



# GIPSA News

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

January 2009

## GIPSA 2009 Administrator's Award Recipients

Each year, the GIPSA Administrator has an opportunity to recognize Agency employees and non-Agency stakeholders for their exceptional contributions to the Agency's mission.

This year, 24 nominations were submitted in 4 categories: 1) distinguished and superior individual, 2) distinguished and superior group, 3) safety, and 4) non-GIPSA support. The awards are an opportunity for the Administrator to recognize extraordinary contributions to the Agency. The following are the recipients of the 2008 GIPSA Administrator's Awards.

### DISTINGUISHED INDIVIDUAL

**Brett Offutt**, director, PSP Policy and Litigation Division, Washington, DC, was recognized for providing leadership and outstanding contributions to GIPSA by reducing the backlog of investigative case files and establishing a case file tracking system, leading to a more efficient investigative case file management process.

### SUPERIOR INDIVIDUAL

**Beverly Whalen**, agricultural marketing specialist, FGIS Market and Program Analysis Staff, Kansas City, MO, was recognized for exceptional leadership, knowledge, and representation of GIPSA to the national bean, pea, lentil, and rice industries.

### DISTINGUISHED GROUP

The **PSP Investigation and Regulatory SOP Working Group** was recognized for their innovative efforts in creating an automated investigative process, which standardized reports, reduced the use of paper, and streamlined the investigative reporting process.

- ◆ **William Crutchfield**, agricultural marketing specialist, Washington, DC
- ◆ **Stuart Frank**, supervisory agricultural marketing specialist, Des Moines
- ◆ **Melba Twitty**, agricultural marketing specialist, Carlisle, PA
- ◆ **Joseph Moore**, supervisory P&S specialist, Atlanta
- ◆ **Nancy Speer**, auditor, Aurora

- ◆ **Stephen Pollock**, agricultural economist, Aurora
- ◆ **Jackie Crull**, agricultural marketing specialist, Champaign, IL
- ◆ **Susan Kleinman**, auditor, Atlanta
- ◆ **Regina Ware**, agricultural economist, Washington, DC
- ◆ **Bruce Gardner**, supervisory auditor, Des Moines
- ◆ **Glenn Plumley**, agricultural marketing specialist, Madison, WI
- ◆ **Philip Warren**, agricultural marketing specialist, Frankston, TX
- ◆ **Margaret Mills**, supervisory agricultural marketing specialist, Aurora
- ◆ **William Arce-Arana**, agricultural marketing specialist, Des Moines
- ◆ **Cindy Bertoli**, supervisory agricultural marketing specialist, Harrisburg, PA
- ◆ **Jamie McDougal**, agricultural marketing specialist, Fort Worth, TX
- ◆ **Kraig Roesch**, legal specialist, Aurora
- ◆ **Creig Stephens**, supervisory agricultural marketing specialist, Atlanta

*Continued, see Awards on page 5.*

# Names in the News

## PERSONNEL

**Dave Grady** was selected to be the field office manager (FOM) of the League City, Texas, Field office, effective January 18, 2009. **Dave** had been assistant FOM in League City.

**Ed Durgin**, Office of International Affairs in Washington, DC, will head west to become the new FOM of the Portland, Oregon, Field Office, effective January 18, 2009. He will work in concert with current FOM **Walter Rust** for several months until **Mr. Rust** retires.

## LEAVE DONATIONS

**Ronald Taylor**, agricultural commodity grader, League City, has been dealing with a very serious illness for months. **Ronald** was recently hospitalized and his diagnosis will require

long-term treatment. He has exhausted his leave. **Ronald** has been accepted into the leave transfer program. All donated leave will be accepted. If you would like to donate either annual or restored annual leave to **Ronald**, please complete form AD-1043 and either fax it or mail it (not both) to: USDA APHIS MRPBS HRD, Attn: LCT, Butler Square, 5th Floor, 100 North 6th Street, Minneapolis, MN 55403, fax 612-336-3544. Form AD-1043 can be found on the web at: <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/forms/ad.shtml>.

## RETIREMENTS

**Wes Blake**, physical scientist, Technical Services Division (TSD), retired after 21 years at the Technical Center. **Wes** worked in several laboratories at TSD, but spent most of his time performing pesticide and mycotoxin testing in the Trace Analysis Lab. Congratulations, **Wes**!

**Bill Braker**, supervisory agricultural commodity grader, Toledo, retired on January 1, after more than 30 years of service.

**Dannye Cameron**, FOM, League City, retired on January 2, 2009, with 33 years of service. After graduating from Alcorn University, he began his career with the USDA/Forest Service. On May 10, 1976, **Dannye** was hired by FGIS' New Orleans Field Office. While in Louisiana, he became a shift supervisor in the Destrehan office in 1979 and the quality assurance specialist in 1983. In 1988, after being selected to be assistant field office manager for the

Pasadena Field Office, **Dannye** moved with his family to Texas. In 2002, he became manager of the League City Field Office. Now that he has finished his journey with FGIS, **Dannye** will be enjoying his new free time fishing and watching baseball.

## AWARDS

**Terrell Bailey** and **Ben Cotton**, New Orleans, received time-off awards for providing exemplary and outstanding service to the field office and the Agency.

**Valerie Collins**, TSD, received a spot award for extra effort in testing a new automated nitrogen analyzer while maintaining the normal workload in the protein reference laboratory

**Brenda Evans**, TSD, received a spot award for dedication, willingness, and extra effort to get the job done under an increased workload.

**Roger Friedrich**, TSD, received a spot award for accomplishments in developing effective training tools relative to inspection and education.

**Ronald Jenkins** and **Tandace Scholdberg**, TSD, received an extra effort award for creativity and diligence in furthering the scientific understanding of the role of endogenous control genes in PCR quantification of genetically enhanced grains.

**Sara Ludwig**, TSD, received a spot award for dedication, willingness and exemplary work efforts in a time of reduced staff and increased workload.

*Continued, see Names on page 4.*

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# From the Deputy Administrator

*Randall Jones, Washington, DC*

As we bring in the New Year, let us take a look back upon 2008, during which we saw many changes within GIPSA, FGIS, and U.S. agriculture. Early in the spring, after 32 years with FGIS, Deputy Administrator **Dave Shipman** accepted a position with USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service. **Mr. Shipman** played a pivotal role in shaping FGIS and leading the program in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. FGIS will miss his guidance and leadership.

We continued to make great strides toward the centralization of our oversight services. With the help and hard work of many team members, much progress was made regarding *FGISonline*. We expect the full completion and implementation of *FGISonline* by this summer. We continued to focus on restructuring the delivery of our programs with the construction of the National Grain Center (NGC). We anticipate that the new portion of the NGC will be completed this spring with the renovations of the current space to be completed in the coming months.

As we moved into the fall, once again we lost one of our leaders when Administrator **James Link** was asked to serve as the AMS Administrator. **Mr. Link** served 3 years as our Administrator and was truly a great leader. We will surely miss his leadership and personable management style. We were most fortunate to have **Terry Van Doren** chosen to replace **Mr. Link** as our Administrator.

U.S. grain producers reaped near record harvests while simultaneously the market place was delivering historic prices through most of year. U.S. exports reached levels last seen in nearly 3 decades. These record grain exports certainly kept FGIS staff extremely busy throughout the country ensuring that U.S. grain continued to feed the world. I deeply appreciate the dedication of our employees to provide continuous service to our customers. Increased exports meant longer work hours in many ports. Unfortunately, toward the latter part of the shipping season, grain prices began to tumble due to the tumultuous world and U.S. financial markets.

Let us not forget the two devastating hurricanes that struck. First, Gustav struck the New Orleans area and then Ike smashed into the Galveston area leaving a wake of destruction and damage. It is in these difficult and trying times that we can be most proud of our FGIS team members. Under the most extreme circumstances, FGIS returned to the port facilities within days to ensure that when the exporters were ready to begin loading ships, FGIS staff were there to make it happen.

Moving into 2009, we can certainly assume that "change" will once again be the norm. Effective January 5, **Mr. Van Doren** has moved to the newly elected **Senator Shaffer's** Washington, DC, staff. On January 20, President-elect **Obama** will be sworn in as our new President, which will bring wholesale changes to the management of USDA. Until an Administrator is named for GIPSA, **Alan Christian**, Deputy Administrator for the Packers and Stockyards Program, will serve as our Acting Administrator.

For the past 3 months, we have experienced a dramatic decrease in the grain export volume and anticipate that this trend will continue through 2009. As you know, reduced volume of exports translates into reduced revenue for our program, so we will have to be most diligent in controlling our expenses this year.

We will have two new field office managers taking over in League City and Portland. We will surely miss the guidance and leadership that **Dannye Cameron** and **Walter Rust** have provided. Together they have 66 years of service with FGIS. We are most fortunate to have very talented people within FGIS positioned to take on additional responsibilities and assume the leadership roles in these critically important export field offices. **Dave Grady** will assume the field office manager position in League City; **Ed Durgin** will be moving across the country from Washington, D.C., to Portland to become the field office manager.

In closing, I want to thank each of you for your hard work and commitment to FGIS this past year. With the support of each FGIS team member, we had a very successful year. In this New Year, we will face many challenges and be presented with many new opportunities. We must remain flexible and committed to our mission and success for our program will follow.

I wish for each of you a very happy and prosperous new year.

**Names**, from page 2.

**Patrick McCluskey**, TSD, received a spot award for leadership during his detail as leader of the Analytical Services Group, providing clear direction and a focus on results.

**David Morris**, TSD, received a spot award for sustained effort in the performance and conduct of completing extra assignments related to special projects and programs while maintaining daily work in other areas of the laboratory.

**Daniel Murphy**, TSD, received a spot award for special effort in assisting the Digital Media Group in the development of various inspector calibration training modules and helping to resolve grading issues in Arkansas and Oklahoma.

**Dale Phetteplace**, TSD, received a spot award for exceptional effort in coordinating and administering practical examinations to perspective licensed inspectors and promoting initiatives to improve program efficiency and cost effectiveness.

**Lynn Polston**, TSD, received a spot award for her focus on customer service and effective working relations with other GIPSA divisions.

**Alvin Sumler** and **Gerald Raymond**, New Orleans, received time-off awards for providing exemplary and outstanding service to the field office and the Agency.

**Larry Troutman**, **Terry Pinkney**, **Roy Johnson**, and **Bernice Moreland**, New Orleans, received spot awards for providing exemplary and exceptional service to our customers.

**James Whalen**, TSD, received a spot award for exceptional effort in promoting and furthering GIPSA's outreach program by coordinating,

preparing, and presenting multiple industry-based grain grading seminars in Nebraska and Illinois.

### 30-YEAR SERVICE AWARDS

Bob Baker, Portland  
Arthur Boline, Jr., Toledo  
Henry Jackson, League City  
Andrew Kuykendall, League City  
Robert Daniel, League City

### 25-YEAR SERVICE AWARDS

Steven Rigden, Washington, DC  
Robert Kayne, Washington, DC  
Vicki Lacefield, Washington, DC

### 20-YEAR SERVICE AWARDS

Mark Wooden, Kansas City  
Denise Ruggles, Kansas City  
Cathleen Brenner, Technical Center  
Gertrude Curry, Technical Center  
Timothy Johnson, Aurora

### 15-YEAR SERVICE AWARDS

Penelope Kilbride, Grand Forks  
Shane Minden, Moscow

### 10-YEAR SERVICE AWARDS

Martha Liberty, Technical Center  
Ricky Millerd, Technical Center  
Nancy Chasse, Atlanta  
Jackie Crull, Des Moines

## EAP in 2009

*Mavis Rogers, Washington, DC*

GIPSA renewed its Employee Assistance Program (EAP) agreement for 2009. The EAP provides confidential counseling services for GIPSA employees who are experiencing personal problems that may be affecting their ability to perform on the job. The program offers an assessment and up to six confidential counseling visits for employees confronted with family and marital problems, stress, depression, and other emotional challenges. It also offers access to legal and financial advice. If you have a problem or any other issues that are keeping you from sleeping at night, do not hesitate to call.

**Problems That Begins at Home  
Don't Always End There**

**Help is Available for you 24/7**

**Call Your EAP at 1-800-222-0364  
for Confidential Assistance  
Today!!!!**

GIPSA also renewed the Health Surveillance Program Agreement for 2009. Through this program, participating employees may receive one medical examination every 3 years. GIPSA also uses the surveillance program to help evaluate the occupational health of our employees. The voluntary program, which is administered by Federal Occupational Health (a division of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services), is available to all full-time permanent GIPSA employees. More information is available on the *inGIPSA* web site under Safety and Health and then Employee Health Exams.

Awards, from page 1.

### SAFETY AWARD

**Timothy Johnson**, administrative officer, Aurora, was recognized for promoting and applying safety and health standards in the workplace, by recognizing a potential safety hazard and taking preventative action, leading to a safer work environment for traveling resident employees.

### NON-GIPSA SUPPORT

**Tom Lehner** and **Barb Lutz**, human resources specialists, MRPBS, Minneapolis, MN, were recognized for providing extraordinary customer service to the GIPSA Federal Grain Inspection Service during the implementation of new positions during fiscal years 2007 and 2008.

#### Non-GIPSA Support Recognized

- **Mark Petry**, agricultural attaché, US Embassy, Beijing, China, was recognized for assisting an FGIS Office of International Affairs Collateral Duty Officers during his 2-year assignment in Beijing. **Mr. Petry** communicated key trade matters to the officer, especially when language barriers existed. With his support, our GIPSA representative was able to successfully complete his assignment in Beijing.
- **Steve Malone**, director, Nebraska Division of Weights and Measures, was recognized for collaborating with P&SP to coordinate a nationwide Monorail Training Course that was attended by representatives from USDA, the National Institute of Standards and Technology, various State Departments of Weights and Measures, academia, commodity industry, and equipment manufacturers. The training was an opportunity for these stakeholders to establish uniform application of inspection and testing methods.
- **MRPBS Financial Management Division (FMD) Debt Management Team** was recognized for working closely with the GIPSA Budget and Planning Staff and FGIS Field Management Division to ensure that the billing and collection of user fees were uninterrupted during Hurricane Gustav. Bills were mailed to over 534 GIPSA account holders, totaling over \$4.6 million for the month of August alone. The team continued to communicate with account holders to ensure payments were made, thus ensuring GIPSA operations would not be interrupted.
- **Paradigm Technologies, Inc.**, was recognized for working with P&SP to develop automated process to their regulatory reviews and investigations. The consultants provide P&SP sub-process teams with guidance on planning, designing, and implementing new processes. Their consultation has helped the Agency meet project timelines and expectations.

## Regulatory Info

*Tess Butler, Washington, DC*

Federal Register Publications

- ◆ United States Standards for Beans, published November 19, 2008
- ◆ United States Standards for Whole Dry Peas, Split Peas, and Lentils, published November 19, 2008
- ◆ Advisory Committee Meeting, published December 2, 2008
- ◆ Opportunity to Comment on the Applicants for the Unassigned Areas of East Texas, published December 1, 2008
- ◆ Designation for the Alabama; Essex, IL; Springfield, IL; Savage, MN; and Washington Areas, published December 1, 2008
- ◆ Opportunity for Designation in Topeka, KS; Cedar Rapids, IA; Minot, ND; and Cincinnati, OH, Areas and Request for Comments on the Official Agencies Serving These Areas, published December 1, 2008
- ◆ Registration, Five-Year Terms, published December 16, 2008

# Training and Development

Rosemary Mayne, Washington, DC

## Training Requirements

Before the end of January, you need to ensure that you have completed two training courses: cybersecurity and civil rights. After completing the courses, check your training history to be sure that the **2009** cybersecurity course and the civil rights diversity course are in your learning history.

## Development Thoughts

Listening. Does your mind wander into your own thoughts when you should be paying attention to someone speaking? You can improve your listening skills. Here's a quick checklist to consider:

- 1) Listen more than you talk.
- 2) Stay focused instead of planning your reply.
- 3) Resist finishing the speaker's sentences.
- 4) Don't dominate the conversation.
- 5) Don't interrupt; give appropriate feedback.
- 6) Paraphrase the conversation occasionally to ensure understanding and to stay engaged.

Creativity. Do you want to improve your creativity? According to the research of Teresa Amabile of the Harvard Business School, creativity is not fostered by money, rewards, tight deadlines, pressure, competition, sadness, or fear. Creativity blossoms when you are engaged in your work /project, have the needed skills, are not unnecessarily distracted, have necessary resources, and are free of politics and unwarranted criticism. What can you do to build such an environment?

## Employee Assistance Program

Call for confidential help.

Washington, DC personnel, call...  
1-800-222-0364

Field personnel, call...  
1-800-222-0364

Goals. Are you a person who sets goals but does not make it from here to there? In discussing striving for greatness, Leonardo da Vinci said, "...if you wish to climb to the top of a building you will have to go up step by step, otherwise it will be impossible to arrive at the top." As we begin 2009, consider the goals you have identified and then be sure to map out the steps to achieve them. Write them down and check them regularly.

# Travel Bits & Pieces

Monica Alexander,  
Washington, DC

## SmartPay2 Transition Update.

Please activate your travel card immediately. Cards that are not activated will result in rejected documents in GovTrip. The GovTrip system performs a scan of 100 percent of voucher documents to ensure travelers have an active travel card on file.

**Travel Card Training.** The deadlines for completed travel card policy training are January 15, 2009, for web-based users and January 21, 2009, for hardcopy users.

## 2008 FGIS Annual Report Available

The 2008 FGIS Annual Report to Congress is available on the GIPSA public web site at: <http://archive.gipsa.usda.gov/pubs/08ar.pdf>. The report summarizes the accomplishments and activities of FGIS and the official grain inspection and weighing system during fiscal year 2008.

## ERO Food Drive

*J.C. Cannon, Atlanta*

The Eastern Regional Office is committed to helping others and making new connections that bring us closer together as families, neighbors, communities, and as a nation. During the months of November and December each year, the employees collect and distribute food items to families within our community.

This year has been a challenging year for the world financially. Many of us and our friends have suffered losses from our 401k plans, losses of our homes, and many other financial tragedies.

Regardless of the personal losses, the employees of the Eastern Regional Office pulled together for a successful food drive. This year we surpassed all previous food drive donations. In light of the world's financial woes, this makes our 2008 food drive especially rewarding.

We selected three families that were in need of our help. The food was delivered to them on December 18 and 19, 2008. We also delivered food to a rehabilitation shelter for men recovering from drug and alcohol abuse, and delivered donated cell phones to a women's shelter.

Thanks to all the employees in the ERO for their contributions and support.



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## Belated Benefits Open Season Opportunity

On December 9, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) notified employees of a belated enrollment opportunity for the Federal Benefits Open Season. OPM asked all health plan carriers to re-evaluate their non-emergency surgery benefits for 2009. OPM took this action in response to concerns about the 2009 contract for Blue Cross Blue Shield Service Benefit Plan, Standard Option (enrollment codes 104 and 105 only), regarding non-emergency surgery benefits provided by out-of-network physicians. Blue Cross Blue Shield was the only plan to submit a change to the contract following OPM's call for re-evaluation.

For further information, including Frequently Asked Questions for this Belated Enrollment Opportunity, and the Blue Cross Blue Shield letter explaining the 2009 contract changes, please see <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/hr/benefits/index.shtml>.

If you have questions about open season, insurance, or retirement, please contact your servicing **Sharon Hudoba**, benefits specialist, at 612-336-3365.

## P&SP Proposes 5-Year Registrations

In the December 16, 2008, *Federal Register*, P&SP proposed amending the regulations under the P&S Act to establish 5-year terms for persons registered as dealers or market agencies under the P&S Act. Upon expiration of the 5-year term, registrants would be required to renew their registrations, and registrations not renewed timely would expire after 5 years.

Under current regulations, a registration is effective indefinitely.

The amendments will allow P&SP to maintain more accurate records and be more effective and efficient in enforcing the P&S Act. Requiring registration renewal will give P&SP periodic updates on whether entities are still operating and the type of operation being conducted, enabling the program to better manage the oversight of its pool of regulated entities.

The comment period closes on February 17, 2009.

**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**

# For Your Health

*Mavis Rogers, Washington, DC*

**Sniffle Season.** If the cold bug hits you this winter, there are many ways to treat your symptoms other than with contempt. Here are some ways that may help.

- ✓ Get more rest to help your immune system fight the virus.
- ✓ Drink fluids to help flush the toxins from your body.
- ✓ Humidify the air with a humidifier or take warm, steamy showers to relieve congestion.

Using a humidifier may be the best way to relieve your children's colds.

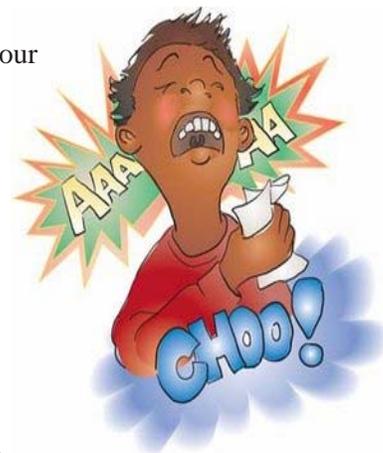
If symptoms send you running to the nearest pharmacy for relief over the counter, use medication wisely. Ask your pharmacist to recommend products that treat specific symptoms. Nasal decongestants can help you breathe better but don't use them more than 3 days. Be cautious about unproven remedies such as zinc or Echinacea; dosages and side effects are uncertain.

Don't pressure your doctor to prescribe an antibiotic for cold or flu, which are viruses. Antibiotics are not effective against viruses. With self-care and patience, your body will soon feel better. But watch for signs of a secondary bacterial infection that may require professional care. These include:

- ✓ Fever that lasts more than 2 days
- ✓ Wheezing or difficulty breathing
- ✓ Facial or ear pain, or sore throat that lasts more than 2 days, and
- ✓ Coughing or fatigue that worsens after 7 days.

Ultimately, it is your immune system and not modern science that cures a cold. What is your best defense against cold germs? Wash your hands frequently, and keep them away from your nose, eyes and mouth.

**Source:** *Personal Best Health Wellness Resources Articles Library*



**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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dana.b.stewart@usda.gov

**by January 25, 2009!**

**Retiring?** To be included on our email distribution list after you retire from GIPSA, please send your email address to [dana.b.stewart@usda.gov](mailto:dana.b.stewart@usda.gov).

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