



# GIPSA News

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

*March 2000*

## From My Desk

*James R. Baker*

Concentration, structural change, market performance, and the use of formula and value-based marketing systems by packers continue to raise questions and concerns from livestock producers across the Nation. Concentration ratios for the top four firms slaughtering fed cattle rose from 50 percent in 1985 to a high of 82 percent in 1994, but decreased to 81 percent in 1998. Four firm concentration in the hog slaughter industry rose from 32 percent in 1985 to 46 percent in 1995 and was 58 percent in 1998. With the purchase of John Morrell and Company by Smithfield Packing, another climb is expected.

One on GIPSA's major responsibilities under the Packers and Stockyards Act is to ensure open, competitive marketing conditions for livestock and meat. Concerns surrounding enforcement in this area were the major topic of discussion in the industry and Capitol Hill. GIPSA specifically has been challenged to increase monitoring and enforcement

of the anticompetitive and unfair trade practices if we find facts that support violations of the Act.

In addition, the procurement and pricing methods used by many of the slaughtering firms are becoming more complex and sophisticated. As the industry continues its rapid move towards value-based methods of pricing, the complexity of the procurement and pricing methods will increase. With this change comes greater opportunity to engage in unfair, unjustly discriminatory, or deceptive practices

to the detriment of livestock producers. Non-negotiated sales-with delayed payment is a major area of concern.

Investigations involving competitive issues and structural changes are complex and generally encompass large geographic areas. Commitments to these types of investigations have brought about the restructuring of the P&S Program. Additional resources are critical to expanding GIPSA's capability to monitor and investigate the competitive implications of structural changes and behavioral practices in the meat packing industry and to support complex litigation when violations are documented. The USDA advisory committee and most producer trade associations have recommended additional resources be appropriated to aggressively enforce the Act, with the expertise necessary to complex investigations. We're going to seek those resources to make sure that P&S Programs can meet all of the many challenges we're facing

### **Major Challenges Facing P&S Programs:**

1. Major shift to contract production
2. Complex structural changes in the industry
3. Obtaining needed resources and people
4. Resolving violations in a timely manner
5. Electronic marketing
6. Concentration

# Names in the News

## PERSONNEL

Welcome to **Dianah Wolf**, administrative assistant, Des Moines, and **Leah Akbar** and **Dennis Murray**, public affairs specialists, Office of the Deputy Administrator, P&S Program, Washington, DC.

**Carol Remmers**, formerly of the Automation and Program Services Branch, was selected to be GIPSA's Information Systems Security Program Manager. She began her new job on February 13, 2000.

Farewell to **Tracey Dowty**, economist, Denver, who accepted a position with the private sector.

## AWARDS

**Ronald Beukema**, Washington, D.C., received a performance award for superior performance of duties contributing significantly to the overall effectiveness and efficiency of the Field Management Division's Automation and Program Services Branch.

**Michelle Bosley**, **Day Huguet**, **Rex Moore**, **Kenneth Weaver**, and **Mark Wooden**, Kansas City, received spot awards for their dedication and efforts in providing processed commodities inspection service during a year-long period of significantly increased workload in the Kansas City Field Office.

**Joyce Hoops**, Toledo, received a time-off award for an excellent job in cleaning and painting offices and lab at the field office, giving a professional look thus increasing the efficiency and morale of all employees on-site.

**Vicki Kottke**, Moscow, received a spot award for her dedication and efforts in providing processed commodities inspection service during a year-long period of significantly increased workload in the Moscow Field Office.

**Denise Ruggles**, Cedar Rapids, received a spot award for her outstanding editing and program debugging support in the development of the various Laser Certificate forms used in the Laser Certificate Program.

## 30-YEAR SERVICE AWARD

Raymond Lavine, League City, TX

## 25-YEAR SERVICE AWARDS

Anne Bullard, New Orleans, LA  
 Russell Frank, New Orleans, LA  
 Richard McCaw, Portland, OR  
 Kenton McDunnah, Cedar Rapids, IA  
 James Qualls, Jonesboro, AR  
 Thomas Regan, Beaumont, TX  
 Janet Walton, New Orleans, LA

## 20-YEAR SERVICE AWARDS

Michael Barnhart, New Orleans, LA  
 Ray Hollis, New Orleans, LA

## 15-YEAR SERVICE AWARDS

Paul Breaux, Crowley, LA  
 Mary McCoy, Washington, DC  
 Carol Remmers, Washington, DC

## 10-YEAR SERVICE AWARDS

Duane Evenson, Grand Forks, ND  
 Margaret Glavin, Toledo, OH  
 Wanda Jimenez, Washington, DC  
 Stanley Narcisse, Beaumont, TX  
 Leon Ross, New Orleans, LA  
 Glenn Terrill, Kansas City, MO  
 Thomas Webb, Portland, OR

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# Developmental Training

*Rosemary Mayne, Washington, DC*

Developmental training in GIPSA is diverse and ongoing. Training opportunities range from P&S' new employee orientation sessions to hands-on software training; from the FGIS FMD administrative conference to P&S' policy, procedure and investigative skills workshops. In addition, each year, GIPSA offers additional developmental training opportunities sponsored by the Office of Personnel Management and USDA Graduate School. Congratulations to the following employees who were selected to participate in the following FY 2000 developmental training programs.

## OPM Management Development Seminars

William Ashley	Aarion Johnson
Raymond Jones	William Kelly
Joe McNeil	Rich Pierce
Virginia Roseberry	Byron School

## Graduate School, USDA Aspiring Leader Program

Steven Burton	Oree King
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## New Leader Program

Myron Hall	Day Huguet
Phillip Miller	David Skallerud
James Winters	

## Executive Potential Program

John Sharpe

## Women's Executive Leadership Program

*(New name: Executive Leadership Program for  
Mid-level Employees)*

Eleanore Speelman

A list of these and other training opportunities was included in the March 1999 issue of *GIPSA News* (a chart with that information also should be posted in each office). Check to see if you might be interested in participating in these or other listed programs and opportunities in the future.

# New FGIS S&H Manager

*Joanne Peterson, Washington, DC*

**Mack Manis** has been selected as FGIS' Safety and Health Manager.

**Mack** has been with the Agency for almost 30 years. He began his career with AMS Grain Division in Beaumont, TX, as an agricultural commodity aid in 1971. Two years later, he was reassigned to the Mobile, AL, field office where he became an agricultural commodity grader. In 1975, he joined the Washington, DC, headquarters staff as a grain export policy specialist. He accepted his most recent position in the Standards and Procedures Branch in 1989. There, he reviewed and developed standards for rice and pulses, and developed policies and procedures for sampling and inspecting commodities and grains.

In recent years, **Mack** and **Bob Crook**, assistant field office manager, Cedar Rapids, IA, spearheaded FGIS' customer outreach program. Their exceptional leadership and dedicated commitment to the program earned them the Secretary's Honor Award in 1998 and a Hammer Award in 1999. More recently, **Mack** was involved in GIPSA's Y2K preparations. He managed both the Agency's business continuity and contingency planning activities and GIPSA's outreach efforts to customers and partners. He has also worked closely with the Civil Rights Staff and the P&S Programs on several recent initiatives.

*Continued, see Manis on page 9.*

# Grain and Livestock Issues Summit

*Leah Akbar, Washington, DC*

On February 28, 2000, GIPSA sponsored a summit to focus on the pressing issues in the livestock and grain sectors. It was the first of three summits that GIPSA will be hosting across the country to leverage resources of Federal and State agricultural representatives to address issues facing small and family size producers. Similar meetings will be held in Denver, CO, and Atlanta, GA, later this spring.

The meeting provided an opportunity to:

- build better working relationships between governmental bodies,
- clarify the respective roles that State and Federal agencies play in addressing the issues facing small and family-sized producers, and
- help identify the potential means of understanding the issues of rapid

technological and structural changes that are adversely affecting grain and livestock sectors.

In his opening remarks, **Michael V. Dunn**, under secretary for USDA's Marketing and Regulatory Programs, briefly described the scope of USDA's responsibility in addressing five specific issues: fair trade practices, concentration and mergers, contracting, livestock mandatory reporting, and legislative proposals. Further, he invited State representatives to share their thoughts, and identify overlaps and gaps between current and proposed Federal and State laws and regulations, to develop a synergistic legislative and regulatory agenda. He asked the representatives to "leverage our resources in a spirit of cooperation."

Participants included attorneys general and agricultural commissioners for the following states: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. USDA's representatives included under secretary **Dunn**; **Kathleen Merrigan**, administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service; **Jim Baker**, administrator, GIPSA; and **Charles Rawls**, the Office of General Counsel (OGC). Additionally, **Douglas Ross**, Special Counsel for Agriculture, Antitrust Division, Department of Justice (DOJ) also participated.

"GIPSA is proud to sponsor these important forums," said administrator **Jim Baker**. "They will help us make real headway in addressing the concerns of America's small producers."



*Left: Under Secretary Michael Dunn, center, joins administrator Jim Baker, right, in welcoming attendees to the Grain and Livestock Issues Summit. Below: GIPSA's Steve Tanner, right, with under secretary Dunn, leads a discussion on biotechnology issues.*



# Test Methods for Genetically Enhanced Grains Take High Priority in GIPSA

*Steven N. Tanner, Technical Center*

Many of you have heard of issues related to the new genetically modified varieties of grain that have been released over the last several years. Probably the most common product in commercial agriculture is Roundup Ready soybeans. There are many other varieties currently in use and being developed. The Technical Services Division and the Analytical Environmental Immunochemical Consortium (AEIC) co-sponsored the Grain Biotechnology Detection Methods Validation Workshop in Kansas City, MO, on February 24 - 25, 2000. AEIC is comprised mainly of life science companies who actually produce genetically enhanced seed, and test kit manufacturers who produce technology to detect genetically enhanced grain.

The workshop gathered technical experts to discuss the application of technologies used in the detection of grain containing biotechnology-derived products and discuss sampling issues that can contribute to error in measurement; and to provide a communication forum for scientists to discuss the proper validation and use of DNA-based and immunological-based (test kit) detection methods as diagnostic tools for grain testing.

The production of genetically modified grains and the release of new genetically enhanced varieties with specific advantages for the producer or the consumer continue to grow. However, importers' acceptance of

some varieties has been lagging. Resistance is due to a variety of factors, including social, cultural, political, and ethical issues. Marketing is increasingly relying on the ability to distinguish between genetically enhanced and conventional products. In keeping with our mission to "facilitate the orderly marketing of grain," we are preparing for the likelihood that third party testing of grain shipments for the presence or absence of these new grain varieties may be necessary. The workshop was intended to help us ensure the validity of that third-party testing.

Approximately 75 people attended the workshop, including representatives from the European Community, Canada, and the United States. The information presented and exchanged during the workshop will help begin the process of deciding how to provide standardized testing of grains for specific genetic enhancements so that U.S. grain will continue to be marketed in an orderly and fair manner.

There are no easy answers to the testing questions. Several techniques and protocols were discussed, but attendees concurred that the consistency of results needs improvement especially when determining the percent of genetically enhanced content. Also, obtaining a representative sample is of paramount importance for the integrity of the analysis.

The most common technique used for modified DNA detection is the

PCR or polymerase chain reaction test. PCR must be performed in a highly controlled laboratory setting with numerous quality control procedures in place. When done properly, you can detect very low levels of a genetically modified grain. Test kits using the ELISA or enzyme linked immunosorbent assay technology can also detect relatively low levels, but available commercial test kits are limited to Roundup Ready soybeans and BT corn. More kits are being developed but a variety of kits will probably not be available until much later this year. Kits look and operate much the same as those used for aflatoxin and DON.

Many participants also predicted that in less than five years, existing technology will be outdated and replaced with more rapid microchip techniques capable of measuring numerous attributes and traits in grain, and will probably not require a controlled laboratory setting. This is interesting and exciting work. GIPSA will continue to communicate with the technology providers and evaluate new techniques, as they become available.

*Continued, see  
**High Priority**  
on page 7.*

# Ethical Conduct Reminder

*Neil Porter, Washington, DC*

Official personnel must constantly be vigilant of our conduct and actions during service delivery. We must be careful not to engage in activities on or off the job that could give the appearance of a loss of impartiality or otherwise affect the confidence of our customers or the public. The following Associated Press article, published on February 9, 2000, serves as a reminder of the importance of abiding by current ethical guidelines.

## U. S. Agriculture Inspectors Admit Accepting Bribes

New York (AP). Seven U. S. Department of Agriculture produce inspectors pleaded guilty Wednesday to federal bribery charges, admitting that they accepted money from wholesalers to grade fruits and vegetables lower and cheat farmers.

The pleas were entered in U. S. District court in Manhattan before Judge Lewis A. Kaplan, who set sentencing for May 22.

The inspectors, appearing relaxed in business suits, each read from brief statements admitting that they had accepted bribes ranging from \$50 to \$350 to falsely grade producer lower than they should so companies would not have to pay as much to farmers.

The farmers make deals with companies which distribute fruits and vegetables to merchants based on what they promise the quality of the produce will be. If an inspector grades the producer lower than had been agreed upon, the farmers are paid less.

Even slight variations in the grade of produce can affect the overall contract price by several thousand dollars, depending on the size and value of the shipment, prosecutors said.

Those who pleaded guilty Wednesday to a single count of bribery of a public official were inspectors based at the Hunts Point Terminal Market in the Bronx. An eighth inspector had pleaded guilty in December.

Prosecutors said the Hunts Point produce inspectors had routinely accepted cash payments from owners and employees of wholesale produce firms since at least 1980, costing suppliers and farmers money.

The charge against the inspectors carries a maximum sentence of 15 years in prison and a fine of \$250,000, but the judge said the defendants will likely face sentences ranging from 1 year and 3 months in prison to 2 years and 9 months in prison. No fine is likely to exceed \$60,000.

Charges brought against various Hunts Point wholesalers are still pending in federal court.

Also, two indicated wholesalers have pleaded guilty to bribery charges and are awaiting sentencing.

# Trinket Update

*Norma Phelps, Washington, DC*

In our December 1999 newsletter, we solicited feedback or objections to implementing an idea to stop giving away trinkets when someone submits an idea to the hotline.

We received four comments — three said to discontinue giving trinkets and one said to continue. Therefore, after our current supply of bags and tee-shirts are exhausted, we will discontinue giving away trinkets.

The GIPSA Idea Hotline is a great communication tool. We look forward to continuing to receive ideas on ways to improve how we do business.

**Are EEO/CR  
issues or  
concerns  
affecting your  
employment with  
GIPSA?**

**Do you have  
questions? Need  
help?**

**Then let your voice  
be heard.**

Call the EEO Advisory  
Committee at...

**1-800-639-5167**

Civil Rights Hotline



# GIPSA Idea Hotline Update

*Norma Phelps, Washington, DC*

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

*Suggestor*

*Suggestion*

Ray Hollis, New Orleans, LA

Include An Annual Eye Exam for FGIS Employees

Sabri Gerguis, League City, TX  
William Bates, Washington, DC

Revise Stowage Exam Procedures  
Consider the Purchase of Magnetic Badge Holders for Headquarters Personnel

Michael D. Barnhart, New Orleans, LA

Allow Purchasing of Clothing From Companies Who Will Accommodate Special Sizes

February's tee-shirt winner: **William Bates**, Washington, DC!

## **GIPSA Hotline Ideas Accepted and Approved for Implementation During February 2000**

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.



Make Full Health Physicals Available for P&S Employees



Do Away With Giving Trinkets Under the GIPSA Hotline Program

Keep those ideas coming in! Send your ideas to the GIPSA Idea Hotline via e-mail: [gipsa-ideas@gipsadc.usda.gov](mailto: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.**

## **High Priority**, from page 5.

We will do our best to keep you posted on “biotech” testing and related issues. In the meantime, you can go to the GIPSA webpage [www.usda.gov/gipsa](http://www.usda.gov/gipsa) and click on the “Biotechnology” section on the front page. This will take you to the summary of the workshop and give you more information about the biotechnology reference facility that is being established at the Technical Center. We will continue to add information in the future.

Our keynote speaker at the workshop, **Tim Daugherty**, president, North American Grain Division, Farmland Industries, Inc., gave us good food for thought. **Mr. Daugherty** said we’ll see more changes in the production and marketing of grain in the next 5 to 10 years than we’ve seen in the last 100 years.

Many years ago **Bob Dylan** recorded a song that included the phrase “the times they are a changing.” For those of us involved in agriculture, our “times” are beginning a period of unprecedented change.

*National  
Women's  
History Month*



*March 2000*

## Update on 1890 Scholar

*Dawn Cowan, Washington, DC*

**Shana Love** is an 1890 National Scholar student. She was employed the summer of 1998 in the Field Management Division, Standards and Procedures Branch as a grain marketing specialist. **Shana** is currently a Senior at Lincoln University in Jefferson City, MO, majoring in Agricultural Business. Below is a spotlight on **Shana's** past year's events.

"I have been pretty busy since the last time I was in Washington, D.C. Last Spring semester (Spring '99) I was re-elected to my position as the Student Government Association Treasurer. I received a grant to pay for a study abroad trip to France and I finished my sophomore year with a 4.0 GPA.

The trip to France was a great success. The trip lasted about a month, from June 7 through July 5, 1999. I was joined on this trip by my professor and five other students. While in France, I took two (2) three (3) hour courses, one course on civilization and one language course to complete my French minor. We toured much of Northern France and stayed with host families in Cannes, in Southern France.

Fall semester 1999 I was very active on campus with numerous organizations. I pledged Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. and I was able to maintain a 4.0 GPA.

Since attending Lincoln University in Jefferson City, Missouri, I have carried no less than 17 credit hours a semester and my accumulative GPA is 3.8 which I hope to be able to raise to at least a 3.9 before graduation. I am majoring in Agricultural Economics with a double minor in French and Computer Science. I intend to go on to Graduate School after completing my degree here at Lincoln. As to what school, I am uncertain.

Presently, I am a very active member and hold positions in numerous clubs and organizations including Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE), MANRRS, Toastmaster International, and my sorority, Alpha Kappa Alpha. This semester I also have the opportunity to intern at the state capital with Representative Rita Days. I have some aspirations to one day enter politics and I hope that this experience will help me to decide."

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## February Issuances

*Charlie Turner, Washington, DC*

- ❑ FGIS PN-00-1, "Optional Statement For Export Wheat Shipments," dated 2-10-00
- ❑ FGIS PN-00-2, "Adjustment Factor Table For High-Oleic Type Sunflower Seed," dated 2-21-00
- ❑ FGIS Policy Bulletin Board Ref#182, "Sorghum Germ-Damage Determinations," dated 2-15-00

## Travel Bits & Pieces

*Peggy Smith, Washington, DC*

**Mandatory Use of the Government Travel Charge Card.** GSA has ruled that beginning February 29, 2000, all government employees traveling on official government business **must** use the government contractor-issued travel charge card for all official travel expenses.

USDA has been delegated authority by GSA to implement the following exceptions to this rule: out-of-pocket expenses, e.g., laundry/dry cleaning, parking local transportation systems, taxicabs, tips; expenses covered by meals and incidental expenses allowance; and telephone calls. However, employees are encouraged to charge as many of these expenses to the charge card as possible.

USDA has also been delegated authority by GSA to grant exceptions from having a travel charge card issued or used to the following employees: new employees who may be required to perform temporary duty travel before a charge card can be issued; employees who have had their card canceled for cause by the issuing bank; intermittent/seasonal employees and those not expected to travel more than twice a year; and employees with issues concerning credit, e.g., those with credit problems or issues, whether past or present. If these employees are required to form temporary duty and need an airline ticket, the ticket can be charged to the GVTS account. The reservation must be made by an authorized employee through American Express Travel at the Rosslyn, VA location.

# Welcome to the Personnel Forum!

**Manis**, from page 3.

In this column you will find answers to frequently asked personnel-related questions. We hope you find the information useful and invite you to e-mail general questions on personnel processes, programs & services to [hrfeedback@usda.gov](mailto:hrfeedback@usda.gov). Please continue to consult with your servicing personnelists on questions that are specific to your situation/circumstances.

**Question:** I have been asked to speak about my program at an annual conference. The sponsor of the conference offered to pay my travel expenses. Can I accept their offer?

**Answer:** The Department issued Ethics Issuance Number 99-2, Acceptance of Travel Expenses from Non-Federal Sources, which establishes uniform procedures for accepting funds for reimbursement of official travel and subsistence (and in-kind assistance) from a non-Federal source for employee attendance at meetings or similar functions.

Acceptance of these funds requires approval of the Deputy Ethics Official (your agency's Administrator) and an evaluation by a Mission Area Ethics Advisor. A list of Mission Area Ethics Advisors can be found at <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/mb/mrphr/ethicsrvcent.html>

The procedure requires use of the form, Approval and Report of Travel Funds Received from Non-Federal Sources, available at the Department's website, <http://www.usda.gov/ethics>, under "Rules of the Road." Payments accepted under this authority are reported to the Office of Government Ethics biannually.

To determine if your agency can accept the travel payment the Mission Area Ethics Advisor conducting a Conflict of Interest Analysis will need the following information:

1. The identity of the Non-Federal source.
2. The purpose of the meeting or similar function.
3. The identity of other expected participants.
4. The nature and sensitivity of any matter pending at the agency affecting the interests of the Non-Federal source.
5. The significance of the employee's role in any such matter specified in (4) above.
6. The monetary value and character of the travel benefits offered by the Non-Federal source

Depending on the outcome of the analysis, you can either:

1. Accept the payment on behalf of USDA. (Note: this payment is considered a "gift" to the agency. No payment should be made directly to you.); or
2. Graciously decline the offer if there is a potential that your impartiality may be questioned. (Note: If that is the case and your Agency wants you to participate nonetheless, it may be prudent and appropriate for the Agency to fund your trip.)

You may also contact MRPBS Travel Services Center at 301-734-8888 for additional stipulations.

**Neil Porter**, director, Compliance Division, said "We look forward to **Mack** coming on board as our new safety and health officer. He brings to this challenging position extensive program experience, the ability to deal effectively with groups and individuals within and outside government, great communication skills, and a demonstrated ability to get the job done."

On a personal note, **Mack** has supported the community as a foster parent in Prince George's County, MD. In 1999, after being a foster parent to a little girl since her birth, **Mack** and his wife **Brenda** adopted **Mackenzie**, who is now 3 ½ years old.

**Mack** is looking forward to the challenges of his new position, as well as to the opportunity to work more closely with the field offices.

## A helping hand for you...

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

# Seven Communication Basics

*Eileen O. Brownell, Fall 1999*

*(This article was provided by **Rosemary Mayne**, Washington, DC, and is reprinted with the permission of the American Society for Training and Development, Alexandria, VA.)*

At work, you spend an average of 80 percent of each day communicating with customers, managers, and employees on the telephone, in person, and in writing. In addition, your body language communicates messages to others, even when you don't utter a word.

The ability to communicate effectively is an important interpersonal skill for effective group dynamics, team development, and customer service. And, while communication is a learned skill, the American educational system generally places little emphasis on speaking or listening skills. As with other skills, communication skills can be learned. First, you have to learn the basics. Then, you must practice the basics in order to create a solid foundation on which to build ever greater communication ability. Remembering to use the communication basics can help ensure that your message hits its mark. Communication basics include the following:

- 1. Own your messages.** Use statements such as "I need...", "I want...", or "I feel..."
- 2. Be specific.** Make your message complete. Do not expect others to guess or anticipate what you need or want. Define your expectations. For example, explain whether a task must be completed in a certain way or whether the project allows one to finish the task creatively.
- 3. Make your verbal and nonverbal messages congruent.** Since body language is a major portion of any message you send, if you sound happy but have an angry look on your face, no one will be sure exactly which emotion you meant to express.
- 4. Be redundant.** Present your message in more than one format. If someone doesn't understand your message, think of a new way to present the information. People communicate one of three ways: visually, auditorily, or kinesthetically. A visual communicator responds to questions such as, "Can you see yourself completing the application?" The auditory communicator responds to such questions such as, "Tell me what it's like to complete a 10-page application form." The kinesthetic communicator responds best to questions such as, "What kind of feeling do you get when you've completed a lengthy application?" You can obtain clues as to a person's communication preference by listening to the words they use.
- 5. Ask for feedback.** Double-check all communication you send by asking the listener to repeat your message in his or her own words. This way, you will know immediately if the message was received correctly.
- 6. Present ideas one at a time.** One idea is easier to follow than several presented at once. State a series of thoughts on one topic in a logical sequence. Make the information you present easy to understand and follow. For example, you might discuss each aspect of a job assignment separately. For example, you might say, "You will need to complete this process before you continue with the next step. Stages of the process include..." At each step in the discussion, ask for feedback to ensure your message has been received correctly.
- 7. Avoid judgment.** Because people will avoid providing important information if they believe their message will be judged or evaluated unfairly, provide feedback without evaluation or judgment. Listen attentively; ask questions for clarity. Have all the facts before drawing conclusions.

There are numerous important communication skills successful professionals possess. Before you can be an effective communicator, however, you must practice the basics over and over again.

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

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

**by March 25, 2000!**

OFFICE OF THE ADMINISTRATOR  
USDA, GRAIN INSPECTION, PACKERS  
AND STOCKYARDS ADMINISTRATION  
STOP 3601  
1400 INDEPENDENCE AVENUE, SW  
WASHINGTON, DC 20250-3601

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