



# GIPSA News

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

*March 2010*

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## Competition Workshops Kicking Off

*J. Dudley Butler, Washington, DC*



*J. Dudley Butler*

The first of a series of public workshops designed to explore competition in agriculture will kick off on March 12, 2010, in Iowa. The workshops are being jointly sponsored by USDA and the Department of Justice (DOJ) to provide farmers, ranchers, consumers groups, agribusinesses, and the Federal government a forum to openly discuss legal, regulatory, and economic issues associated with competition in the agriculture industry. These workshops are important tools for determining courses of action to address the unique competition issues in agriculture.

The March 12, workshop will be held at the Des Moines Area Community College's FFA Enrichment Center. Secretary of Agriculture **Tom Vilsack** and the DOJ's Assistant Attorney General for the Antitrust Division **Christine Varney** will participate in the workshop. They will be joined by Iowa Agriculture Secretary **Bill Northey** and Iowa Attorney General **Tom Miller**. The workshop

will include roundtable discussions, expert panels focusing on the competitive dynamics in the seed industry and trends in contracting, transparency and buyer power, and public testimony.

Subsequent workshops will be held on May 21, 2010, in Normal, Alabama, focusing on contracts in the poultry industry, concentration, and buyer power; June 7, 2010, in Madison, Wisconsin, with a focus on concentration, marketplace transparency, and vertical integration in the dairy industry; August 26, 2010, in Fort Collins, Colorado, with a focus on beef, hog, and other animal sectors, and on enforcement of the Packers and Stockyards Act and concentration; and, December 8, 2010, in Washington, DC, with a focus on the discrepancies between the prices received by farmers and the prices paid by consumers.

I will be attending all of the sessions, and GIPSA is playing an active role in the planning and implementation of these workshops

# Names in the News

## PERSONNEL

**Steve Patoray** is the new agricultural engineer in the Western Regional Office's Business Practices Unit. **Steve** has extensive experience in the scales and weighing industry, and is uniquely qualified for the position. Prior to joining P&SP, **Steve** served for 8 years as the director of the National Type Evaluation Program (NTEP) administered by the National Conference on Weights and Measures. An NTEP evaluation determines whether a device is capable of meeting the requirements of NIST Handbook 44, prior to the device earning an NTEP certificate and being placed into service. **Steve** also has 25 years of experience as an engineer for scale companies. **Steve** reports for duty on March 15, 2010.

## RETIREMENTS

**Jim Brown**, quality assurance manager, New Orleans, went on leave on February 26, 2010, through his April 2, 2010, retirement date. **Jim** started with FGIS on January 19, 1976. Throughout his career, he said he was glad to have had the "good fortune of working with a lot of good people... Agency employees, licensed inspectors, and trade members. I have been able to travel in the U.S.

and to Canada. I have also had to face a number of challenges, starting in one of the smallest offices (St. Louis), moving to Belle Chasse, and finishing in the largest (New Orleans). At the end of the day, I think that it all has made me a better person and for that I am grateful." **Jim** said he won't miss the 2:00 a.m. calls about odor or damage problems at the elevators; 6:30 a.m. calls from supervisors saying they are short of personnel at the elevators, and the commute from Belle Chasse to Destrehan and back. He will miss the challenge of grading the difficult samples, visiting with foreign delegations, and all of the individuals who he had the pleasure of working with over the years, especially those in the New Orleans Field Office. We wish **Jim** all the best!

## CONDOLENCES

**Dorothy Grigsby**, agricultural commodity grader (ACG), New Orleans, passed away in late February. **Dorothy** joined FGIS in Destrehan on November 22, 1978, as a temporary employee, and became an ACG in 1988. She went on many details throughout her career. **Dorothy** will be sadly missed.

**Jimmy Phelps**, 75, retiree, passed away on February 5, 2010. After graduating from

Texas A&I University with a BS in animal husbandry, **Jimmy** worked as a land surveyor and then completed a tour with the U.S. Air Force. He joined USDA in 1959 as an agricultural commodity grader with the Agricultural Marketing Service's Grain Division. He joined FGIS in 1976. During his career, he served as assistant field office manager (FOM) in Houston, and an FOM in Beaumont, Portland, Galveston, and Chicago. He also worked in the former Grain Inspection Branch in Hyattsville, MD. He retired from FGIS in 1991 after 32 years of service. After retiring, he started a home design business. During his lifetime, **Jimmy** was active in agriculture and natural sciences, from being a Future Farmers of America member in high school to a fisherman and pigeon racer throughout his lifetime. **Jimmy** is survived by his wife Paula and their children and grandchildren.

## AWARDS

**George Banks**, New Orleans, received a spot award for providing a high level of customer service and expertise in the field office's rice inspection program.

**James Brown**, New Orleans, received a spot award for providing exemplary, outstanding service to our internal and external customers.

*Continued, see Names  
on page 3.*

## **Names, from page 2.**

**Carla Cambre**, New Orleans, received a spot award for providing high-quality and high-volume service to our internal and external customers.

**Harold Chiasson**, New Orleans, received a spot award for providing exemplary and outstanding service to our customers during an extreme emergency.

**Erin Dubroc, Joanna LeBlanc, Joanne Matherne, Dana Mitchell, and Angela Roper**, New Orleans, received a group spot award for producing a high volume of certificates, and processing billing documents and T&As in a timely manner.

**Rose Fremin**, New Orleans, received a spot award for providing exemplary and outstanding service to our customers.

**Tracy Gerke**, Kansas City, received a spot award for extra effort and outstanding personal commitment in support of the Technical Center's computer facilities.

**Mai Ho**, Washington, DC, received a spot award for her expert programming to remedy the CuSum processing problems caused by the decade change from 2009 to 2010.

**James Holmes**, New Orleans, received a spot award for providing exemplary and outstanding service to our internal and external customers.

**Adel Ibrahim**, League City, received a spot award for being instrumental in identifying CuSum processing problems caused by the decade change from 2009 to 2010.

**Frank Jackson**, New Orleans, received a spot award for completing a special project in an efficient and timely manner.

**Morris Johnson**, Washington, DC, received a spot award for extra effort and outstanding personal commitment in support of the GIPSA wide-area network and router configurations.

**Joel Jolly**, New Orleans, received a time-off award for providing extra effort to improve service to our customers.

**Yohanna Lorio**, New Orleans, received a spot award for providing limitless support to several elevators experiencing CuSum processing problems due to the decade change from 2009 to 2010.

**Amber McDonald Lake**, Washington, DC, received a time off award for being a valuable resource to the Agency, her role in the Combined Federal Campaign, and her team efforts to bring the GIPSA community together throughout the year.

**Carmen McKinley**, New Orleans, received a time-off award for providing accurate and timely rice inspection results to the industry during the absence of the rice inspection coordinator.

**Andrew Ping**, Washington, DC, received a spot award for rapidly completing, reviewing and summarizing the thousands of Department of Justice Concentration Workshop comments.

**Wanda Pittman**, New Orleans, received a spot award for providing high quality services to the New Orleans Field Office.

**Robin Rother**, Kansas City, received a spot award for extra effort and outstanding personal commitment in support of the Technical Center computer facilities.

**Merle Russelburg**, New Orleans, received a spot award for providing exemplary and outstanding service to our internal and external customers.

**Charles Trevillion, Sarah Welch-Hill, Roy Shepherd, Lezo Foley, Wade Berteau, and Larry Giles**, New Orleans, received a group spot award for providing exceptional service in a professional manner to our internal and external customers.

**Larry Troutman**, New Orleans, received a spot award for providing exemplary and exceptional service to our customers.

**Mary Vial**, New Orleans, received a spot award for her outstanding effort performing annual gate checks at three elevators.

**Willie Washington**, New Orleans, received a spot award for providing exemplary and exceptional service to our customers.

**Jennifer Zuckman**, Washington, DC, received a spot award for rapidly completing, reviewing and summarizing the thousands of Department of Justice Concentration Workshop comments.

## Farewell

*Tom Wrenn, Grand Forks*



*Tom Wrenn*

When I was a younger person in the Navy and traveling between Norfolk, Virginia, and the Mediterranean Sea, I really loved being on the high seas. But, I had in my mind that when I became a breadwinner, I wanted a job that would be stable with a very good retirement. So when I finished college at South Dakota State University in 1976, the Agricultural Marketing Service's recruiters were on campus and I applied.

I was so excited that my first day on the job, I dressed in "Sunday-going-to-church clothes." My boss in Duluth had me probe a boxcar of oats. This I did, and in the back of my mind I vowed to not do this to anyone should I become a boss.

I worked in the Duluth area until 1977, when an opening for FGIS came up in Lutchter, Louisiana. My wife, our little baby-to-be, and I left Duluth for Lutchter. Reporting to Lutchter, we met **Glenda, Carla, Conrad**, and many others who became our family. I worked in the Lutchter field office for 10 years with very good men and women who taught me about FGIS manuals, directives, handbooks, and so on. One person in Lutchter shared a birthday with me on February 16, and to this day we either email, telephone, or wish each other in person a "Happy Birthday."

I applied for many jobs within FGIS while in Lutchter, achieving a goal that I did even not see on my radar screen. I was selected as the Grand Forks Field Office Manager in 1987. I had felt that to be a manager, you should first be an assistant manager. But, you learn to adjust to the cards dealt and I accepted the management position in Grand Forks.

Of course, it was an ongoing work of art – molding, forming, building, securing trust, and meeting internal and external customers. There were times when I made a few mistakes, and I apologize to anyone I offended. Overall, Grand Forks became a strong and stable field office with many great employees working for and with me.

The 23 years here in North Dakota I will remember forever.

## Issuances

*Terri Henry, Washington, DC*

- FGIS Policy Memorandum Reference No. 228, "Limiting Analysis of Lots Containing Deleterious Substances, and Testing Plant Environmental Material Collected During Plant Sanitation Inspection," dated January 29, 2010
- FGIS Policy Memorandum Reference No. 230, "Transferring Sublots," dated February 19, 2010
- FGIS Policy Memorandum Reference No. 231, "Review Inspections Performed Under the CuSum Loading Plan," dated February 19, 2010

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## Regulatory Info

*Tess Butler, Washington, DC*

### Federal Register Publications

- Proposed Posting, Posting, and Deposting of Stockyards, published January 26, 2010
- Proposed Posting, Posting and Deposting of Stockyards (clarifying text), published February 1, 2010
- Registration, Five-Year Terms, published February 9, 2010

## **FGIS Matters...!**

*Randall Jones  
Washington, DC*

It seems like February has come and gone pretty quickly! It's been a hectic month in DC – with FOUR days of government closure for one of the largest snowstorms the area has ever seen. We are certainly not equipped to deal with snow like our neighbors in the north...and we are hoping we don't have to any time soon.

In other parts of the country, nothing has been slowing our workforce down. New Orleans has inspected over 25 million metric tons (MMT) of grain so far this year; League City nearly 7 MMT; and other offices are showing equally impressive numbers. We have soybean exports to thank for a large portion of this extra workload – the United States has exported 34 percent more soybeans than this time last year. It will be interesting to see what happens in this market when South America starts harvesting their soybean crop.

I was able to visit Kansas City this month to visit with members of the American Association of Grain Inspection and Weighing Agencies (AAGIWA). They were very interested in FGIS*online* updates and are eager to fully implement the new system.

We also discussed some upcoming challenges the official inspection system will face with expected retirements, and how we can best work together to train new inspectors. AAGIWA also invited FGIS to participate in their upcoming annual meeting scheduled for April 26-28, 2010. That meeting provides a great opportunity for FGIS to interact with its official partners.

## **Ensuring Swine Contracts Comply with Farm Bill Requirements**

*Jay Johnson, Des Moines*

The 2008 Farm Bill established new requirements for swine contracts under the Packers and Stockyards (P&S) Act. These requirements went into effect on June 18, 2008, upon passage of the Farm Bill. P&SP currently is reviewing contracts involving pork producers to ensure their compliance with the Farm Bill requirements.

The 2008 Farm Bill amended the Packers and Stockyard Act to require that swine contracts:

- Allow swine growers to cancel growing or production contracts for up to 3 days after signing, or any date specified in the contract or growing arrangement (the contract must disclose method and deadline for cancellation);
- Include a disclosure statement on the first page that clearly states whether additional large capital investments may be required of the grower during the term of the contract; and
- Allow growers to opt out of arbitration provisions before entering a contract.

P&SP is increasing its audits of swine production contracts to ensure their compliance with the Farm Bill requirements, and seeking civil penalties of up to \$11,000 per violation when we find that swine contractors are not in compliance.

As part of our ongoing outreach efforts, P&SP recently shared this information with more than 100 agricultural media outlets to help ensure that all swine contractors are aware of and in compliance with these requirements.

### **Employee Assistance Program**

Call for confidential help.

1-800-222-0364

*Continued, see FGIS Matters, on page 7*

# Continued Security Threats

*Brian Hughes, Washington DC*



I hope everyone had a great holiday season. As we move through the new year, we continue to see reoccurring themes in the security threats that GIPSA as well as other Federal agencies face, namely the ever-popular trinity of scareware, phishing, and social engineering.

Scareware is a piece of malware designed to scare an individual into purchasing a bogus virus/malware removal tool. This software can be extremely convincing as it is crafted to look similar to valid tools that are on the market or native to the operating system. Lately, we've seen several instances of "Personal Security" pop-ups with a shield similar to that of Windows Firewall. If you see a shield pop up asking you to update the database for the Personal Security program **DO NOT CLOSE THE WINDOW**, instead please end the Internet Explorer task with the following process:

- Press the ctrl alt and delete keys simultaneously.
- Click the Task Manager button.
- Scroll through the list until you find iexplore.exe.
- Click the End Process button.
- You may then close Task Manager by clicking the X in the upper right hand corner of the window.

If you attempt to close the window instead of ending the Internet Explorer process, the malware may very likely install because it's not actually a separate window, but instead is a web page that is designed to look like a separate window and the X is actually the link to install the malware. **Please remember that at GIPSA, the updates for the McAfee Suite of antivirus products that we use are sent to your computer automatically.**

Phishing is the fraudulent process of attempting to acquire sensitive information such as user names, passwords, and credit card details by masquerading as a trustworthy entity. Please do not respond to these emails or click any imbedded links contained within the body of the email.

Social Engineering is the act of manipulating people into performing actions or divulging confidential information. Recently, we saw an instance of social engineering involving government credit cards. A GIPSA employee was called from a phone number that only showed up as 101 on his caller ID. When he picked up, there was a recording telling him that his card had been compromised and that he should press 1 immediately to take action against it. Our colleague of course didn't respond, but if he had they would have most likely asked him to "verify" his card number, expiration date, etc. **Please remember that with ANY credit card, only communicate with the card issuer using the phone number listed on the back of the card.**

It's also the time of year that we're seeing numerous calls asking for updated information for "Federal Contact Directory" and other directories. Please do not respond to these inquiries, but instead refer them to **Terri Henry** at 202-205-8281 or [Terri.L.Henry@usda.gov](mailto:Terri.L.Henry@usda.gov). Terri has already vetted the legitimate inquirers.

Finally let me say that I'm very pleased with the awareness of our staff. I've had several people call when they encounter something suspicious and I'm then able to pass on the warnings to the rest of the agency. If you encounter anything that you feel might be a possible security incident, please notify me ([brian.a.hughes@usda.gov](mailto:brian.a.hughes@usda.gov)/202-205-8150 or my colleague, [noah.r.waters@usda.gov](mailto:noah.r.waters@usda.gov)/202-720-8247). Thanks for helping to keep GIPSA's network safe.

## Meet Mary Knutson!

*Tom Wrenn, Grand Forks*

**Mary Knutson**, Grand Forks Field Office, is a critical link in providing quality services to FGIS' customers.

In 1996, **Mary** began work as an agricultural commodity technician in the sample breakdown room. She became a valuable asset to the field office right away, and found new and more efficient ways to set up dry beans, peas, and lentil samples. Many of the office's visitors noted that they'd never before seen a breakdown room (some call it the "pit") in such good shape. **Mary** made sure that everything was wiped clean with soap and water at the end of each week of work.

In 2004, **Mary** was reassigned to the front office where she greeted visitors, dispatched staff, typed certificates, sent out inspection result sheets, and answered telephone calls. During the 2½ years that she worked in the area, changes were taking place with the development of *FGISonline*. The first program deployed was Certificates (CRT) in January 2007. **Mary** put in countless hours testing the program to make sure everything worked just right. She practiced working in the program to make sure everything was just right until....

On April 2, 2007, **Mary** issued the first online certificate on lentils to Commodity Specialist Company, Minneapolis, Minnesota! It was exciting to see the first certificate roll out and the thousands more to follow. In January 2010, **Mary** issued certificate number 30,000!

Congratulations to **Mary**, the Grand Forks Field Office, and *FGISonline* for such an achievement!



*Mary Knutson*

## **FGIS Matters**, from page 5.

Speaking of communications... we kicked off an inaugural conference call with members of the official inspection system on February 26 2010. Topics included *FGISonline*, agency training, upcoming changes in some policies and procedures, and the Quality Management Program. We plan to continue these calls on a regular basis, and will be soliciting feedback from FGIS divisions in advance.

Later this month, I will participate in the annual North American Export Grain Association meeting in Portland, Oregon. Likely, one of the topics for discussion will be our current fees and structure. As the Grain Inspection Advisory Committee recommended in November 2009, we need to make sure that GIPSA assesses fees, and allocates costs, fairly and equitably. Costs are always something we must be aware of, especially in light of our limitation on inspection and weighing expenses as directed by Congress. Every measure we can take to contain costs must be taken. This may mean that some things we've done in the past, we cannot do again. Be conscious of costs and, as always, think outside the box. Often that helps us save a few pennies.

Talk to you again next month. Keep up the great work you do, and stay safe.

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

Call the EEO Advisory Committee at...  
1-800-639-5167

Civil Rights Hotline



## For Your Health

Mavis Rogers, Washington, DC

Your tongue is an incredibly important muscle that helps you to chew and swallow food, taste (the average tongue has about 9,000 taste buds), and speak. When it is healthy, your tongue should be slightly pink in color, moist, and fairly smooth. However, if your tongue is dry, coated, discolored or painful, it could indicate a problem.

A change in the appearance or feeling of your tongue could be related to the tongue itself or another problem within your body. Some tongue changes are harmless; others may indicate health issues. Here are some common tongue scenarios, along with what they may be telling you.

- Hairy Tongue is when the small bumps that cover the surface of your tongue become enlarged and profuse making the tongue appear hairy or furry. This is harmless, but if the appearance is bothersome, antibiotics can be given.
- Geographic Tongue is characterized by smooth, bright red patches on the top of the tongue. The patches can change size and location from day to day and have a map-like, or geographic, appearance. There may also be some soreness or burning. This condition is harmless and usually resolves on its own in a few months. It is sometimes triggered by stress, hormonal changes, or allergies.
- Fissured Tongue is another harmless condition in which deep grooves form on the tongue's surface. In fact, fissured tongue is an inherited trait that normally occurs in 10 percent of population.
- Black Tongue can result from an overgrowth of bacteria and yeast in the mouth which cause discoloration. This is a harmless condition that can usually be resolved by brushing your tongue with a toothbrush twice a day. Rinsing your mouth with diluted hydrogen peroxide can help remove the discoloration.
- Smooth Pale Tongue can be a sign of nutritional deficiencies, particularly vitamin B-12 deficiency, or anemia.
- Canker Sores on the Tongue are viral ulcers that can be painful but will go away on their own. Canker sores can appear for no apparent reason, though some doctors believe they are triggered by stress and fatigue.
- Enlarged/Swollen Tongue can be caused by a number of disorders, including strep infection, Down syndrome, leukemia, cancer, and hypothyroidism. It can also be a minor side effect of a hangover or an allergic reaction to food or medication.
- Red Tongue, which appears from dark pink to magenta, it could be a sign of nutritional deficiencies, particularly of folic acid, vitamin B-12, or vitamin B3.
- White Tongue is a white coating on your tongue that could mean that you are dehydrated. It can also be caused by smoking or drinking alcohol. A white coating can also be a sign of thrush, which is an infection of the mouth with the yeast *Candida albicans*.

To keep your tongue clean and healthy, along with brushing your teeth regularly, experts recommend using a tongue scraper twice a day. Tongue scrapers are inexpensive, and it takes only about 10 or 15 seconds to do: just slide the scraper gently over your tongue (you do not need to press hard), repeat three or four times to reach the entire surface, and you are done.

**Sources:** *MayoClinic.com, Medline Plus Medical Encyclopedia, and Sixwise.com.*

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, 2010!

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

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