pneumonia vaccine, which can be given at the same time or any time of year.

Salty Truths. Is salt good or bad for you? The answer may depend on how much you consume. Your body needs sodium to help regulate body fluids and blood pressure. To do those jobs, experts recommend no more than 2,400 mg or less than a teaspoon of table salt a day. But many people get much more than that and that is where problems begin.

You may know that sodium can boost pressure and lead to hypertension in salt-sensitive people. Evidence now shows that high sodium may cause or worsen hardening of the arteries.

The good news is that research has shown that lowering sodium in-

take can control high blood pressure in many people, particularly those following the Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) diet. Combining the DASH diet, which is low in fat and high in fruits and vegetables, with low sodium intake can be as effective as taking blood pressure medication. Even if you are not at risk for high blood pressure, reducing your salt intake is a good idea.

Most of the salt you consume doesn't come from the salt shaker, but from foods that are processed and high in fat, such as cold cuts and bakery items. Other salt sources: canned soups and sauces, chips and crackers, and fast-food. Don't hide the salt shaker. Read labels instead, and try to keep your sodium intake to a minimum. A dash here and there is plenty.

Courtesy TopHealth December 2003: The Health Promotion and Wellness Newsletter

GIPSA News is the employee newsletter of the USDA Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration. Send your news, ideas, suggestions, comments, questions, or thoughts for the next issue to:

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FAX (202) 205-9237
dana.b.stewart@usda.gov

by January 25, 2004!

OFFICE OF THE ADMINISTRATOR
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