



GIPSA News

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

February 2002

GIPSA Releases Captive Supply Study

On January 18, GIPSA released a report entitled "Captive Supply of Cattle and GIPSA's Reporting of Captive Supply" that clarifies the definition of captive supplies and announced ways that the Department can ensure clear reporting of information in the future.

The report was conducted in response to a Congressional mandate in the 2001 Agricultural Appropriations bill. It clarifies GIPSA's definition of the term "captive supply," and compares GIPSA's captive supply statistics to those published by other organizations, including USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service. The report also compares 1999 procurement transactions data of the top four beef packers to summary captive supply data the packers submitted to GIPSA.

The report highlights the following points:

- Differences in captive supply statistics reported by various organizations result from conflicting definitions and variations in the geographical

bases of the data collection. GIPSA defines captive supplies based on whether a packer commits to purchase livestock before the animals are ready for slaughter.

- GIPSA's analysis of the top four beef packers' 1999 transactions data revealed that the summary captive supply statistics the packers reported to GIPSA included cattle procured from non-reporting subsidiaries, affiliates, owners and employees, if the animals were procured through a captive supply arrangement.
- Based on its review of the top four packers' transactions records, GIPSA found that captive supplies accounted for 32.3 percent of the firms' total slaughter rather than 25.2 percent, as reported in the packers' annual reports to GIPSA. The data discrepancies are attributed to misunderstandings about captive supply definitions and computational errors.

GIPSA announced the following actions in response to the findings.

- GIPSA will publish its definition of captive supply in the *Federal Register*. The definition is this: livestock that is owned or fed by a packer more than 14 days prior to slaughter; livestock that is procured by a packer through a contract or marketing agreement that has been in place for more than 14 days prior to slaughter; and livestock that is otherwise committed to a packer more than 14 days prior to slaughter.
- Revise the Packer Annual Report form to clarify reporting definitions.
- Audit future Packer Annual Reports.
- Report captive supply information in more detail.

Copies of the report are available on the internet at: http://www.usda.gov/gipsa/pubs/captive_supply/captive.htm

Names in the News

PERSONNEL

Karen Guagliardo has joined Field Management Division's Data and Information Analysis Branch. **Karen's** thorough knowledge of field operations at all levels across the country and computer savvy will be a great asset to the Branch. **Karen** was formerly with the Compliance Division's Review Branch.

The Denver Regional Office welcomes new auditors **John Ver Linden**, **Nancy Speers**, and **Jason Kessel**.

Farewell to **Viola Nathan**, administrative assistant, Denver, left GIPSA to take a position with the Department of Commerce.

After 47 years of government service, **Charlie Turner**, Compliance Division, retired on February 3, 2002.

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NEW ARRIVALS

Dana Stewart, Office of the Deputy Administrator, and husband **Tim**, welcomed their new son **Michael** on December 6.

Jennifer Zuckman, Office of International Affairs, and her husband **Mike** welcomed son **Noah** on January 26. Noah weighed in at 9 pounds, 1 ounce and was 20 3/4 inches tall.

AWARDS

Dean Alexander, supervisory economist; **Kalyn Coatney**, economist; **Christopher Grey**, marketing specialist; **Weylin Lucius**, economist; **Maggie Mills**, marketing specialist; and **Julie Shiflett-Stepanek**, former economist in Denver, received spot awards for their dedication and extra effort in completing a Congressionally mandated report on the cattle and hog industries.

Sam Basile received a time off award for his professionalism and unselfish dedication in assisting with **Under Secretary Hawks'** visit to Chicago, Illinois, from December 3-6, 2001. **Sam** did such a great job that he received a personal thank you from the under secretary.

Robin Black, auditor, Denver, received a time off award for his extra effort in coordinating and handling the recent Combined Federal Campaign in the Denver office. **Robin** also received a spot award for exhibiting exceptional effort during a period when the Financial Unit was

severely understaffed and for the thorough preparation of the Monte Vista Livestock Auction, Inc., report.

Cary Brown and **Al Rupert**, Chicago, IL, received spot awards for giving an impressive tour of the Master Scale Depot for **Under Secretary Bill Hawks** and for an outstanding job in preparing the Master Scale Depot for the tour.

Erin Dubroc, **Amelia Gautreau**, **Rose Fremin**, **Angela Marine**, **Joanne Matherne**, **Dana Mitchell**, **Joanna LeBlanc**, and **Angela Roper**, New Orleans, LA, received performance awards for continued excellence in performing their duties as members of the New Orleans Field Office Clerical Staff.

Robert Medley, agricultural commodity grader, New Orleans, received a certificate of merit for his many years of exemplary service and leadership to the FGIS National Safety Committee.

Holly Miyazawa, student auditor trainee, Denver, received a spot award for exhibiting exceptional effort during a period when the Financial Unit was severely understaffed and for providing guidance to the Unit's summer intern.

James Morcaldi and **Marlys Sahlin**, auditors, Denver, received spot awards for performing additional duties and responsibilities during a period when the Financial Unit was severely understaffed and for assisting with the training of several new auditors.

Continued, see Names on page 7.

Under Secretary Hawks Visits Master Scale Depot

John Giler, Washington, DC

On December 5, 2001, Under Secretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs **Bill Hawks** visited the GIPSA Master Scale Depot in Chicago, Illinois. GIPSA's **Cary Brown** and **Al Rupert** gave **Mr. Hawks** a tour of the facility and explained GIPSA's role in standardizing national railroad scale weights. **Sam Basile**, **Marianne Plaus**, **David Mundwiler**, **John Godfrey**, and **I** accompanied **Mr. Hawks** on the tour.



GIPSA's Cary Brown explains scale operations to MRP Under Secretary Bill Hawks.

The National Bureau of Standards built the Master Scale Depot in 1928. Railroads use master scales to calibrate their railroad track scale test cars. This program provides the railroad industry with traceability to a national standard. FGIS assumed control of the Chicago Master Scale Depot in 1980 as part of the official weighing program. The master scale capacity is 150,000 pounds and operates within a ½ pound accuracy. The scale, which is one of three in the United States, is a unique design that has held its accuracy relatively constant since 1928. **Cary** and **Al** explained the importance of the Master Scale Depot during the tour.

Cary and **Al** maintain the five GIPSA railroad track scale test cars, including calibrating the test car test weights; calibrating test weights for the public (for a fee); and performing railroad track scale testing and hopper scale testing. They also keep the standard weights and master scale accurate to ensure the calibrations are correct.

Cary and **Al** made it very clear during the tour that they are proud of their role and responsibility to the railroads and the grain industry as "the keepers of the railroad track scale standards."

2002 Leadership Programs

*Rosemary Mayne,
Training Officer,
Washington, DC*

The USDA Graduate School's 2002 Aspiring Leader and New Leader Programs begin soon. Based on the rankings determined by a panel, the following individuals were selected for the 2002 programs:

Aspiring Leader Program

Deborah Bobino, Beaumont
Angela Marine, New Orleans
JoAnn Perrillous, New Orleans
James Hood, Atlanta

New Leader Program

Jimmy Cadle, Jonesboro
Scott Cooley, Olympia
John McCann, New Orleans

Congratulations to these people! The next 6 months offer a great opportunity for growth and development.

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

FGIS Directives Update

Jan Hart, Washington, DC

Tess Butler and **I** will provide directives maintenance support for the near future as a result of **Charlie Turner's** retirement.

As part of this support, each month we will announce in the GIPSA newsletter the new directives issued, as well as those directives that have been cancelled which should be discarded.

Tess will also work with GIPSA webmasters **Dana Stewart** and **Ray Hart** to update the Table of Contents on a monthly basis as these updates are announced.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 202-720-8433 or **Tess** at 202-720-7486.

ISSUANCES

- ❑ **GIPSA Directive 4790.1**, "Safety and Health Program", dated 11/06/01.
- ❑ **FGIS Directive 9180.62**, "Clothing and Identity Apparel Policy", dated 01/07/02.
- ❑ **FGIS Program Notice 01-18**, "Clothing and Identity Apparel Program", dated 12-26-01.
- ❑ **FGIS Program Notice 02-01**, "Bulk Identity-Preserved Inspection Plan", dated 01/08/02.

CANCELLATIONS

- ❑ **AMS/FGIS Instruction 2250.1** (old 240-2, Rev. 2), "Imprest (Petty Cash) Funds", dated 2/22/80. The Department and GIPSA no longer allow using imprest funds. The Purchase Card Management System's check-writing capabilities have replaced

those functions. Therefore there is no need for this Instruction.

- ❑ **GIPSA Directive 4790.1**, "Safety and Health Program", dated 2/10/94.
- ❑ **FGIS Instruction 4790.9** (old 376-1), "FGIS Responsibility for the Safety of Non-Federal Official Inspection Personnel", dated 3-29-82. Information is now included in GIPSA Directive 4790.1.
- ❑ **FGIS Directive 9180.62** (misnumbered 5200.2), "Clothing and Identity Apparel Policy", dated 04-01-98.
- ❑ **FGIS Program Notice 97-28**, "Performance Requirements of Grinders." The disposal date was 9/12/98, but it was marked as retain until superseded. Information is now included in the DON and Aflatoxin Handbooks.
- ❑ **FGIS Program Notice 99-5**, "Approved Fluorometers". The disposal date was 3/1/00, but it was marked as retain until superseded. Information is now included in the DON and Aflatoxin Handbooks.
- ❑ **FGIS Program Notice 99-8**, "Minimum Color Line for Hard White Wheat". The disposal date was 3-24-00. This notice is past its expiration date, and there is no need to retain, per Policies and Procedures Branch, Field Management Division (PPB, FMD).
- ❑ **FGIS Program Notice 99-10**, "Desert Durum Wheat Protein Calibration". The disposal date was 4-1-00. This notice is past its expiration date, and there is no need to retain, per PPB, FMD.

- ❑ **FGIS Program Notice 99-11**, "Cancellation of Desert Durum Wheat Protein Calibrations". The disposal date was 4-9-00. This notice is past its expiration date, and there is no need to retain, per PPB, FMD.
- ❑ **FGIS Program Notice 99-12**, "Near Infrared Transmittance Wheat Protein Updates and Adjustments". The disposal date was 4-26-00. This notice is past its expiration date, and there is no need to retain, per PPB, FMD.
- ❑ **FGIS Program Notice 01-12**, "Fumonisin Testing Service". The disposal date was 10-22-02, but it is cancelled now because information in that program notice was incorporated into GIPSA Directive 9180.71, "Fumonisin Testing Services," dated 11-26-01.



Black
History
Month

—
February
2002

Tuskegee University and the Professional Agricultural Workers Conference 2001

Dennis S. Murray Sr., Washington, DC

The 59th Annual Professional Agricultural Workers Conference (PAWC) was held at Tuskegee University, December 2-4, 2001. Educators, scholars, and agricultural professionals contributed their knowledge of land, community/international development, and cultural heritage to make this an educational experience for all attendees.

The unique gathering for agricultural professionals focused on **George Washington Carver's** and **Booker T. Washington's** mission to educate Black farmers.

Lewis Adams, a former slave, and **George T. Campbell**, slave owner, saw the need to educate Black people. On February 12, 1881, Alabama passed a bill allowing Blacks in Macon County to establish a training facility. After considerable recruiting efforts, county commissioners hired Carver and Washington, men with great minds and the desire, to build Tuskegee Institute, now Tuskegee University, for farmers. On July 4, 1881, the school opened to help Black farmers discover new ideas in agriculture. Many thought that the training program wouldn't last, but the 30 students who attended knew better. With **Carver's** and **Washington's** knowledge and dedication, the students helped build the institution that is now Tuskegee University.

Carver, an inventor and scholar, brought life to everything he touched.

For more than 50 years, he labored at Tuskegee to mold the minds of young men and women in the rural community. He cultivated the minds, bodies, and souls of student farmers, preparing them for greater accomplishments in life.

Educating farmers was the first priority of the school. As Washington's vision of the importance of farm issues gained favor, farmers from across the country wanted to attend Tuskegee. His focus on rural communities resulted in the establishment of PAWC in 1894. The PAWC reflects **Washington's** dream of expanding the social economics of rural people in agriculture development. It was a way to help farmers who couldn't attend classes because of farm and family obligations. Once a year, Washington arranged an intensive 1-week conference of classes for farmers to attend, to learn, and to share successes and failures from the previous operating year.

Between 1894 to 2001, the conference took many shapes. Many of this year's attendees were Tuskegee alumni, including **Cliff Herron**, Director of Outreach for USDA's Farm Service Agency. **Mr. Herron** shared his experiences while moderating a workshop on USDA discrimination and land-based lawsuits.

Also in attendance was **Lou Gallegos**, USDA Assistant Secretary for Administration. He presented an inspiring presentation on cultural

differences and similarities between Afro-Americans and Hispanics. He asked for ideas on how he and USDA can help bridge the gap between Afro-American and Hispanic people.

The conference provided information on other aspects and issues related to agriculture such as agriculture rural development and international economic development. Assistant Professor, **Ari Mwachofi** of the University of Arkansas-Pine Bluff, in her talk on "Minority Farmers An Endangered Species, reported that the number of Black farmers has decreased due to lack of finances.

Each session was informative and educational, and left attendees with a sense of accomplishment. **Dr. Walter A. Hill**, Dean of the College of Agriculture, Environmental and Natural Sciences, at Tuskegee University, and staff, sponsored an excellent conference again this year. The professionals in agriculture support the PAWC in its effort to continue the legacy left by **George Washington Carver** and **Booker T. Washington**.

Tuskegee University provides a commitment to higher learning and seeks to capture and embody the quest for excellence in instruction, research, and public service to our communities. Past and future generations of farmers should be proud of the accomplishments made through hard work and perseverance.



GIPSA Idea Hotline Update

Norma Phelps, Washington, DC



Here are the ideas received on the GIPSA Idea Hotline during December 2001 and January 2002. If you have questions about any ideas or the Hotline, please call me at 202-720-1017.

Suggestor

Suggestion

Donna Melton, Washington, DC

Scott Cooley, Olympia, WA

Vicki Lacefield, Washington, DC

William A. Kelly, Washington, DC

John McCann, New Orleans, LA

Melba S. Twitty, Atlanta, GA

Myron Hall, New Orleans, LA

Robin Rother, Kansas City, MO

David Lowe, Kansas City, MO

Cross-Train Administrative Personnel for Transition to Technical Positions

Develop a Business Card for Employees That is Linked to the GIPSA
HomePage

Allow All Headquarters Staff to Have Adobe Acrobat 5.0

Allow Employees to Download Free Software/Programs/Tools

Insert in the Subject Line of E-Mail Messages to Download File

Develop a Bio Book With Pictures of All GIPSA Employees

Make Approved GIPSA Forms Available on Website

Purchase Long Sleeve Polo Shirts for the FGIS Clothing Program

Purchase the pcAnywhere Software for Each GIPSA Location or Use
Free VNC

Include TSD and DC Employees in the Clothing and Identity Apparel Policy

GIPSA Hotline Ideas Accepted and Approved for Implementation During December 2001 and January 2002

This list does not necessarily indicate that the idea was implemented as suggested or that it is currently in place (it could be in the development/implementation stage). To avoid the chance of misinterpretation, please call the Hotline if you have any concerns or questions regarding the following list of ideas.



GIPSA Should Adopt the Flexible Work Schedule



Purchase Long Sleeve Polo Shirts for the FGIS Clothing Program

Keep those ideas coming in! Send your ideas to the GIPSA Idea Hotline via e-mail: gipsa-ideas@gipsadc.usda.gov; FAX to 202-720-1015; or telephone 800-455-3447 or 202-720-1013. **We encourage you to send ideas via fax or e-mail to reduce the possibility of transcription errors; however, ideas will be accepted regardless of the method you choose to use.**

Travel Bits and Pieces

Peggy Smith, Washington, DC

Privately Owned Vehicle Increase. Amendment 101 of the Federal Travel Regulations was published in the *Federal Register* on January 15, 2002. This amendment has increased the mileage reimbursement rates for use of Privately Owned Vehicles (POV) on official Government travel.

The governing regulation is revised to increase the mileage allowance for advantageous use of a privately owned automobile from 34.5 cents to 36.5 cents. The mileage rate for motorcycles was increased from 27.5 cents to 28.0 cents per mile. The governing regulation is also revised to increase the mileage allowance for advantageous use of privately owned airplane from 96.5 cents to 97.5 cents per mile. The rate increases were effective January 21, 2002.

Frequent Flyer Miles. On December 28, 2001, the President signed into law S. 1438, National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2002. Section 1116 of this law authorizes Federal employees to retain promotional items, including frequent flyer miles, earned on official travel.

Guidelines for Official Federal Travelers Using Frequent Traveler Benefits. Certain provisions of the Federal Travel Regulation (FTR) and the Federal Property Management Regulations (FPMR) require that promotional benefits, including frequent flyer miles, earned on official travel are considered the property of the Government and may only be used for official travel. The National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2002, signed by President Bush on December 28, 2001, now allows federal employees to retain for personal use promotional items received incident to official travel.

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) has indicated to GSA that these benefits may be taxable. GSA will provide additional information as it is received from the IRS.

There is a helpful Frequently Asked Question section on the Frequent Flyer Miles available at www.policyworks.gov. Click on "Travel Management Policy", then on "Travel Advisory Number 5 – Using Frequent Traveler Benefits."

Names, from page 2.

AWARDS, continued

Donna Wolf, computer specialist, Denver, received a spot award for her extra effort in developing and publishing an Emergency and Response Plan for the Denver office.

LENGTH OF SERVICE AWARDS

Length of Service Award Certificates for the 25-year certificate remain unavailable. The Department is no longer printing the 5-year interval certificates any longer. However, they will continue to print and stock 10-, 20-, 30-, and 40-year certificates.

To continue providing our employees with the 5-year interval certificates, APHIS-FSO, Minneapolis, has ordered a generic certificate that allows us to enter the specific year of service. As soon as these certificates are received at FSO, we will get caught up on the backlog of certificates.

Thank you for your patience.

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

New GIPSA IT Staff

Gerald Bromley, Chief Information Officer, Washington, DC

Information technology (IT) requirements in GIPSA are increasing dramatically. Just a few years ago, IT staffs primarily dealt with internal office automation support systems with a few cross cutting requirements to either provide information to other USDA agencies, such as grain export information, or to receive information such as daily livestock market prices. New IT requirements are being driven by the White House, Congress, USDA, our constituents, and an ever increasing internal demand from management and our information-driven users.

The White House started the ball rolling with the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA). This required us to change the way we do business and how we account for the results we achieve. Government needs increased automation to meet the GPRA's tracking and reporting requirements.

Dissemination of electronic information has just begun. We have made great strides, such as providing a GIPSA web site with electronic e-mail capabilities, but there is 10 to 100 times more IT work needed to provide true interactive electronic information to our constituents. We must close the "digital divide" between the both internal and external users who have network access and those who don't. Agency employees must have network access before we can adequately address the needs of our external customers.

Recognizing the critical need for more and better IT services, GIPSA

decided to integrate the IT staffs of P&S and FGIS. The new GIPSA IT Staff, which became official in November 2001, is organized into three branches based on the functionality each provides the Agency.

The Network and Telecomm Branch is headed up by **Bruce Griffith**. **Bruce** has been providing network support for USDA agencies as an employee and contractor for over 10 years. He first worked with the Agriculture Marketing Service and then as a contractor he provided network installation and support USDA wide. **Bruce** joined P&S 3 years ago as their Information Resource Management Coordinator. His next major task will be to design and build out the complete GIPSA network — a critical step in meeting all of the IT mandates that have been levied upon GIPSA..

The second branch is the Applications Branch, headed by **Warren Dicus**. **Warren** has over 30 years of IT applications development experience and personally supports the Certificate Program, which is one of the major IT applications in FGIS. This branch handles all the custom developed programs for GIPSA.

The third branch is the Operations Branch. Currently, supervisory duties are being shared on a rotating basis by **Irene Omade** and **Morris Johnson**. This branch will provide support for all the common off-the-shelf software packages that we use every day and all National Finance Center (NFC) applications. **Irene** comes from P&S and has over 20

years of experience in IT training and support. **Morris** comes from FGIS and has over 10 years experience. **Morris** has also served the last 5 years as GIPSA's telecommunications coordinator.

This reorganization will give GIPSA more depth in each specialty area and uniformity in IT systems. On the applications end, one of our goals is to provide each user with an identical standard set of applications, or a "Standard Desktop." The IT Staff will then only have to integrate the desktop once and install many times instead of integrating all the applications separately for each GIPSA computer. We will follow the same "Standards" methodology as we install the servers in the various field offices.

IT security is a major issue affecting our daily work productivity. Securing our data and our computer processing ability is at a critical junction. Future IT funding and program funding will depend on our demonstrated ability to secure our processes and data. We must rapidly move our data from individual computer disk drives to secured network drives. Data security must be a goal of all GIPSA employees. The IT Staff will not be able to achieve the necessary data security without the help of all GIPSA employees. Security must be our top agency IT priority.

In future articles, I will address the IT Staff's plans for the GIPSA wide area network build out and GIPSA's eGovernment efforts.

Take an Active Role in Fighting Viruses and Virus Hoaxes

Carol Remmers, Washington, DC

Almost weekly we get warnings concerning viruses and virus hoaxes. Many of these warnings come from local news TV and radio. And almost weekly I send out an e-mail message about the virus or hoax in the warning. So many messages, the messages are getting weak. Furthermore, comments have been made by GIPSA employees suggesting, "I won't worry about it until I get a warning note from you." While I am flattered by the confidence placed in me, I do not think this is wise. I have been known to take vacations from time to time and occasionally need a sick day off.

For these reasons, I believe GIPSA employees should empower themselves. When your local news program reports on the latest malicious-code scourge affecting the Internet, check it out. Here are some sites to bookmark:

McAfee: <http://vil.nai.com/vil/>

Norton Anti-Virus: <http://www.symantec.com/avcenter/index.html>

Computer Virus Myths: <http://Vmyths.com>

These are just a few and by no means the only web sites to use. If you cannot remember the above, just visit the security page on "InGIPSA." At the very top of the page are two links to the McAfee site.

Should you receive a warning and it does turn out to be a hoax, inform the well-intentioned person with a link to the hoax web site.

Does this mean I will NEVER put out another warning? As delightful as that sounds to some GIPSA employees, the answer is "No." I will still put out warnings on some malicious code events. GIPSA's ISSM's may chose to put warnings out for their locations. I would like to cut down on the amount of warnings and get employees in the habit of utilizing the security web resources available to them. Take an active role in fighting viruses and virus hoaxes!

Asian TDY Position Opens

In the December 2001 issue of *GIPSA News*, FGIS announced it planned to establish collateral duty Grain Marketing Specialist positions (GS 12-13). Individuals selected for these positions might be assigned in Asia to represent the Agency while on temporary duty assignment (TDY) for a period of up to 4 months. The vacancy announcement for the TDY positions opened on January 28, 2002. Check the GIPSA Employment Opportunities section in the Agency's *inGIPSA* website for information about the position. Additional questions should be directed to Office of International Affairs at 202-720-0226. All eligible employees are encouraged to consider this unique opportunity.

A Place for Red Meat in Your Diet

Deborah Shipman,
Washington, DC

Perceptions are changing about the health benefits of including red meat in a balanced diet. According to an article in *Meatingplace*, Bryan Salvage reported that new research shows a balanced diet that includes red meat can be healthy. This conclusion was supported by the Tufts Longitudinal Health Study with college students that concluded a balanced diet with red meat should begin at an early age.

The National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) notes that there are 8 cuts of beef that meet government guidelines for lean and extra lean. An NCBA news release reported that "a 3-ounce serving of lean beef provides more than 10 percent of the daily value of zinc, iron, protein, selenium, phosphorus and many B-vitamins, and contributes less than 10 percent of the daily calories to a 2,000 calorie diet." These essential nutrients can protect and maintain the immune system and protect against impaired growth and learning disabilities. The iron in red meat can help prevent iron deficiency, which, according to the Center for Disease Control, "is the most common nutritional deficiency in the United States affecting 7.8 million adolescent girls and women of childbearing age, and children aged 1 to 2."

Americans are learning to consume more whole grains, fruits, and vegetables. This is good, but now the word is out — no single food supplies every nutrient. We all can live healthier lives by having varied diets.

Employee Recognition Program (Awards)

Dawn Cowan, Washington, DC

The Employee Recognition Program is designed to fairly and equitably recognize and reward individuals and groups for excellence in fulfilling GIPSA's mission. All employees — including full-time, part-time, and seasonal employees, regardless of appointment type — are eligible for most types of recognition. In addition, former employees whose contributions occurred when they were employed with USDA and private citizens who contributed to USDA's mission or the Government as a whole are eligible to receive non-monetary recognition.

Supervisors and managers are responsible for recognizing employees for specific achievements; ensuring equitable distribution of recognition; considering input as appropriate from coworkers, customers, or other sources such as unions and employee organizations when making recognition decisions; recognizing contributions in a timely manner; emphasizing the importance of teamwork through recognition of groups; emphasizing nonmonetary recognition for specific achievements; promoting the recognition program by encouraging employee participation, arranging for appropriate presentations, and periodically publicizing recognition activities; allowing those recognized to choose the type of recognition they receive when choices are possible; forwarding suggestions/inventions promptly to the appropriate party for evaluation; and reviewing nominations to ensure that recognition is linked to the contribution and that the amount accurately reflects the value of the contribution rather than grade level or other nonmerit factors.

It is GIPSA's policy to: grant recognition based on the value of the contribution to the Government; ensure that the Employee Recognition Program is not used as a substitute for other personnel actions, such as promotions or pay; obtain maximum benefits for the Government, whenever possible, by considering the applicability of employee contributions throughout the Department and the Government; provide effective promotion, publicity, and training about the Employee Recognition Program to supervisors and employees; expect supervisors to invite and encourage suggestions, identify employees who deserve recognition, promptly act on award nominations, use the performance appraisal process to help identify performance supporting an award, and inform employees about types of ideas and performance for which they can be rewarded; and ensure that consideration for recognition is made without regard to political, religious, labor organization affiliation or nonaffiliation, marital status, race, color, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, or age, and not based on personal favoritism or patronage.

Anyone who believes an employee or private citizen has made a significant contribution may make a recommendation. A nominator should consider customer and coworker input in determining if an individual is deserving of recognition. Approval levels vary depending on the amount and type of award. Check GIPSA Directive 4451.1 dated 6/1/99 Employee Recognition Program for delegations of authority. All USDA employees should be given an equal opportunity to be rewarded for the results of work without regard to

grade level, or other nonmerit factors.

There are several recognition categories. Monetary Extra Effort Awards are lump-sum cash awards that recognize individuals or groups who make significant one-time contributions (e.g., special project, task force, etc.) to the Agency's or the Department's mission or goals. Examples of monetary extra effort awards include: extra effort (formerly called special act or service awards), spot, employee suggestions, and invention, administrator awards. All monetary awards, except spot awards, may be presented to groups.

Nonmonetary Extra Effort Awards are granted for a specific contribution which is above and beyond normal job requirements but does not meet the requirements for monetary awards. Examples of nonmonetary extra effort awards include: time off, honorary, informal recognition, letters of appreciation or commendation, certificates of appreciation or commendation, and keepsakes.

Performance Bonuses are monetary recognition given for performing well over the course of the rating cycle, such as consistently high productivity or high quality work. Examples of performance bonuses include lump-sum performance bonuses (formerly substituted superior performance awards) and Quality Step Increase (QSIs).

SES career employees are eligible for performance bonuses, Presidential Rank and Extra Effort Awards (except Spot and Time Off). SES non-career employees are eligible for Extra Effort Awards (except Spot and Time Off).

For Your Health

Mavis Rogers, Washington, DC

OVERCOMING ANXIETY.

Anxiety can be a feeling of apprehension, dread or fear over a real or imagined threat to your well being. Some amount of anxiety at times is normal. For example, mild anxiety prompts many people to complete assigned tasks or practice speeches or presentations. Feelings of anxiety can alert you when danger is present. Ongoing anxiety, when there is no apparent reason, is not normal especially if it is overwhelming and it gets in the way of your daily activities.

Self Help Strategies:

- **What is the cause?** Look for the causes of your anxiety and lessen your exposure to them.
- **Talk to someone.** Talk about your fears and anxieties with someone you trust.
- **Prepare for upcoming events.** Anticipate and get ready for situations that you think will cause anxiety, such as speaking in front of a group or dealing with an uncomfortable situation. Imagine yourself feeling calm, confident and in control.
- **Eat healthy foods.** Eat at regular times and don't skip meals.
- **Limit caffeine after lunchtime.** Too much caffeine can make you edgy and anxious. Drink decaffeinated coffee, tea, colas or water. Avoid chocolate.
- **Avoid alcohol and caffeine.** Both of these contain chemicals that can cause anxiety.
- **Exercise regularly.** Practice relaxation exercises daily such as deep breathing, visualization, or meditation.
- **Don't over-commit yourself.** Trying to accomplish too much with too little time is a sure-fire way to

bring on anxiety.

- **Confront your anxieties slowly and gradually.** Face your fears a little bit at a time, until you feel comfortable taking on more. Anxiety is a real feeling, but with patience, it can be conquered.

BOOST YOUR SELF-ESTEEM.

Self-esteem is the way we perceive and evaluate ourselves. People with high self-esteem have a strong sense of self-worth and they tend to see the positive aspects in themselves. Those with low self-esteem tend to evaluate themselves in negative terms. Listed below are some practical tips and insights to help you boost your self-esteem. Practicing techniques like these is the first step in feeling more confident.

- **Keep Things in Perspective.** It is easy to become so focused on our own lives that we lose track of the big picture. Remember, we are just one small part of a complex world. Like everyone else, we are subject to life's ups and downs. And, it is normal to experience changes in our self-esteem from one day to the next.
- **Identify Positive Characteristics About Yourself.** Write down your strengths and the positive aspects of your personality. Choose one of these attributes to focus on to help build your self-esteem. For example, if you enjoy and excel at gardening, devote more time to tending to your garden.
- **Take Care of Yourself.** When we are healthy, we tend to feel better about ourselves. That means eating right and avoiding alcohol and drug

abuse. It also means avoiding physically and emotionally harmful relationships, and taking responsibility for our feelings and behavior.

GETTING HELP. If you would like more information, call your EAP at 1-800-222-0364. Counselors are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week to provide assistance at no cost to you.

Courtesy: FOH Employee Assistance Program – Magellan Health Services

Annual Report on the Web

The 2001 GIPSA annual report is on the web at: <http://www.usda.gov/gipsa/pubs/01ar/01arindex.htm>

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