



# GIPSA News

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

*March 2001*

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## USDA Welcomes Secretary Ann Veneman



*Secretary of Agriculture Ann Veneman*

**Ann M. Veneman** was sworn in as the 27th Secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture on January 20, 2001. In her Senate confirmation hearing, she said, "The spirit of the American farmer is emblematic of the spirit of America, signifying the values of hard work, faith and entrepreneurship." The new Secretary has pledged to work to foster an atmosphere of teamwork, innovation, mutual respect and common sense within the Department and focus our delivery systems on quality service to our customers."

**Secretary Veneman** brings a wealth of knowledge and understanding of agricultural policies and issues. She served as USDA Deputy Secretary from 1991 to 1993. From 1989 to 1991, she served as Deputy Undersecretary of Agriculture for International Affairs and Commodity Programs. She joined USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service in 1986 and served as Associate Administrator until 1989. Highlighting her belief that more open markets are needed to help promote U.S. food and agricultural products, **Veneman** was actively involved in the Uruguay Round of GATT negotiations, NAFTA, and the U.S.-Canada Free Trade Agreement.

From 1995 to 1999, **Veneman** served as Secretary of the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), managing agricultural programs and services for the nation's largest agricultural producing state. During her tenure, **Secretary Veneman** pioneered programs and partnerships to enhance food safety, pest and disease prevention and control and agriculture education. **Secretary Veneman** also made it a priority to expand global opportunities for California agriculture.

**Secretary Veneman**, an attorney, was raised on a peach farm in Modesto, California. She earned her bachelor's degree in political science from the University of California at Davis, and a master's degree in public policy from the University of California at Berkeley, and a juris doctorate degree from the University of California, Hastings College of Law. In her personal capacity, she currently serves as a board member of the Close Up Foundation, a nonpartisan civic education organization, based in Washington, D.C.

# Names in the News

## PERSONNEL

**Tess Butler**, Washington, DC, formerly secretary to the deputy administrator, FGIS, is the new regulatory specialist in the Compliance Division.

Farewell to **Michael Navratil**, auditor, Denver, who took a position as an auditor with the Defense Contract Audit Agency.

## CONDOLENCES

**Ralph Anderson**, retired chief of Columbus Grain Inspection, Inc., Circleville, Ohio, passed away.

**Roy Dupont**, New Orleans, passed away on February 9. **Roy** is survived by his brother **Harold**.

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## AWARDS

**Dannye Cameron**, League City, received a spot award for outstanding efforts in the field office's administrative program.

**Robert Campbell, Robert Daniels, Gary Erskine, Walter Gilbert, Emad Ibrahim, Paul Molina, and George Wright**, all of League City, received spot awards for high quality, high volume service to Agency customers.

**James Doak** and **Mark Wooden**, Kansas City, MO, received a time-off award for his significant effort in contacting certified private applicators in Missouri for the pesticide recordkeeping program.

**Susan Fall**, Minneapolis; **Ed Stallman**, Grand Forks; **John Flemm**, Washington Federal/State Office; and **Judy Johnston**, Wichita, received spot awards for outstanding contributions to the Standards and Procedures Branch in revising the licensing exams which enabled the Agency to implement a testing program that will more accurately evaluate the knowledge, skills, and abilities of licensed personnel.

**Constance Grows**, ACG, New Orleans received a spot award for her professionalism and thoroughness in completing assigned duties.

**Wade Berteau**, ACG received a spot award for his guidance to field office employees with the Cu-Sum program, and a time-off award for his outstanding performance as a grader and for coming out while on vacation to resolve a cu-sum problem at ADM-Ama.

**Deborah Edwards**, League City, received a spot award for outstanding efforts in the field office's administrative program.

**Rhondalyn Edwards**, ACG, New Orleans received a spot award for performing her duties in an exceptional and professional manner.

**Sabri Gerguis**, League City, received a time-off award for effectively representing GIPSA in international assignments in Turkey, Egypt and Jordan.

**Roy Hebert**, ACT, and **Albert Nelson**, ACG, Crowley, received a spot award for resolving a quality problem with foreign representatives.

**Ray Hollis**, ACG, New Orleans, received a time-off award for resolving a Cu-Sum problem and explaining procedure to co-workers.

**Patricia Jackson** received a spot award for maintaining Moisture Meter Lab customer service during a period of personnel shortage from 1/14/01 to 2/11/01.

**Joel Jolly**, ACT, New Orleans, received a time-off award for cleaning and organizing the lab at ADM Destrehan.

**Andrew Kuykendall**, League City, received a spot award for outstanding effort in the field office's rice program.

**Stephen Mattison**, ACA, New Orleans received a spot award for working well as a team player and exhibiting a positive attitude.

*Continued, see Names on page 3.*

## Names, from page 2

**James McLaurin, Garey Holmes, and Terrel Bailey**, ACG's, New Orleans, received a spot award for doing an outstanding job in the equipment program.

**Stephen Michel**, ACG, New Orleans received a spot award for providing exemplary service to our customers.

**Amy Newman**, League City, received a spot award for outstanding efforts in the field office's administrative program.

**Norma Phelps**, Washington, DC, received a time-off award for coordinating the Field Management Division office renovations and relocations that were required due to the recent division reorganization.

**Nilsa Ramos**, resident, Tallahassee, received a spot award for voluntarily setting up and organizing the administration of office car fleet, keeping records, enforcing rules, identifying needs and keeping employees informed of all regulations.

**Gerald Raymond**, ACG, New Orleans for maintaining a professional work habit in providing exceptional and efficient service to our GIPSA customers.

**Leon Ross**, ACT, New Orleans, received a time-off award for providing exemplary service to our customers.

**William Shelby**, shift supervisor, New Orleans received a spot award for serving as scale specialist for several months.

**Creig Stephens**, marketing specialist, Atlanta, received an extra effort award in recognition of his extra effort for the initiative, professionalism, and innovation demonstrated in planning, coordinating and conducting the 2001 resident agent meeting and training.

**Carl Tutt**, League City, received a spot award for outstanding effort in the field office's rice program.

**James Whalen**, Kansas City, MO, received a performance awards for his outstanding performance of duties which contributed to the increased effectiveness and efficiency of GIPSA and the Kansas City Field Office.

**Carroll Wilson**, ACT, New Orleans received a spot award for his extraordinary dedication, extra effort and enthusiasm for the job.

### 30-YEAR SERVICE AWARD

Mack Manis, Washington, DC

### 20-YEAR SERVICE AWARD

James Morcaldi, Denver

### 15-YEAR SERVICE AWARD

Gunnard Eskilsen, Washington, DC

## 2000 Export Grain Quality Report Available

GIPSA's "2000 U.S. Grain Exports: Quality Report" is now available. The report summarizes the quality of export wheat, corn, soybeans, sorghum, barley, sunflower seeds, and canola. It is based on data collected during the official inspection of export grain shipments in calendar year 2000.

The report is available electronically on GIPSA's web site at <http://www.usda.gov/gipsa/pubs/export/00export.htm>. Hard copies are available in limited quantities from Dana Stewart, telephone 202-720-5091, e-mail [dstewart@gipsadc.usda.gov](mailto:dstewart@gipsadc.usda.gov).

## Travel Bits & Pieces

*Peggy Smith, Washington, DC*

**Credit Card Receipt.** Just a reminder that a lodging receipt must be provided with a travel voucher. If you choose to attach your credit card receipt, you must black out your credit card number.

**Post Audit Voucher.** When NFC has selected your voucher for post audit, the paper voucher with original signatures and copies of all attachments must be sent to NFC within 30 days of receiving the post audit notice. Failure to submit the voucher in a timely manner may result in your being billed for the amount of the voucher.

# EEO Advisory Committee

*Eugene Bass, Director, Civil Rights Staff*

The GIPSA Equal Employment Opportunity Advisory Committee (EEOAC) and the Special Emphasis Program Managers (SEPMs) met in Washington, D.C. on January 22-26, 2001. The committee addressed a variety of civil rights issues and concerns during the week. The SEPMs also met to discuss goals and objectives and ways to improve and strengthening GIPSA's overall Special Emphasis Program.

The following EEOAC members and SEPMs were present for the meeting:

## EEOAC Members

Raymond Jones  
Amanda Roussell  
Melinda Meador  
Robert Medley  
Eddie Clark  
Peggy Smith

## SEPMs

Sharon Williams  
Viola Nathan  
Deborah Shipman  
Linda Alston  
Shelli Lopez  
William Arce  
Janet Walton  
Paul Hughes

Topics discussed during the meeting included: implementing the EEO/CR performance element for supervisory and non-supervisory personnel; a review of Workforce Diversity issues including a discussion on the Affirmative Employment Program, including recruitment and hiring initiatives as a means to overcome barriers to full participation to GIPSA's programs; and a review of incentive awards issued to employees.

The committee decided that one of their primary goals for 2001 is to conduct monthly conference calls to address issues and concerns. The first conference was held on February 8, 2001. Full minutes of the meeting will be prepared and forwarded to all employees soon.

Please contact any EEOAC members or SEPM if you would like to discuss any Civil Rights issue or concern.

## New on the Web

- **2000 U.S. Exports Quality Report**

<http://www.usda.gov/gipsa/pubs/export/00export.htm>

- **Rice Inspection Educational Brochure**

<http://www.usda.gov/gipsa/reference-library/graingallery/graingallery.htm>

- **Grain Gallery**

<http://www.usda.gov/gipsa/reference-library/graingallery/graingallery.htm>

From the North Country Food Bank, Inc. to Tom Wrenn, manager, Grand Forks, ND, Field Office.

January 17, 2001

Dear Tom:

Thank you for your part in making 12,500 pounds of edible beans and 85 pounds of pasta available for those in need in 2000. We are proud to offer this nutritious food to our 148 agencies within our 21 county service area.

Also, I compliment your friendly and helpful staff on the help I receive when I pick up the donations. We appreciate this help in getting food to those in need.

Sincerely,

Ron Graham  
Executive Director

# National Women's History Month

*Linda Alston, Washington, DC*

The Education Task Force of the Sonoma County (California) commission on the Status of Women initiated a "Women's History Week" celebration within their own county in 1978. In 1981, with the support of the national leaders of organizations for women and girls, the Task Force secured a congressional resolution to have "National Women's History Week" celebrated nationwide. Within a few years, thousands of schools and communities began celebrating National Women's History Week. In

1987, the National Women's History Project petitioned Congress to expand the celebration to the entire month of March. Since then, The National Women's History Month Resolution was approved with bipartisan support in the House and Senate.

Over the years, the interest in women's history has grown. The President's commission on the Celebration of Women in History in America sponsored hearings in many sections of the country. The Commission reported about the effectiveness of the activities and institutions that are promoting women's history awareness and heard recommendations for programs that are still needed. The Women's Progress commission will soon have hearing to ascertain appropriate methods for identifying and preserving sites of importance for American women's history. State historical societies, women's organizations, and groups such as the Girl Scouts of USA have worked together

to develop joint programs. With the guidance of the National Women's History Project, educators, workplace programs planners, parents and community organizations in thousands of American communities have turned National Women's History Month into a major celebration.

## **Federal Women's Program.**

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### *National Women's History Month "Celebrating Women of Courage and Vision" March 2001*

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The Federal Women's Program (FWP) is a special emphasis program established in November 1967, by the Civil Service Commission to enhance the employment and advancement opportunities of women. In October 1967, Executive Order 11375 had added sex to other prohibited forms of discrimination in the Federal government. In August 1969, Executive Order 11478 integrated the FWP into the overall Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Program to address the underrepresentation of women and their employment concerns, especially in higher grade levels and in certain job categories. Federal Personnel Manual 713 was issued to carry out Executive Order 11478, and Federal Personnel Manual 713.9, dated May 20, 1970, directed Directors of EEO to have on staff a Manager for the Federal Women's Program.

In March 1972, the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972, P.L.

92-261 combined all Federal employees and agencies under the equal employment opportunity provisions of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which required all Federal agencies to allocate sufficient resources to ensure a results-oriented EEO program at headquarters and field levels. The designation of a Federal Women's

Program Managers was codified in the Code of Federal Regulations (29 CFR 1614.102) as appropriate for carrying out equal employment opportunity func-

tions in all organizational units of an agency, and at all agency installations.

**Are EEO/CR issues  
or concerns  
affecting your  
employment with  
GIPSA? Do you  
have questions?  
Need help? Let  
your voice be  
heard.**

Call the EEO  
Advisory Committee  
at...

**1-800-639-5167**

Civil Rights Hotline



# Partnership Council Meeting

*John Good, Washington, DC*

In December 2000, the National Partnership Council met. Attending were **James Baker, David Orr, Walter Rust, John Shropshire, Graig Watts, Sarah Welch-Hill, Walter Gilbert, Vincent Volpe, Cleve Ellis, and myself.** The agenda included: travel gain sharing, training, Career Path Guide, financial status of FGIS, proposed fee schedule, reauthorization, and labor management plan. Each topic was discussed in-depth. These are the decisions made by the Council:

1. The Work Group previously appointed by the Administrator will continue to develop a Career Path Guide. However, the Group will focus only Agriculture Commodity Grader (ACG), GS-1980-5/7/9 positions. For this segment of the guide, the group will define typical/core knowledge, skill, abilities (KSAs) for use in Agency vacancy announcements, as well as guidance for applicants addressing the KSAs. The guide also will include a list of potential training activities that, if completed, would enhance improve the chances for being selected for an ACG vacancy. Once the Council approves this segment, the Group will develop others. This Career Path Guide Group is made up of **Rosemary Mayne, Janet Walton, and Larry McDonald.**
2. The Administrator appointed a Work Group to evaluate the costs and benefits of the Travel Gain Sharing Program, and to develop a report recommending either maintaining the program or allowing it to expire. Agency employees will be encouraged to submit comments and/or suggested changes to the program. If the program is extended, it will be framed by the Group's analysis and employees' suggestions, subject to approval by the National Partnership Council. Employees are encouraged to e-mail their comments and/or suggested changes to the program directly to members of the Work Group: Peggy Smith (Peggy\_L.Smith@USDA.GOV), Bruce Boor (Bruce\_M.Boor@USDA.GOV), Karen Guagliardo (KGuaglia@GIPSADC.USDA.GOV), Glenda Lasseigne (GLasseigne@GIPSALA.USDA.GOV), or David Mundwiler (DMundwiler@GIPSADC.USDA.GOV). Employees may also FAX comments to 202-720-1015. The Group plans to begin its evaluation after the first of April, so please have your suggestions in by then. The National Partnership Council and the Work Group thank you.
3. The Council agreed to a LMR Plan that will be available after each Council member's signature is obtained. (This will be available on the GIPSA web site along with the Partnership Agreement.)
4. The Council will teleconference on February 15th (rescheduled to February 21, 2001<sup>4</sup>) to discuss an agenda for its next meeting.

# GIPSA's Web Site Gets Good Rating

*Vicki and Doug Lacefield, Washington, DC*

Recently, we visited friends in Kansas City who own their own computer counseling and Web-design business, and are doing quite well for themselves. They build, house, and maintain web sites for several large companies and numerous smaller companies. While there, I asked for their professional opinion on GIPSA's web site. I would like to share some of their comments which included, "very professional looking," "easy to navigate", and "loads quickly, which is a big plus to the common public that mainly do not have high-speed connections". Overall, they rated us as an excellent web site!! WAY TO GO WEBMASTERS!!!!

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## February Issuances

*Charlie Turner, Washington, DC*

- ❑ Weighing Handbook, Chapter 2, "Documentation of Official Weighing Services" dated 2/21/01
- ❑ Directive 9181.1, "Testing for StarLink (TM) Corn - Lateral Flow Test Strip Method" dated 2/26/01
- ❑ Directive 9181.2, "Performance Evaluation of Rapid Tests For the Detection of Biotech Events," Dated 10/10/01

# For Your Health

*Mavis Rogers, Washington, DC*

**EAP Program Change.** Beginning January 1, 2001, Federal Occupational Health Employee Assistance Program began offering a new service to all employees and their family members. This service provides free access to an interactive depression screening or alcohol screening via the telephone and the Internet. Employees who used this service is offered a brief depression or alcohol screening questionnaire that will provide initial information on these problems and encourage them to contact the EAP for further information. To access this service, you can use any of the following options:

- 24 Hour Telephone Access Number is 800-698-8267
- For Spanish option, push the number 2 at the same number above
- For hearing impaired TTY 800-855-2880
- Internet address is:  
[www.mentalhealthscreening.org/screening/login.asp](http://www.mentalhealthscreening.org/screening/login.asp). In the keyword box enter foh eap to login and begin taking either of the screenings.

Since you can suffer from these two disorders at the same time, or one can cause symptoms that seem like the other, you may want to take both tests. Each screening will take between 4 and 5 minutes to complete.

### **Can Garlic Benefit Your Heart?**

Garlic has been used in folk medicine for centuries, but its benefits have still not been proven. Some research suggests that garlic may help control high cholesterol. Garlic also has been touted as a possible remedy for high blood pressure, stomach cancer, and

even the common cold. But, to date, there is no proof that garlic helps any of these conditions. Still, experts say garlic is safe for most people. Fresh garlic, garlic powder, and supplements seem to hold the most promise. Pregnant women and people with medical conditions should talk to their doctor before taking large amounts of garlic.

**Hidden Salt.** What fits in a bread box and is a large source of salt? The answer may surprise you: bread. In a survey, adults could not distinguish between reduced-salt bread and bread with the typical amount of salt. You can switch to a lower-salt bread and not give up the good taste.

**Muscle Cramps.** If muscle cramps are interfering with exercise, take these precautions: regularly stretch the muscle that usually cramps; and consume enough carbohydrates and fluids every day to prevent muscles from tiring. If a cramp still happens, stop exercising and stretch the cramped muscle.

**Think red for Vitamin C.** Ounce for ounce, red peppers offer about 32 times as much vitamin C as oranges.

**Turn Housework and Other Chores into Exercise.** No time or inclination for the gym? Research shows that you can fill your daily quota of exercise with everyday chores and activities. The key is to pick activities that get your arms or legs moving such as washing windows. Mopping floors and painting walls are moderately paced activities that are similar to brisk walking. Activities that are hardy in intensity and comparable to bicycling, include shoveling snow and pushing a hand mower. Of course, you can't mop

floors every day. To get 30 minutes of exercise a day outside the gym, you may have to seek out opportunities for fitness. Here are some ideas: pick up the space on leisurely chores such as dusting; when grocery shopping, move quickly down the aisles; and seek out stairs wherever you go.

**Hepatitis C.** America's most common chronic blood-borne infection is hepatitis C. It affects nearly 4 million Americans. Hepatitis C is a leading cause of chronic liver disease. Hepatitis C spreads via infected blood. People at risk for the disease include those who use intravenous drugs and those who come in contact with blood on the job. A blood test can determine if someone has hepatitis C. There is not a vaccine for hepatitis C, but you can reduce your risk by: staying away from the needles used for drugs, tattoos, or body piercing; avoiding shared razors or toothbrushes; and wearing gloves if you come in contact with others' blood.

**Traveler's Diarrhea.** To help keep traveler's diarrhea from ruining your vacation: avoid water unless it is boiled or bottled; keep bottled water by the sink to brush your teeth; avoid salads and raw fruit and vegetables unless you can peel off the skin; make sure meat and fish have been thoroughly cooked; keep away from products sold by street vendors; and steer clear of mayonnaise and unpasteurized dairy products. Travelers diarrhea can usually be treated with over-the-counter drugs that contain loperamide. Call a doctor if you don't feel better in a day or two or if more serious symptoms develop.



# 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*

Kenneth Dempster, New Orleans	Install Rain Gauges At All Export Locations
Larry Haller, Washington, DC	Replace Map in Display Case to Show Current P&S Field Offices
Danny Whitten, League City, TX	Change the FGIS-30 Form to Include a Column for Contract Hours
Tom Wrenn, Grand Forks, ND	Include Pictures of Grains and Pulses on GIPSA Website
John Heidorn, New Orleans, LA	Put a 2-Drawer File Cabinet on Floating Rigs for Supplies and Forms
Anonymous	TSD Should Explore Outside Contracting of Analytical Laboratory Testing Services

March's tee-shirt winner: **Tom Wrenn!**

## **GIPSA Hotline Ideas Accepted and Approved for Implementation During February 2001**

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.

-  Solicit Input From Teams When Preparing Performance Appraisals
-  Include Pictures of Grains and Pulses on GIPSA Website

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.**

# Celebrating the Legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

*Dennis Murray, Washington, DC*

The dream of **Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.** lives within us everyday. We share the legacy in celebrating his birthday and his commitment to the struggle of Black people and equality. On January 15, 2001, GIPSA headquarters and the Office of Civil Rights celebrated **Dr. King's** birthday by viewing the film "The Black Americans of Achievement" which follows **Dr. King's** crusade for freedom and equal rights and depicts individuals who bear witness to the struggle during the civil rights movement.

The film takes you back to the beginning of the movement, from **Dr. King's** birthplace in Atlanta, GA, to his ministry at Dexter Baptist Church in Montgomery, AL, and back to Atlanta where he was laid to rest. **Dr. King's** march on Washington, DC was perhaps the most memorable event in the civil rights movement in America. People from all walks of life came to march arm in arm with **Dr. King** for equality. The "I Have A Dream" speech transcended into a part of history that is heard all over the world. The message from that speech provided black people and other diverse nationalities with a feeling of hope and equality.

*Continued, see MLK on page 10.*

# Combating Computer Virus Hoaxes

Carol Remmers, Washington, DC

Almost weekly, I receive messages from GIPSA employees about an e-mail “virus” warning. Usually these messages come from well-intentioned relatives (“my Mother sent this to me,” or “my sister in Utah says...”) or friends who only meant well.

People who are trying to be genuinely watchful and helpful forward these “warnings” to me or one of our security representatives. In one sense that is good, since it shows a concern for information systems security matters that we have urged, especially with the overwhelming problems caused by widespread malicious software like “Melissa,” “ILOVEYOU” and the more recent “Anna.” Indeed, we have encouraged you to be wary of such suspicious messages.

From another perspective, though, it isn’t so good. Today there is a staggering quantity of garbage floating around the Internet. As a result, we are spending far too much time rebutting false alarms. More time and effort has been spent combating hoaxes than in fighting real viruses. We need you to do a little investigating on your own before forwarding warnings to us or anyone else. You can do this by using readily available Web resources to find the truth. It isn’t hard to do and it will demonstrate real professionalism on your part. While there is no foolproof way to immediately spot a virus hoax from the genuine article, there are some key things to watch for:

1. Consider the source. Is the person who alleges the information or warning identifiable, or is the source of the information left vague or unnamed?

2. If the source is “identifiable,” is it reasonable? For example, America On-Line isn’t in the business of identifying or fighting computer viruses, so a message citing a virus warning from AOL should be considered suspicious until verified by another source.

3. Consider the format. Are there a lot of exclamation marks in an attempt to add drama or fear? *Reflect a moment:* When was the last time you saw exclamation marks in an official document? That should be a giveaway that such a “warning” is probably phony.

4. Is there a sense of panic? Be especially alert if the message urges you to pass it on to all your friends or colleagues. Such language fosters unreasoning urgency and should raise a red flag that the warning may be a hoax. Nearly every hoax uses this technique; few genuine alerts do.

Regardless of whether you see one of the above indicators or other suspicious verbiage, check out any warning that doesn’t come from an ISS or IT representative. If you can’t find information on one or two reputable websites (see below), then contact me and I will investigate further.

Make no mistake, we desire and applaud security awareness on the part of every GIPSA employee.

We need you to stay involved with ISS efforts. Just as strongly, we want to help you in every reasonable way. But there are certain things you can and should do for yourself. Be a pro; check out computer virus warnings for yourself. You can validate computer virus warnings at one or more

of these websites.

· Symantec Antivirus Research Center, website of the vendor of Norton Antivirus software. <http://www.symantec.com/avcenter/index.html>

· Stiller Research, another vendor of antivirus software. This site is often referenced by the USDA ISSPM. <http://www.stiller.com/>

· McAfee Online Services, vendor of antivirus software. <http://www.mcafee.com/antivirus/>

· Computer Incident Advisory Capability, run by the Department of Energy but relied upon heavily by several other Federal activities, including USDA. <http://ciac.llnl.gov/ciac/>

· Computer Virus Myths. [Http://kumite.com/myths/](http://kumite.com/myths/)

Finally, the next time the well-intentioned relative or friend sends you a hoax, refer them to the sites you used to find the hoax information. This practice would surely put an end to computer virus hoaxes!

## 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

# Sharing Common Ground

By Dennis S. Murray Sr.

On January 19-21, 2001, a group of youths descended on Chattanooga, TN, for their 3<sup>d</sup> Annual Southern Youth Conference of the Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group (SSAWG). **Savanah Williams**, Southern Regional Youth Coordinator and steward of South Ferry Farms in Surry, VA, collaborated with conference coordinators **Jessica Fox**, Macon, MS, and **Felipe Camacho**, Austin, TX, to hold this special event.

The youth conference ran concurrently with the SSAWG adult conference.. The theme of the conference was "Sharing Common Ground" and building communities, which provided an overall focus of working together to create a fun atmosphere for the youth in farming. The youth conference featured fun educational activities and workshops for young people ages 6 to 18.

The young people represented organizations from the Southern regional states: Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Florida, Kentucky, Maryland, Mississippi, Texas, North Carolina and South Carolina. The Mark Twain School, in Montgomery County, MD, was well represented. Their workshop consisted of gardening and landscape preparation. All of the workshops conducted by the youth were open to all the conference attendees both youth and adults. The workshops included: how to save farms by developing a housing community, selling produce to new communities, how to make nutritious juice drinks, and how to evaluate your own community.

One of the youth organizations from North Carolina was the Carolina Farm Stewardship Association of Pittsboro, NC. Gilistine Richardson, Todd and Richardson Farms, was among the attendees of this group. Mrs. Richardson and her son, Andre, a 15 years old freshman at Wendell, NC, High School, and her niece Sydra Todd, a 16 year old junior at Zebulon, NC, High School, discovered that farming could be a ticket for success in their lives. Sydra and Todd have already witnessed success when the Todd and Richardson farm was awarded a produce grant to continue their efforts in producing quality watermelons.

The farmers of SSAWG, throughout the years, serve as mentors to the youth. Each youth develops his or her own skills and creates a project that will contribute to their community. Throughout the years, the Richardson's have committed themselves to work with the youth on community projects, developing skills and technology for the survival of black family farms.

Through correspondence between SSAWG and the Civil Rights Office of GIPSA, I was invited to speak at the youth conference. I addressed the programs and opportunities that youths have in agriculture through USDA's intern and cooperative education programs. Brochures explaining GIPSA programs were made available for distribution to participants. Reaching out to expose these young folks to USDA programs will hopefully increase recruitment efforts in the future.

Plans for next year's conference will begin in April 2001. Should you or your organization want to participate call Savanah Williams at (757) 294-3063 or e-mail [psotl@cs.com](mailto:psotl@cs.com).

**MLK**, from page 8.

**Sharon Williams**, the coordinator of the event, presented an exciting day of remembrances. During this event **Mr. Baker**, then Administrator, presented **Eugene Bass**, Director of Civil Rights, and his staff — **Raymond Jones**, EEO specialist, **Wanda Jimenez**, EEO coordinator, **Linda Alston**, EEO assistant, and Dawn Cowan, secretary — a special achievement Award for their work in outreach and civil rights. The staff was commended for their dedication to civil rights and their achievements in outreach.

To conclude this celebration, **Sharon Williams** hosted a contest on the life and struggles of **Dr. King**. The winners were **Sidney Allen**, **Tom Hearon**, **Raymond Jones**, and **Duane Putman**. Each winner received a memento that honors **Dr. King's** legacy.

**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**

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**by March 25, 2001!**

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