



GIPSA News

The newsletter of the employees of the Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration

January 2011

FGIS Matters...!

Randall Jones, Washington DC

Export inspections. Through nearly the first 3 months of the fiscal year, export inspections continue to run ahead of last year's levels. As of December 20, total inspections are 12 percent ahead of last year and 20 percent ahead of the 5-year average. Soybeans, primarily exports to China, continue to be the main force behind the increase, up 2.17 million metric tons (mmt) over last year (8 percent). Corn inspections are running 1.33 mmt (12 percent) ahead of last year but still lag the 5-year average by 1.70 mmt. Wheat is up 1.73 mmt over last year and is leading the way in terms of percentage, up 28 percent.

New Orleans continues to see the largest increase in volume, up 4.13 mmt or 32 percent above last year at this time. The vast majority of this boost has come from soybeans, which account for 2.60 mmt of the increase. Olympia and League City have also handled large increases, up 0.55 mmt (9 percent) and 0.54 mmt (14 percent) respectively. Nearly all of League City's increase has been from wheat.

Labor-Management Forum. **Tom O'Connor, Bob Lijewski,** and I traveled to Portland and met with representatives from the National and local Unions (New Orleans, League City, and Portland). During this meeting, we developed the charter for the Labor-Management Forum. The meeting was very productive and laid the foundation for positive and productive working relationships.

Leadership Development Program. After my visit to Portland, I attended the final week of GIPSA's Leadership Development Program (LDP) in Shepherdstown, WV. I was very impressed with the participants' presentations and the group's motivation and eagerness to make a difference in the agency. I have great expectations for this next generation of GIPSA leaders, and anticipate that the LDP participants will make significant contributions and play key roles in GIPSA in upcoming years.

Kansas City. Also last month, **Bob Lijewski** and I traveled to the National Grain Center in Kansas City and held an all-employee meeting to discuss proposed changes to the organization's structure and functions. We briefly discussed the newly created Change Control Working Group (CCWG), which provides an avenue for all staff to provide key input into the operations of our program. **Don Kendall** announced that he was retiring after 38 years of service. Don had been the Technical Services Division's (TSD) acting director since early last year and his work was crucial to the continuation of TSD functions. He has provided outstanding leadership and direction to FGIS. Congratulations to Don on his retirement. We will certainly miss him. **Dave Funk** is now TSD's acting director. We've got a number of other retirements this month that are mentioned separately in this newsletter. Please join in me congratulating all retirees!

*Continued, see **FGIS** on page 9.*

Names in the News

PERSONNEL

Greg Giese, physical scientist, joined the Biotechnology work group on December 6.

Matthew Shepley has joined the Applications Development Branch, Information Technology Staff. **Matt** previously worked for Johnston McLamb as a senior consultant. For the last 3 years, he was an integral member of the team supporting the FGISonline applications, and is largely responsible for the recent successes in launching the new Licensing program for FGIS. **Matt** brings extensive experience in the business analysis and development arenas. **Matt** was a member of the Honors program at George Mason University, where he graduated with a degree in Computer Science.

LEAVE DONATIONS

The following GIPSA employees are approved as recipients under the Leave Transfer Program:

Carolyn Cooper Bridges, agricultural commodity grader (ACG), League City, will be out of the office for an extended period of time due to a serious medical condition.

Cathy Phelps, supervisory ACG/quality assurance specialist, Stuttgart, will be out of the office for an extended period of time due to a serious medical condition.

Angela Fore, legal instruments examiner, Eastern Regional Office, will be out of the office for frequent medical appointments and treatment for a serious medical condition.

Melanie Schwemer, agriculture commodity aid, League City, on April 28, 2010, welcomed a new baby boy to her family.

Ernestine Taplin, agricultural commodity technician, New Orleans, will be out of the office for approximately 6 to 8 weeks due to a serious operation.

Carolyn, Cathy, Angela, Melanie, and Ernestine have exhausted all of their available leave, and would appreciate donations of annual leave or restored annual leave. To donate, 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>. If you have any questions, please contact **Kitty Weeden** at (612) 336-3305.

RETIREMENTS

Bob Crook, Compliance Division, retired on December 31, 2010, with 29 years of Federal service.

Ken Critchfield, assistant director, Quality Assurance and Control Staff, Field Management Division (FMD), retired on December 31, 2010. **Ken** began his career in grain inspection in 1967 at the Lubbock Grain Exchange as a sampler, and later was a licensed inspector for that agency. In 1980, he accepted a position at the newly opened FGIS field office in Plainview, TX, as an inspector. During his time in Plainview, **Ken** served as quality assurance specialist, protein coordinator, equipment specialist, and training officer. He also served as assistant field office manager at both the Plainview and Wichita offices before accepting the field office manager's position in Wichita in 1998. In 2007, **Ken** assumed his current position. Born in Ardmore, OK, **Ken** grew up in West Texas in a large family of six sisters. He and wife **Vicki** have two daughters and three grandchildren. **Ken's** immediate retirement plans are wide open by design, but he looks forward to spending time with family, playing golf, reading, watching sports and movies, and in general relishing having no definite plans since summer vacation in high school.

Continued, see Names on page 3.

Names, from page 2,



Henry C. Greenwood retired on December 31, 2010. He began his Government career with the Postal Service in 1974. In 1977, after serving 2 years in the Army, he joined FGIS in New Orleans as a GS-3 agricultural commodity aid. Shortly thereafter he was selected for the upward mobility program and rose quickly within the ranks despite being furloughed twice before he was eligible for a GS-9. In 1994, he became a program analyst and later a compliance officer with FGIS' Compliance Division in Washington, DC, where he provided oversight of 13 state agencies. Two years later, he joined FMD's Policies and Procedures Branch as an agricultural marketing specialist overseeing the commodity program. To ensure outstanding customer service, he frequently met with stakeholders and travelled, domestically and to foreign countries, to resolve food quality issues. He developed the Modified Observation of Loading Service, a unique inspection service for export vessels being loaded with food assistance products. The service reduced the amount of damaged products shipped overseas, enhanced the appearance of U.S. agricultural products in the international arena, and improved the integrity of foreign food assistance programs. He helped develop the Total Quality System Audit (TQSA) program, which emphasizes quality in the manufacturing process rather than finished product characteristics. The program saved USDA and taxpayers over \$6 million a year in inspection costs. He was recognized with the Secretary's Honor Award for Personal and Professional Excellence for his contributions to the TQSA program, and the TQSA team received Vice President Gore's Hammer Award for contributing to government that works better and costs less. He led a team that developed guidelines for compliance with regulations. These guidelines, requires service providers to develop and document their internal processes. GIPSA audits the processes in place of compliance reviews. He established requirements for the location, design and maintenance of space provided to FGIS by facilities requesting service to help protect FGIS personnel by removing them from, or near facilities susceptible to dust explosions. In 2006, FGIS initiated a 2-year pilot program to study the use of GIPSA's existing contracting authority to improve the cost effectiveness of mandatory export inspection services while maintaining the integrity of the official inspection system. He developed contracts for service agreements and labor assistance. His contributions in the pilot contracting program enabled GIPSA to collect and analyze data to assess the impact contracting export service would have on inspection cost, service delivery, and the integrity of the official inspection system. He took pride in his work and was dedicated to getting the job done right. He was eager to help co-workers, field employees, other Government agencies, industry groups, and the general public. He willingly volunteered to work on special projects and in recognition of his excellence, Henry received many certificates of merits, awards, letters of appreciation, and accolades throughout his career. **Dave Orr**, former FMD director, recently wrote in a note to Henry: "Most folks at FGIS never really knew or really appreciated what you did for the Agency. Oh, they thought they knew but they really didn't. You just went about your work and got the job done. Others in USDA sure knew about your contributions and for that you should be proud." GIPSA has greatly benefited from **Henry's** outstanding abilities and unselfish devotion to public service, and we will miss him.

*Continued, see **More Names** on page 4.*

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

More Names, *from page 4.*



Donald C. Kendall, acting director of the Technical Services Division (TSD), retired on December 31, 2010, after 38 years of distinguished government service. **Don** received his Bachelor of Arts degrees in Chemistry and Mathematics from Southwest Baptist College. After graduation, he served 3 years in an Army engineering unit. His civilian government career began as a chemist with the National Center for Toxicological Research in Little Rock, AR. He attended graduate school at the University of Arkansas-Little Rock in his “spare” time and earned a Master’s degree in Business Administration. **Don** moved to Kansas City in 1989 to become director of the FDA’s Total Diet Research Center. In 1992, he was promoted to director of FDA’s Kansas City District Laboratory. During those years he acquired considerable expertise in applying state-of-the-art equipment to pesticide analysis. In 1996, **Don** joined TSD as chief of the Analytical Research and Testing Services Branch. He became chief of the Biotechnology Branch when it was formed in 2001, and was instrumental in setting up and staffing FGIS’ Biotechnology Laboratory. He received an Honor Award from the Secretary of Agriculture for his group’s work with biotechnology method validation and support. He was promoted to deputy division director in 2004 and led the Quality Systems and Services Unit. Finally, when **John Sharpe** retired in 2009, **Don** was designated acting director of TSD, a role he has fulfilled to the present. **Don** served as Alternate Delegate to the Codex Alimentarius Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling for 10 years. In 2010, he received Honor Awards from the Secretary of Agriculture and from the State Department for his role in achieving U.S. goals in developing Codex Alimentarius regulations regarding sampling and measurement of biotech events in grain. Other than his considerable professional achievements and his sense of humor, **Don** is best known at TSD for his enthusiasm for catching and cooking catfish. His beautiful new home on Smithville Lake seems to be an ideal place for pursuing that hobby and enjoying his retirement years with his wife, **Nancy**. Congratulations, **Don**, you will be greatly missed!

George Pulwicz, MRO, retired on December 31, 2010. **George** grew up in Hamtramck, MI. In 1969, he enlisted in the Air Force after high school and spent a year in Viet Nam. In 1973, he joined a carpenters’ union and became a carpenter’s apprentice. After graduating from Central Michigan University, he started his Federal government career in 1983, with the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. Two years later, he joined PSP’s Indianapolis, IN, office as an auditor. In 1999, George relocated to the newly established PSP National Pork Office in Des Moines, IA. During the early years of this office, George’s knowledge and expertise was instrumental in helping to develop the office’s Financial Protection Unit. As new employees were brought on board, **George** undertook to provide the initial training, and over the early period of the new auditors’ careers, acted as a mentor to many of them. The hallmark of **George’s** long and distinguished career is the professional and competent fashion in which he always carried out his duties. In his more than 25 years with the Agency, **George** conducted hundreds of compliance reviews of major livestock markets, dealer operations, and packers, and always with the same dedication to high professional standards, commitment to doing the work right, and with the initiative and flexibility that are so important for an auditor. **George’s** work ethic, dedication, professionalism, and overall commitment to a high standard of performance throughout his career made him an exemplary Federal employee. In retirement, **George** and his wife **Bernice** plan to travel to Florida to visit their three grandchildren. He also plans to pursue his hobby of woodworking and do whatever ideas my wonderful wife has for him.

Continued, Even More Names, on page 5.

Even More Names,

from page 4.

Larry Troutman, shift supervisor, Brunswick, GA, retired on January 1, 2011, with 36½ years of Federal service with GIPSA. Larry started out in the Baltimore Field Office and then transferred to the Savannah, GA, suboffice. When the Savannah office closed, he transferred to Brunswick, GA, where he completed his career. **Larry** plans to retire to Mississippi and keep busy coaching little league basketball and doing volunteer work for his church.

Ken Weaver, FMD Field Operations and Support Staff, retired on December 3, 2010. **Ken** began his career in 1976 in Houston, TX, as an agricultural commodity grader with the Agricultural Marketing Service's Grain Division. In 1978, he transferred to the newly established FGIS in Washington, DC, where he worked as a grain marketing specialist in the Rice and Commodities Branch, Grain Procedures Branch, Procedures Development Branch, and the Standards and Procedures Branch. In 1988, he moved to Kansas City as the assistant field office manager (AFOM). He became the AFOM for the Wichita Field Office when the Kansas City Field Office closed, then became the acting FOM from 2007 until 2008. He then joined FOSS until retirement. **Ken** plans to raise a few head of cattle among other pursuits.

Continued,

Even MORE Names,

on page 6

With Sincere Thanks

*Melanie (Brett, Trent, Trever, and Van) Schwemer,
League City*

*Angel: a person whose actions and thoughts
are consistently virtuous.*

Angels are among us, everywhere. They are known and unknown, seen and unseen. They bless us, even when they don't know us. I happen to believe these sentiments, wholly.

Your selfless gift of donated hours has richly blessed our family beyond words. Where there would have been no income and no continuing benefits during our time of need, there they were. The words, "thank you," on their best day with the deepest sentiment behind them, still fall short of expressing the gratitude my family holds for your acts of kindness.

Issuances

Terri Henry, Washington, DC

- FGIS Directive 9290.18, Exception Programs, dated December 2, 2010
- FGIS Program Notice 11-03, Near Infrared Transmittance (NIRT) Soybean Protein and Oil Calibrations, dated December 9, 2010



**It might seem like small change...
but it can turn into a money idea!**

Submit your change request form available at *inGIPSA*
and email it to: FGIS-CCWG@usda.gov

CONDOLENCES

Darrell Kearns, retired assistant chairman of the Board of Appeals and Review, passed away on November 15, 2010, at the age of 79 after a long battle with cancer. He is survived by **Colleen**, his wife of 60 years.

AWARDS

Frieda Achtentuch, Washington, DC, received an extra effort award for outstanding contributions to GIPSA operations in FY 2010.

Rene Acosta, Portland, received a spot award for efficiently implementing the WebTA system in the field office while continuing to provide outstanding customer service during a period of increased customer service requests.

Donald Atley, Stuttgart, received a spot award for altering his plans after hours and on weekends to provide unscheduled service to the customers in his area on numerous occasions.

Eugene Bass, Washington, DC, received an extra effort award for outstanding contributions to GIPSA operations in FY 2010.

Donald Blalock, Portland, received a spot award for reviewing the Hops Inspection Hand-

book and inspecting hop samples received at the field office when the hops coordinator was absent from the worksite.

Noah Brook, Toledo, received a time-off award for outstanding, professional job performance throughout the year, and for travel/details to various locations with little or no advanced notice and for extended time periods.

Ronald Bundy, Toledo, received a time-off award for outstanding, professional job performance throughout the year, and for travel/details to various locations with little or no advanced notice and for extended time periods.

Stuart Conser, Portland, received a spot award for providing a wheat grading seminar for the 2010 Elevator Manager Workshop and for coordinating efforts to collect samples for the Japan Pesticide Residue Project.

Tina Crane, Stuttgart, received a spot award for providing exceptional assistance to the acting field office manager during the management transition in the Stuttgart Field Office.

Cleve Ellis, Portland, received a spot award for assisting with the lease renewal, remodeling the sample collection system at T5, and working to develop a tip replacement for dividers that will reduce equipment replacement costs.

James Gardner, Portland, received a spot award for ensuring consistency in falling number results between Washington

State and Portland, and for providing outstanding customer service as protein coordinator.

Michael Glatzel, Toledo, received a time-off award for outstanding, professional job performance throughout the year, and for travel/details to various locations with little or no advanced notice and for extended time periods.

Margaret Glavin, Chicago, received a time-off award for outstanding, professional job performance throughout the year, and for travel/details to various locations with little or no advanced notice and for extended time periods.

Barry Gomoll, Toledo, received a time-off award for outstanding, professional job performance throughout the year, and for travel/details to various locations with little or no advanced notice and for extended time periods.

Anthony Goodeman, Toledo, received a time-off award for outstanding, professional job performance throughout the year, and for travel/details to various locations with little or no advanced notice and for extended time periods.

Ferriel Gregory, Portland, received a spot award for efficiently providing exemplary and sustained customer service and certifications during a period of increased workload and requests for service.

Continued, Awards, on page 7.

Awards, from page 6.

Joseph Han, Toledo, received a time-off award for outstanding, professional job performance throughout the year, and for travel/details to various locations with little or no advanced notice and for extended time periods.

Judy Hawkins, Portland, received a spot award for providing exemplary administrative customer service to fulfill the mission of the agency and improve customer service delivered by the Portland Field Office.

Alan Heimsch, Stuttgart, received an extra effort award for exceptional assistance and leadership during the transition of management in the Stuttgart Field Office.

Craig Klever, Portland, received a spot award for introducing and providing training for an automated Weight Loading Log, which has enhanced customer service and weight documentation, and for being instrumental in presenting weighing training to new employees.

Kendra Kline, Toledo, received a time-off award for outstanding, professional job performance throughout the year, and for travel/details to various locations with little or no advanced notice and for extended time periods.

Jeffrey LaHale, Portland, received a spot award for outstanding performance in working with intermittent employees, ship agents, and the trade to proactively assess and fill staffing requests, ensuring that requested services were provided.

Roger Loving, Toledo, received a time-off award for outstanding, professional job performance throughout the year, and for travel/details to various locations with little or no advanced notice and for extended time periods.

Amber McDonald-Lake, Washington, DC, received a spot award for taking on duties outside of her job description, including staffing, budgeting, attending Departmental meetings, and other general support for the Agency.

Patricia Ogunyale, Washington, DC, received a spot award for taking on duties outside of her job description, including budgeting, attending Departmental meetings, and monitoring the receipts for the dissemination and retrieval of workstations and printers.

Marianne Plaus, Washington, DC, received an extra effort award for her outstanding contribution to GIPSA operations in FY 2010.

John Rasmusan, Portland, received a spot award for providing assistance to the Moscow suboffice for approximately 6 weeks during an extremely busy harvest period. Customers provided many favorable comments on his performance.

Deborah Richards, Toledo, received a time-off award for outstanding, professional job performance throughout the year, and for travel/details to various locations with little or no advanced notice and for extended time periods.

Albert Snelson, Stuttgart, received an extra effort award for exceptional assistance and leadership during the transition of management in the Stuttgart Field Office.

Philip Tate, Toledo, received a spot award for outstanding, professional job performance throughout the year, and for travel/details to various locations with little or no advanced notice and for extended time periods.

Gregory Zieber, Toledo, received a time-off award for outstanding, professional job performance throughout the year, and for travel/details to various locations with little or no advanced notice and for extended time periods.

AgLearn Up and Running

AgLearn (www.agLearn.usda.gov) is now up and running and mandatory training is coming due. If you have not done so please complete: (1) Information Security Awareness, due 1/31/2011, and (2) No Fear Act, due 2/28/2011.

Here are commonly used functions that can be found on your **NEW** user account screen:

- ◇ Courses are now located on the “To-Do List” (previously “Learning Plan”) and are on the left-side.
- ◇ SF-182s and “Completed Work” (previously “Learning History”) in the upper-right corner.
- ◇ To change supervisor, click on your name in the upper-left corner. Scroll to the middle of the page and click the pencil icon. Click the magnifying glass next to your supervisor’s name. Type in the name of the acting or new supervisor, and then hit “Search,” then “Select,” and then the “Save” button in the lower right corner of the pop-up box. You will not be able to change your e-mail address.
- ◇ The “Home” tab at the top of the screen will return you to your account.
- ◇ **AGLEARN ADMINISTRATORS:** You may now access your administrator account as a user. To do this login as a user and at the top middle of your account click the button “Administrator Role” to access Administrator rights.

In Appreciation

The Grand Forks Field Office donated more than 32,870 pounds of dry beans, peas, and lentils to the Food Bank in 2010.



November 23, 2010

Dear Edward Stallman :

Thank you for joining the fight against hunger. Your partnership in our hunger-relief efforts will touch the lives of more than 62,000 people who are hungry or at risk of hunger in a very direct and meaningful way this year. I'm sure that each and every one of them is also grateful for your compassion and generosity.

Food shelf visits are at all-time highs again this year, although growth in the number of individuals seeking emergency food assistance has moderated after an unprecedented increase last year. Thanks to you along with our incredible food donors, hardworking volunteers and dedicated financial supporters, we are on track to provide food for a record 5.5 million meals to meet this growing need.

In 2011 we will continue to expand services to people and communities with unmet needs, seek out new sources of food, develop innovative methods to address hunger and provide the highest level of stewardship for the resources you entrust us with.

We are especially thankful for the many blessings and gifts bestowed through the support of many.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Linda Sailer".

Linda Sailer
Product Resource Manager

Employee Assistance Program

Call for confidential help.

1-800-222-0364

Congratulations LDP 2010 Grads!

Rosemary Mayne, Washington, DC

December 6, 2010, began the culmination of a yearlong development journey for 20 GIPSA employees. Meeting in at the OPM Eastern Management Development Center (EMDC) in Shepherdstown, West Virginia, the group received its final week of training and made project presentations to management.

The 2010 LDP class had a rigorous year. In addition to the December week, they spent a week in January and another in August training at EMDC. In the intervening months, they completed four AgLearn courses and five Leadership Quick Talks, read and wrote three book reviews, conducted three senior leadership interviews, shadowed a senior leader for a week, and developed a leadership development plan for themselves. Throughout the year, each person worked on an agency-identified project as well. Training topics for the December week included Management in Challenging Times, The Emotionally Intelligent Supervisor, Strategic Thinking and Visioning, Generational Differences in Today's Workplace, Leveraging and Managing Diversity in the 21st Century, the Federal Budget Process and GIPSA's Implementation, and The Transition to Supervision and Leadership.

A focal point for each participant was a formal presentation on the outcomes of their yearlong project including their action recommendation. Projects topics included: cultural barriers, alternative dispute resolution, performance metrics (dashboard), recruitment, succession planning, Farm Bill review, export service contracts, a producer education program, biotech grain, cooperative agreements, wheat standards, competition investigative process, a training module for regulatory investigations, implementing a quality management program, and management accountability reviews. The presentations were excellent and reflected much research and effort on the part of the LDP individuals.

The program was capped with GIPSA administrator **Dudley Butler** and FGIS deputy administrator **Randall Jones** providing their comments on leadership skills and challenges. They awarded each participant with a graduation plaque.

The OPM adjunct faculty consultant, **Dr. Michael Kaplan**, and I found the year with this group truly rewarding. GIPSA has a dynamic, energetic, and capable group of employees poised to apply their leadership knowledge, skills, and abilities going forward. If you have considered a leadership role, look for any future opportunities such as this and apply.

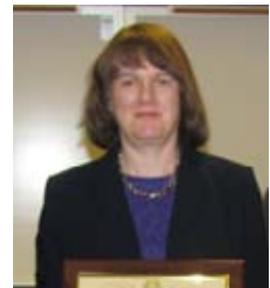
Please join me in congratulating **Kathy Boyd, Sarah Childress, Robert Dorman, Scott Flanary, Anthony Goodeman, Joseph Han, Jeana Harbison, Candace Hildreth, Jeff L'Heureux, Joshua Liang, Jason Lopez, Jayne Ludwikoski, Shane Minden, Idelisse Rodriguez, Amanda Roussell, Tandace Scholdberg, Thomas Steele, Casey Sturgill, Caroline Thorpe, and Regina Ware** on a job well done! Kudos to each of you!



*Regina
Ware*



*Robert
Dorman*



*Caroline
Thorpe*



*Joseph
Han*



*Sarah
Childress*

More LDP Grads 

Congratulation to Our LDP 2010 Grads!



*Candice
Hildreth*



*Jeffrey
L'Heureaux*



*Casey
Sturgill*



*Jason
Lopez*



*Kathy
Boyd*



*Tandace
Scholdberg*



*Idelisse
Rodriguez*



*Joshua
Liang*



*Tom
Steele*



*Shane
Minden*



*Jane
Ludwikoski*



*Jeana
Harbison*



*Amanda
Roussell*



*Scott
Flannery*



*Anthony
Goodeman*

Telework Enhancement Act of 2010

*Terri Henry,
Washington, DC*

President Obama signed into law the The Telework Enhancement Act (TEA) of 2010. The legislation grants Federal employees eligibility to telework and requires Federal agencies to establish telework policies and designate a Telework Managing Officer. Federal agencies must:

- Establish policy for eligible employees to telework.
- Determine employee eligibility.
- Notify all employees of their eligibility. Teleworking is applicable only to jobs that are conducive to telework, and where the work assignments are portable and can be performed effectively at a location other than their official duty station.
- Establish interactive training programs for teleworkers and telework managers.
- Include telework in business continuity (COOP) plans.
- Designate a Telework Managing Officer, who must be a senior official with direct access to agency head.
- Provide yearly progress reports.

Under TEA 2010, every Federal agency's telecommuting policies must allow its telecommuters to perform at or above ordinary levels, must involve a written agreement with each telecommuter, and must be factored in as an important element of the

FGIS, from page 1.

Stuttgart. **Bob Lijewski** and I also traveled to our Stuttgart Field Office and held an all-employee meeting with staff. We toured the labs at the rice mills and met with their managers. I am very encouraged with the plan and strategic vision of **Sandra Metheny**, assistant field office manager. FGIS management will work with her and Stuttgart's staff to facilitate her proposed improvements, including upgrading the field office and labs.

Proposed Changes to FGIS Organizational Structure. The CCWG received a number of suggestions related to the proposed changes to FGIS structure and functions. The CCWG reviewed the comments and forwarded them to the FGIS Executive Management Team (EMT) with their recommendations. The EMT has discussed the comments and will provide responses to those who submitted the proposed changes. I highly encourage all employees to continue submitting ideas and changes to the CCWG and take advantage of this process to help improve our program.

Holiday Party. The first snowfall in Washington, DC, did not deter GIPSA headquarters staff from enjoying an afternoon of good food and company at our holiday party. Thanks to the Holiday Party Committee, **Idelisse Rodriguez, Sherri Murphy, Amber McDonald, Andrew Greenfield, Jennifer Zuckman, Jeana Harbison, Amy Blechinger, Ty Luckey, and Rita Bhanot** for all their hard work.

Lastly, I realize many of you worked throughout the holidays and for that I am very grateful. I can assure you your dedication is appreciated. As we enter into the new calendar year, we can anticipate another very busy and successful year. The new year brings forth the opportunity to renew our commitment to customer service, which has made FGIS the world leader in grain inspection and weighing. Keep up the great work.

agency's "continuity of operations" plan for dealing with emergencies, catastrophes, and other major work-stopping events.

One part of the law establishes a process by which the Federal government will issue guidelines regarding telecommuters and information security. One technical requirement of TEA 2010 requires agencies to begin to purchase computer systems that enable and support telework (unless there is a specific reason not to do so).

The law also requires Federal research into telecommuting best practices and recommendations, as well as into the effects of increased telecommuting on energy consumption, job creation, job dispersal during emergencies, productivity, and urban transportation patterns. Findings from all this research and analysis, as well as annual reports on the state of telework and telework promotion within the Federal government, must be made freely available to the public.

For more information about GIPSA's Telework Program, contact me at Terri.L.Henry@usda.gov or 202-205-8281.

Source: Telework Exchange, December 10, 2010.

For Your Health

Mavis Rogers, Washington, DC



Goals and Resolutions. For many of us, New Year's resolutions are grandly made and easily broken. Why? Because, a resolution is just that – a decision. To make a life change, you need more than a decision. You need a plan to guide you in putting your decision into action so that you can reach your goal. It is up to you to take steps to get closer to your goal. Learning how to set goals takes practice.

Setting a small goal, like getting up half an hour earlier in the morning so that you can get where you need to be on time, may be challenging – it just takes practice. After a few weeks or months, it will just be a positive habit. Knowing that you can make small changes can give you the motivation and confidence to tackle a bigger goal.

Setting realistic goals can lead to a healthier lifestyle and improved self-esteem. The temptation to make New Year's resolutions can be strong, but you can set all kinds of goals at any time during the year. Pick a day that is meaningful for you - your birthday, your anniversary, your child's birthday, or any personal date. Working towards goals can improve your life in many ways. Once you have accomplished a goal, be it big or small, you will know it can be done and you will have confidence for your next goal.

The following tips can help you successfully plan and achieve your goals:

- ☞ **Be specific.** People who set specific goals are more likely to succeed. For example, instead of saying that you want to save money, set a specific goal to save \$20 (or whatever your goal amount is) per week.
- ☞ **Put it in writing.** Write down exactly what you want to achieve and post it in a place where you will see it every day. This will help remind you of what you are working toward. When you write, use positive terms. For example, instead of writing "I will stop eating junk food," reword your goal in more positive terms "I will make healthy food choices."
- ☞ **Set realistic goals.** When you think about setting goals, make sure that they are within your reach. Be mindful of your finances, schedule, and other personal affairs. Remembering these important factors will help you set realistic goals. It is unreasonable to expect to make a lot of big changes at the same time.
- ☞ **Develop an action plan.** Create a timeline with steps toward your goal. Set deadlines for each step and cross them off as you go. Sometimes just watching your list get smaller can give you a sense of accomplishment and help you to stay motivated.
- ☞ **Believe in yourself.** Stay positive about your progress. Share your goal with a friend and ask him/her to help keep your spirits up. To quote Henry Ford, "If you think you can or you can't, you're right."
- ☞ **Be flexible.** Keep in mind that setbacks can happen. Don't get discouraged and give up. Try again. Your hard work will pay off.
- ☞ **Ask for help.** If you get stuck or need a little encouragement, don't be afraid to talk about it. You might be surprised what kind of support people offer.
- ☞ **Reward yourself.** Acknowledge your achievements, even the small ones. Reaching a goal takes hard work and you should be proud of your efforts. Having clear goals and a plan can bring your family together and help you to be healthier all year. All positive changes – tiny or drastic – can improve your everyday life. Make this New Year count and create a plan to follow through on your resolutions.

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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by January 25, 2011!

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Courtesy of Wellness Proposals

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