



# GIPSA News

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

January 2005

## 2004 Administrator's Awards

*Dave Shipman and JoAnn Waterfield*

Before leaving GIPSA, Administrator Donna Reifschneider had the honor of selecting the 2004 Administrator's Awards recipients.

These individuals and groups made significant contributions to GIPSA during the past year, contributions that were recognized and applauded by their coworkers and colleagues.

It is our pleasure to announce the recipients of the 2004 Administrator's Awards:

**Distinguished Individual** - Martin Begley, Washington, D.C

**Superior Individuals** - Jerry Kuseck, Portland Field Office  
Rose Fremin, New Orleans Field Office

**Distinguished Group** - Mai Ho, Washington, DC  
Anita Heckenbach, Kansas City

### Superior Groups

**Legal Instruments Examiners, Des Moines**  
Jackie Crull, LaDondra Moon, Kristi Pirtle, Jeani Plautz

**P&SP Forms Task Force**  
Steve Mason, Atlanta; Pam Lake, Atlanta; Patti Tolle, Denver; Sharon Setzer, Denver; Jackie Crull, Des Moines; Angela Aibner, Washington, DC; Dana Stahl, Washinton, DC (AMS); Deirdre Holder, Washington, DC

**Safety** - Steven Bennett - FGIS, Minneapolis, MN

**Non-GIPSA Support** - Karin Finke - MRPBS, Human Resources, Minneapolis, MN

Congratulations to all awardees. Your work has helped all of us better serve our customers and colleagues.

*Happy  
New Year!*

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# Names in the News

## PERSONNEL

**Beverly Cook** is the Board of Appeal and Review's new equipment specialist. Having served as an equipment specialist for the past 14 years, **Beverly** brings to the BAR considerable practical field equipment check testing experience. These experiences will prove invaluable as we contemplate changes to make program administration more efficient and move toward the centralization of equipment check testing activities.

**Donna Hardnett**, legal specialist, Atlanta, returned to full-time status on December 8.

**Don Kendall** was selected to be the deputy director of the Technical Services Division. Don brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the position. His previous experience includes management positions with Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) National Center for Toxicological Research, Director of laboratory operations with FDA's regional Kansas City facilities, and most recently as a member of the TSD management team for the past 8 years.

**Evan Loudon**, program clerk, Portland, resigned and went to work for CLD Pacific Grain. Evan worked in the field office for 4 years.

**Gale Mason** is the new chief of the Trade Practices Branch in OPLS. **Gale** comes to GIPSA from the Agricultural Marketing Service, where she was assistant national supervisor for shell eggs.

**Ted Respet**, assistant manager, Minneapolis, has been reassigned to

the Regulatory Branch. **Ted** will establish a satellite office in the Duluth/Superior area and he will continue helping the Field Management Division on an as needed basis.

**Carla Thomas** joined the Atlanta office as a legal instruments examiner. **Carla** was previously a senior docket tactician with the U.S. Attorney's office.

## RETIREMENTS

**Jim Rampton**, physical scientist, Technical Service Division, retired on December 31, 2004, after 24 years of government service. He began his Federal service by serving 2 years in the U.S. Army, 2 years as a Federal employee with the U.S. Army, and 20 years with the Federal Grain Inspection Service.

**Sheldon Wishna**, electronics engineer, TSD, retired on December 31, 2004. Sheldon had 36 years of government service. He first worked 10 years for NASA followed by 26 years with the Federal Grain Inspection Service.

## CONDOLENCES

**Bill Skillern**, former Houston field office manager, passed away at age 68. **Bill** had retired after 33 years of Federal service. He is survived by **Florence**, his wife of 47 years, and children **William** and **Lizabeth**.

## AWARDS

**Nabil Azmy**, agricultural commodity grader, TSD, received a time off award for his exceptional effort in communicating with the barley industry and conducting workshops. This brought about a standardized method for assessing sprout damage and facilitated the marketing of barley.

**Eric Poling**, grain marketing specialist, TSD, received a time off award for his exceptional effort in developing visual reference images and grading mats for the barley industry. This brought about a standardized method for assessing sprout damage and facilitating the marketing of barley.

**Larry McDonald**, program analyst, received a certificate of merit in recognition of his outstanding contribution to the U.S. government through his sustained performance, dedication to mission, and pursuit of economy and efficiency of operations.

**David Lowe**, agricultural commodity grader, received a certificate of merit for his exceptional effort in productivity, continuous efforts to improve inspection efficiency and effectiveness, and commitment to customer satisfaction.

**Ideliss Rodriguez**, compliance officer, Compliance Division, received a spot award in recognition of the outstanding work she did in narrating the Spanish grading tutorials.

*Continued, see Names on page 3.*

Names, from page 2.

### 35-YEAR SERVICE AWARDS

William Malie, New Orleans, LA  
Larry Richard, New Orleans, LA

### 30-YEAR SERVICE AWARDS

Doris Barecky, League City, TX  
Pat LaCour, Washington, DC  
Virgil Kelly, Kansas City, MO  
James Wilhelm, New Orleans, LA  
James Young, New Orleans, LA

### 25-YEAR SERVICE AWARDS

Lynn Luster, Jonesboro, AR  
William Perales, New Orleans, LA

### 20-YEAR SERVICE AWARDS

Paul Breaux, New Orleans, LA  
Roy Bruner, Washington, DC  
Mai Ho, Washington, DC

### 15-YEAR SERVICE AWARD

Deborah Edwards, League City, TX

## 2004 Review Branch Contributor Award

*Jan Hart and the Review Branch Staff Members*

Of the 56 FGIS field-based employees who volunteered to work on details with the Compliance Division's Review Branch, 15 assisted during onsite compliance reviews during 2004. They worked during a number of compliance reviews that evaluated FGIS field offices and suboffices, and State and private agencies.

The Review Branch recognizes each field-based reviewer as an individual for their contributions. We also provide year-end recognition to the persons contributing most to our program. As a group, we decided that **Beverly Cook** and **Vicki Kottke** will receive the annual "Review Branch Contributor Award."

Again, our thanks to each and every one of the employees that participated in reviews this past year. Here's to a great program in 2005!

### 2004 Review Program Participants

**Beverly Cook**, ACG, Kansas City  
**Scott Cooley**, QAS, Washington Federal/State  
**Mitch Doak**, ACG, Kansas City  
**Susan Fall**, QAS, Mineapolis  
**Myron Hall**, ACG, New Orleans  
**Joe Hearn**s, QAS, League City  
**James Holmes**, shift supervisor, New Orleans  
**Judy Johnston**, office support assistant, Wichita  
**Vicki Kottke**, office support assistant, Moscow  
**Ray Lavine**, scales specialist, League City  
**Angela Proyer**, clerk, New Orleans  
**Ted Respet**, assistant manager, Minneapolis  
**Lynette Scalise**, ACT, Moscow  
**Richard Tomarelli**, scales specialist, Toledo  
**Gary Zella**, QAS, Stuttgart

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## Travel Bits 'n Pieces

*Peggy Smith, Washington, DC*

eTravel Update. Some Travel Management Center (TMC) contracts will be expiring throughout 2005. If your office's contract expires before the implementation of eTravel on June 30, 2005, please begin making your

travel and hotel reservations through [www.FedTraveler.com](http://www.FedTraveler.com) when your contract expires. FedTraveler.com is the website we will be using once eTravel is implemented. You can also call Electronic Data Systems

(the eTravel vendor) to book your reservations at 1-866-876-8020. The current full-service fee is \$27.09 and the self-service fee is \$11.

# Supreme Court Arguments on Beef Checkoff Program

Larry Haller, Washington, DC

On December 8, 2004, I attended the oral argument on the beef checkoff program (*Veneman v. Livestock Marketing Association*, No. 03-1164, and *Nebraska Cattlemen Inc. v. Livestock Marketing Association*, No. 03-1165) before the Supreme Court. The proceedings were very interesting.

Under the checkoff program, cattle sellers must pay \$1 per head into a fund each time a cow is sold. This money is used for generic beef advertising (“Beef: It’s What’s for Dinner”), and for research and development of processed beef products and food safety research and information. Some cattle producers object to the mandatory nature of the program and have challenged the law as unconstitutional, claiming that the program is compelled speech in violation of the First Amendment of the Constitution.

Seven years ago, the Supreme Court upheld a marketing program for peaches and plums against a similar challenge. That decision was followed by another decision 3 years ago that invalidated a Federal assessment on mushroom growers.

I arrived at the court at about 8:30 a.m. and I was 58<sup>th</sup> in line. The first 50 people in line were allowed to enter at about 9:30 a.m. The next group of about 15 was allowed into the building at 10:00 a.m., and we were able to get into the courtroom about 10:10 a.m., when the arguments were already underway. The courtroom, which held about 150 to 200 people, was full, with a few additional chairs set out in the back.

Eight of the nine Justices were

present (William Rehnquist was not there due to health problems). Each Justice, except Clarence Thomas, asked questions of the attorneys. Each attorney who spoke was repeatedly interrupted with questions challenging his position. In some cases the attorney was not able to answer because one Justice would answer the question of another. The Justices appeared to enjoy challenging the attorneys (and occasionally each other), but the attorneys remained serious and respectful.

Attorneys arguing for the checkoff (lawyers representing the government and Nebraska Cattlemen Inc.) claimed that because the checkoff was set up by an act of Congress and is administered by USDA, it is government speech and therefore not subject to First Amendment claims. Neither of the previous cases considered whether the messages were government or private speech.

Some justices questioned whether the program would be lawful if it were funded by an excise tax of \$1

per head rather than a ‘contribution’ to the program. Others asked if it would be lawful if it were more clearly labeled as government-sponsored. Justice Ginsberg pointed out that the government appeared to have contradictory messages on the virtues of eating beef. “What is government speech?” she asked. “If you went to the surgeon general, the message would be ‘eat meat moderately.’”

Justices also questioned how the challenges to the beef and pork checkoffs would affect government-funded smoking-prevention campaigns, which are financed in part through taxes paid by tobacco companies.

I very much enjoyed the opportunity to see how the Supreme Court works, and especially enjoyed the Justice’s animated questions and discussion.

Based on the Justices’ questions and comments, it was unclear if they were leaning in favor or against the program. Press reports say that a decision is expected in the summer of 2005.

**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

# GIPSA Training Opportunity: New Leader Program

GIPSA is now accepting nominations for the USDA/Graduate School's New Leader Program (NLP). The New Leader Program is an intensive 6-month developmental program designed to develop full-time permanent Federal employees at the GS 7-11 levels into more effective leaders through a series of developmental experiences. The program emphasizes team building and individual development. It requires three separate weeks of residential classroom training reinforced by a 30-day developmental work experience and independent study.

Participants will be selected through a competitive process. To apply, submit:

1. The application form, which is available online on the New Leader Program page of the Graduate School's Leadership Development Programs website: <http://www.grad.usda.gov>
2. A signed and dated Federal resume that includes your home address, an objective summary, experience, accomplishments, education, and awards. (A Federal Resume must include all components specific to a Federal Resume format.)
3. A written statement explaining your achievement goals for participation in the NLP, i.e, how the program fits your career goals.
4. A written statement from your first-line supervisor assessing your leadership potential and your motivation to complete all requirements and fully participate in all components of the NLP.
5. An approval signature from your manager.

Submit your complete application package to Mary McCoy, USDA/GIPSA, Training Staff, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Stop 3649, Washington, DC 20250-3649. The application deadline is February 4, 2005. For additional information, call **Mary** at (202) 720-1734 or check the above website.

## Help is within reach.

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

# Mandatory Price Reporting Programs Extended

The authority to continue livestock mandatory price reporting as required by the Livestock Mandatory Reporting Act of 1999 was extended through September 30, 2005. The amendment extending Act affects GIPSA's swine contract library.

The Act required the Department to establish a library or catalog of the types of contracts offered by packers to swine producers for the purchase of swine (including swine that are purchased for future delivery). GIPSA maintains the swine contract library, which is intended to aid in the price discovery process and provide equal access to market information for all market participants.

The program also requires that packers electronically submit purchase and sale information to USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS). AMS is currently releasing over 100 daily, weekly or monthly reports under the program covering market transactions for fed cattle, swine, lamb, beef and lamb meat.

Most plants continued to provide this market data and information on a voluntary basis during the cessation of authority, which originally expired on October 22, 2004, ensuring uninterrupted publication of meaningful market information.

More information on the Swine Contract Library can be obtained via the World Wide Web at [scl.gipsa.usda.gov](http://scl.gipsa.usda.gov).

# GIPSA Application Modernization

*Deborah Shipman, Washington, D.C.*

GIPSA has started a new project that will impact every employee.

In response to the GIPSA Enterprise Architecture (EA) initiative, GIPSA formed a team in September 2003, to implement recommendations made by the EA to modernize GIPSA's IT Applications. This 3-year project is called "GIPSA Application Modernization" (GAM) and identifies 28 computer applications that need to be developed, or purchased, to improve and align information and data flow to the Federal Enterprise Architecture.

The program manager for GAM is **Chuck Smith**. GAM project managers are: **Karen Guagliardo, David Bowen, James Vanderwielen, and Diane Palecek**. IT support, for software configuration control, quality assurance, and testing, will be provided by **Jill Ainsworth, Tracey Paugh, Robert Kayne, and Steve Rigden**. Additional help will be supplied by people who understand GIPSA's business processes, and IT folks that currently support existing applications.

The goal of GAM is to develop an easy and simple user-friendly Web application for internal (GIPSA management and staff) and external (public) use to complete a number of business transactions with GIPSA. Other goals are to develop and implement automated letter generation capability, incorporate specific business rules, create online help for all web pages, interface to the USDA eAuthentication application; and implement data capture by applying scanning and optical character recognition (OCR) technologies (allowing GIPSA to become compliant with the Government Paper Elimination Act).

The following applications will be developed:

## Under current development:

- GIPSA Agricultural Product Standards (APS)
- FGIS National Quality Database Warehouse (NQDB)
- P&SP Regulated Entity & Registration (RER)
- GIPSA Issue Management
- GIPSA Website Redesign & Migration
- GIPSA eAuthorization (eAuthentication & Application Security)

## Future Applications Identified for Implementation:

- GIPSA Organization & Personnel Activity Reporting
- FGIS Certificates
- P&SP Bonds & Financial Instruments
- FGIS Delegation, Designation, and Export Registration
- FGIS Official Services
- FGIS Customer Information Management
- P&SP Regulated Entity Transaction Reporting
- P&SP Financial Claims
- FGIS Inspections & Testing
- GIPSA Investigations & Compliance
- GIPSA Field Test Equipment Reporting
- GIPSA Complaint Management

# For Your Health

*Mavis Rogers, Washington, DC*

**Winter Weather Driving Tips.** Even experienced drivers can find their nerves and skills tested by winter road conditions. So here are some tips to help you drive safely as the weather turns cold.

- Before beginning your trip, know the current road conditions and weather forecast.
- Make sure your vehicle is winter-ready:
  - Check your brakes and tires.
  - Check your battery and ignition system.
  - Check your antifreeze and thermostat.
  - Check your windshield wipers and de-icing washer fluid.
  - Check your headlights, tail/brake lights, blinkers and emergency flashers.
  - Check your exhaust system, heater and defroster.
  - Check your oil.
  - Properly lubricate door locks that may be prone to freezing.
- Keep your car's windows, mirrors and lights clear of snow and ice.
- Always wear your safety belt.
- Leave a few minutes early to allow extra time to get to your destination.
- Start out slowly in the lowest gear recommended by your vehicle's manufacturer.
- Be aware of potentially icy areas such as shady spots and bridges.
- Keep a safe distance of at least 5 seconds behind other vehicles and trucks that are plowing the road.
- Don't pass a snowplow or spreader unless it is absolutely necessary. Treat these as you would emergency response vehicles.
- Don't park along the street. Snowplow drivers can't fully clear a road if cars are in their way.
- Keep an emergency winter drive kit in your car.
- Drive smart!

*Source: Virginia Department of Transportation.*

**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:

**Dana Stewart**  
USDA, GIPSA, Stop 3601  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-3601  
Phone (202) 720-5091  
FAX (202) 205-9237  
dana.b.stewart@usda.gov

**by January 25, 2005!**

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## Issuances

*Fred Kelley, Washington, D.C.*

### New Issuances

1) FGIS Directive 9180.78, "Procedures For Bulk Grain Exported In Containers," dated December 6, 2004 (Distribution: A, C, E).

Please call Mack Manis at 202-720-0244, fax to 202-720-4628, or e-mail to [j.mack.manis@usda.gov](mailto:j.mack.manis@usda.gov) if you have concerns or suggestions.

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USDA, GRAIN INSPECTION, PACKERS  
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