



# GIPSA News

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

*April 2004*

## **GIPSA Hosts Key Ag Outlook Forum Session**

*Leah Tahiry, Washington, DC*

GIPSA hosted a key session at this year's Agricultural Outlook Forum. The scope of the session significantly expanded from a look at current and potential changes in market structure to a session addressing the pressing issues related to the discovery of BSE, or Mad Cow Disease, in the United States.

The panel of experts from USDA, academia, and industry examined the state of the U.S. meatpacking industry prior to the discovery of BSE and how USDA is helping packers implement the new regulations, and explored the implications of a national animal identification program on the future structure of the U.S. meatpacking industry.

**Dr. Marvin Hayenga**, Iowa State University, presented an overview of the changing state of the industry prior to the discovery of BSE. **Rob Larew**, director of Congressional and Public Affairs of USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS), followed with an overview of how FSIS and other agencies are responding to the discovery of BSE and how USDA is helping packers implement the new regulations. He addressed age determination, segregation of specified risk materials or SRMs, and animal and meat identification for trace back. **Scott Charbo**, USDA's Chief Information Officer, discussed how a U.S. animal identification program may work and potential implications for the meatpacking industry from a technology impact point of view. **John Nalivka**, president/owner of Sterling Marketing, Inc., an international agricultural economic and advisory firm, wrapped up the session with a provocative discussion of the implications of the discovery of BSE. He summed up the diverse aspects of the session and how they related to one another.

*Continued, see Outlook on page 7.*

## **Tech Center Helps Develop Web Tutorial on Real-Time PCR**

*Dr. Ron Jenkins,  
Kansas City, MO*

The Internet Library of Crop Technology Project (ILCTP) is a web-based educational site that presents unbiased, research-based information on plant genetics, genetic engineering, and biochemistry through lesson modules. The lessons are composed of text with images, animations, a hyperlinked glossary, and quizzes. Extension educators, journalists, businesses, college professors, and high school teachers from around the world have used these lessons. In addition, several of the lessons are part of on-line distance education courses which can be taken for academic or professional credit through the University of Nebraska's Department of Agronomy and Horticulture.

*Continued, see Web Lesson  
on page 3.*

# Names in the News

## PERSONNEL

**Patricia Donohue-Galvin** became GIPSA's budget officer on April 5. She comes to us from the APHIS budget and program analysis staff in Riverdale. She is familiar with MRP and will be a great asset for GIPSA.

**Dr. Thomas Duggan**, Ph.D. reported to the P&SP Denver Regional Office as competition unit supervisor. **Tom** served as a senior economist in Denver from 1999 until 2001. He returns to GIPSA after working as a manager in KPMG's Economic Consulting Services in California. **Tom** earned a Ph.D. in Economics from Colorado School of Mines and a Masters in Economics from Boston College. Upon rejoining GIPSA, **Tom** immediately assumed leadership of the BSE Competition Task Force.

**Yvonne Palmer**, office assistant, Policies & Procedures Branch, left GIPSA on April 2. **Yvonne** has been with USDA since November 2000. She is leaving to pursue an

internship with Bright Horizons Family Solutions as a teacher assistant floater.

## RETIREMENTS

After 30 years of service, **Gale Calkins**, Wichita, will retire from GIPSA on April 3, 2004. **Gale** began his career with FGIS on May 24, 1974, as an agricultural commodity technician at the Wichita, Kansas, field office. He had worked as a processed commodity contract sampler for the Wichita office for approximately 7 years prior. He became an agricultural commodity grader in 1977, and was promoted to quality assurance specialist (QAS) of the Wichita office in February 1984. **Gale** quickly developed a reputation for dedication and unerring consistency as QAS and was a trainer and mentor for many Federal and official agency licensed inspectors over his career. He served with seven different field office managers (**Warren Martin** was the first), and each recognized the value of **Gale's** work ethic. **Gale** plans to spend his time woodworking, gardening, and fishing, not necessarily in that order, and will continue to use his grain inspection mentoring skills by assisting Oklahoma State University and the Texas A&M Extension Service with their grain inspection seminars.

**Owen Ecker**, statistician in the Field Management Division's Data and Information Analysis Branch,

has decided to join the retirement ranks effective April 3, 2004. Before joining GIPSA a little over 6 years ago on February 15, 1998, **Owen** was a part of the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS). In AMS, he was assigned most of the grain inspection projects. **Owen** has provided statistical service to GIPSA for his entire 31½ year career. He has been working with GIPSA longer than most GIPSA employees, and can probably recite the limits on more grain and commodity standards than any else. **Owen's** retirement plans include spending more time on his musical interests and devoting more time to his model train collection. We wish **Owen** a long and healthy retirement.

## AWARDS

**Clemmie Smith**, agricultural commodity grader, League City, received a certificate of merit in recognition of his tireless commitment to workplace safety and many years of exemplary service with the FGIS National Safety Committee.

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Program**

Washington, DC personnel, call...  
301-570-3900  
or 1-800-222-0364

Field personnel, call...  
1-800-222-0364

## Web Lesson, from page 1.

The site was developed by educators at several land grant universities, and is hosted by the University of Nebraska Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources. **Dr. Deana Namuth**, Distance Education Coordinator, Department of Agronomy/Horticulture, University of Nebraska, has developed a number of lessons that provide valuable information to industry, government agencies, and academia, including courses on Crop Genetic Engineering and Herbicide Action in Plants.

Several months ago **Dr. Namuth** contacted GIPSA's Biotechnology Reference Laboratory at the Technical Center in Kansas City, MO, to discuss development of modules on Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) technology and the analysis of biotechnology-derived food crops such as corn and soybeans. The Biotechnology Reference Lab staff saw this as an excellent opportunity to share important information and agreed to collaborate with **Dr. Namuth** in developing these modules.

Real-Time PCR (RT-PCR) is a method used by testing laboratories worldwide to detect the presence of and quantitatively analyze for biotechnology-derived events in food crops. Unfortunately, RT-PCR is not as accurate and precise as other measurement technologies, making it difficult for the U.S. grain industry to comply with labeling regulations that have been implemented by buyers of U.S. grain. As a result, GIPSA has taken a very active role in developing programs, such as the USDA/GIPSA Proficiency Program, to improve the reliability of testing for biotechnology-derived grains throughout the world. Over 100 organizations test-

ing for the presence of biotechnology-derived grains are now enrolled in this program, with over 70% of the participants from outside the United States.

**Dr. Namuth** visited the Biotechnology Reference Laboratory on several occasions, and together, we developed the general outline for the lesson, including the narrative, and still pictures and video footage of **Dr. Louis Busjaeger** and **Dr. Luke Shokere** demonstrating how to set up PCR reactions. **Roger Friedrich** was instrumental in helping to organize the narrative and video footage portions of the module.



*Web Lesson Developers: from left to right, Roger Friedrich, Luke Shokere, Deana Namuth, Louis Bussjaeger, and Ron Jenkins.*

The RT-PCR lesson on the crop technology website depicts molecular detection and quantification techniques through highly innovative computer animation and video technologies analyses. The lesson addresses the need for accurate and reliable detection methods when analyzing for biotechnology-derived events in grains and provides training to laboratories that perform RT-PCR based testing. The animation is resourceful, artistic, and visually demonstrates abstract concepts to make them easier to comprehend. To review this and other lessons, you can go to the ILCTP website at <http://croptechnology.unl.edu> and click on the "lessons module." The lesson is entitled "Real-Time PCR - Some Basic Principles." The animation can be accessed within the lesson or directly at: [http://citnews.unl.edu/croptechnology/animationOut.cgi?anim\\_name=taqman.swf](http://citnews.unl.edu/croptechnology/animationOut.cgi?anim_name=taqman.swf).

The lesson modules at this website are excellent for disseminating information to diagnostic companies, agricultural chemical companies, the grain industry, and various grain industry organizations. In fact, the website just recently won the 2004 American Distance Education Consortium (ADEC) Distance Education Award for Excellence in College and University Distance Education. Congratulations to Dr. Namuth on receiving this award!

# FGIS Administrative Conference

*Deborah Edwards, League City*

An Administrative Conference was held in Kansas City, Missouri, February 24-26, 2004. Representatives from each GIPSA FGIS field office participated in positive overview and topical discussions.

An open forum with **Dave Orr** paved the way for a great conference. **Glenda Lasseigne**, New Orleans, presented a review session on the Financial Foundation Information System (FFIS). **Denise Ruggles**, Cedar Rapids, presented Brio and EIDS training. **Karin Finke**, APHIS Minneapolis Financial Branch, and **Nidhi Sharma-Smith**, Washington Financial Services Branch, were on hand to answer questions about the FFIS receivable processes. **Vicki Clark**, Employee Assistance Program, discussed stress management indicators and techniques we can use in our office settings. **Tanika Harris** and **Donna Melton** provided training on the National Finance Center's direct input travel program. **Rosemary Mayne** discussed current issues affecting training, including the Presidential Management Initiatives and AgLearn, the USDA Learning Management System.

Conference participants agreed that the organizers were very successful in providing a productive week. The conference was extremely positive for participants. Subject matter was only one benefit of the Administrative Conference. Another was sharing ideas and reinforcing a strong network among the FGIS administrative personnel. **Tina Crane**, Stuttgart, stated, "The open-end forum was very informative because suggestions and answers were shared from other offices on administrative matters." Even though we were not able to resolve every issue during this session, the majority felt that much was accomplished.

This was my first Administrative Conference and I was able to meet and establish stronger relationships with headquarters personnel and co-workers from other field offices. I really enjoyed meeting and talking with each individual and touring the Technical Center.

The success of the conference can be attributed to the professional organization and planning of **Norma Phelps**, Field Management Division, and **Rosemary Mayne**, Training Staff, who drew on input from all the participants. Many thanks to each for their time and effort.

**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**

# Leadership News

*Rosemary Mayne,  
Washington, DC*

**Ed Durgin**, FGIS Office of International Affairs, and **Tim Hansen**, P&SP Office of Policy and Litigation Support, Trade Practices Branch, recently culminated a year-long journey of leadership development. On April 2, 2004, **Ed** and **Tim** graduated from the Graduate School's Executive Potential Program.

A year ago, they joined a group of highly talented and motivated peers, and through class work, interviews, and work assignments, they gained important insights into their respective leadership styles and how they impact others. **Ed** and **Tim** practiced leadership competencies in organizations outside of GIPSA and developed a valuable network of Federal managers. Kudos for completing all the requirements and maximizing the opportunities the program offered!

The GIPSA employees competitively selected for participation in the upcoming Graduate School leadership programs are:

## **Executive Potential Program**

- ★ **Nelson Buck**, FGIS Field Management Division, Policies, and Procedures Branch

## **New Leader Program**

- ★ **Denise Ruggles**, FGIS Field Management Division, Cedar Rapids Field Office

## **Aspiring Leader Program**

- ★ **Bart DiGiovanni**, P&SP, Atlanta Regional Office
- ★ **Kirwin Lee**, FGIS Field Management Division, New Orleans Field Office

# For Your Health

*Mavis Rogers, Washington, DC*

It's spring, and many are ready to tackle lists of jobs around the house and garden. Remember, annual spring-cleaning rituals involve a number of activities that can be dangerous or even deadly if the proper precautions are not taken.

Seniors who have underlying health problems may be at greater risk as many health problems may affect balance, sight, or sensation. The following tips can help make spring-cleaning safer, healthier, and even more enjoyable. Remember that there is nothing wrong with asking for help – it could save your life.

**Prevent Back Injuries.** Follow these proper lifting techniques to help prevent most back injuries:

- Plan your lift, don't hurry.
- Bend at the knees, not at the hips or lower back.
- Keep abdominal muscles tight to help support weaker back muscles.
- Lift with your strong leg and thigh muscles.
- Keep objects you are lifting close to your body.
- Get help when lifting very heavy objects.

**Prevent Falls.** Many spring cleaning chores such as cleaning gutters and trimming trees involve use of a ladder. The *American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons* estimates more than 511,000 people in the United States require medical treatment because they fail to use ladders correctly.

- Select the right ladder of the right height for the job.
- Set up the ladder on a firm level surface.

- Check the ladder for loose or broken rungs, and missing or loose screws or hinges before using.
- Don't over-reach. Move the ladder as needed to be close to your work.
- Move materials with caution; sudden weight shifts can affect balance.
- Do not use a ladder as a seat between tasks. A step ladder's top pail shelf is not designed to carry the weight of most adults.
- Don't climb ladders if you have a balance disorder or are taking any medication that may affect your balance. Don't be too proud to ask for help.

**Prevent Cuts or Other Serious Traumatic Injuries.** Gardening tools and equipment cause an estimated 172,000 injuries annually; 70,000 of those are related to lawn mowers.

- Every spring, service your lawnmower before using it to make sure it is in good repair. This includes having the blades tightened and sharpened.
- While mowing, wear shoes with non-slip soles for gripping. Never wear sandals or canvas shoes.
- Never use fingers to remove grass or debris from lawn mower blades.
- No rider other than the operator should be allowed to ride on a riding mower.
- Wear protective clothing and eye-glasses when using a lawn mower.
- Do not tamper with safety release switches or protective guards on the mower.
- Wear a filtration mask to prevent breathing problems from the dust while mowing, especially if you have asthma

or other respiratory disorder.

- If you are using a gas-powered mower, store gasoline only in approved containers.
- Store gardening equipment properly to avoid tripping over them and getting punctures from stepping on them.

**Use Chemicals Safely.** Many garden and cleaning chemicals are dangerous and may cause serious health problems used improperly.

- Read product labels for proper use. Make sure you use chemicals such as oven cleaners only with proper ventilation.
- Wear protective clothing and gloves when using chemicals. Many household chemicals are corrosive, meaning they burn the skin. Many pesticides can cause nerve damage and can be absorbed through the skin or lungs.
- Clean up accidental spills immediately. Store all household and garden chemicals properly to prevent injury to pets or children. Check labels for flammability.
- Have the phone number for the poison control center handy. Keep directions for chemical use in a central place, as they list treatments.

Most of these tips for preventing injury are just basic common sense. Following them will make your hard work more pleasant and rewarding; much more rewarding than a trip to the emergency room.

*Courtesy Marian Eure R.N. Marian is a registered nurse with over 25 years experience in adult health care, health promotion, and health education.*

## Issuances

*Fred Kelley, Washington, D.C.*

### New Issuances

- GIPSA PN-04-07, "Cyber Security Risk Management," dated February 20, 2004 (Distribution: GIPSA-All).
- GIPSA PN-04-08, "Sensitive but Unclassified (SBU) Information Protection," dated February 20, 2004 (Distribution: GIPSA-All).
- FGIS Directive 9180.74, "Service Fees and Billing Codes," dated February 26, 2004 (Distribution: A, C, E).
- FGIS Policy Bulletin Board, Reference #201, "Review Inspection for Mycotoxins," dated March 8, 2004 (Distribution: FGIS-All).
- FGIS Directive 9000.5, "Remote Issuance of Official Certificates," dated March 11, 2004 (Distribution: A, C, E, F, H, T, X).
- FGIS PN 04-04, "Automated External Defibrillators," dated March 12, 2004, (Distribution: GIPSA-All).
- FGIS Directive 9181.2, "Performance Verification of Qualitative Mycotoxin and Biotech Rapid Test Kits," dated March 29, 2004 (Distribution: A).
- MRP Directive 4339.1, Change No. 1, "Medical Qualification Determinations for Appointment to Covered Positions Within Marketing and Regulatory Programs," dated February 10, 2004 (Distribution: MRP).

### Cancellations

- FGIS Directive 9180.74, "Service Fees and Billing Codes," dated July 2, 2003.
- FGIS Directive 9000.5, "Remote Issuance of Official Certificates," dated March 11, 1999.
- FGIS Directive 9181.2, "Performance Verification of Rapid Tests for the Detection of Biotechnology Events," dated February 7, 2002.

Please call me at 202-720-0259, Fax to 202-690-2755 or e-mail to [Fred.H.Kelley@usda.gov](mailto:Fred.H.Kelley@usda.gov) if you have any concerns or suggestions.

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## New on the Web

All approved official agency fee schedules are now posted on the web. Access this information from the GIPSA Service Providers page of the About Us section of the public web site: <http://www.usda.gov/gipsa/aboutus/service-states.htm>.

## Travel Bits & Pieces

*Peggy Smith, Washington, DC*

**Bank of America Free Online Bill Paying.** Travel cardholders can save time and expense by making their payment to Bank of America online. Making a payment online is easy, convenient, 100% secure, and it's free. Payments can be made in four easy steps:

1. Sign onto:  
[www.MyEasyPayment.com](http://www.MyEasyPayment.com)
2. Enter card account information
3. View account information
4. Make a payment using your checking account

All payments made through MyEasyPayment.com will be applied to the account within two to three calendar days.

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## Update Your Address Book

The FGIS Cedar Rapids field office moved to a new home in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, on April 1, 2004. The field office's telephone and fax numbers will be changing to phone (319)841-9210 and fax (319)841-9213.

Postal mail delivery will continue to be P.O. Box 74855, Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52406-4855. (There will be no postal delivery to our new street address, only carrier deliveries such as FEDEX or UPS.)

The field office will be located at 845 Capital Drive SW, Suite 3 (near the Eastern Iowa Airport).

## Idea Hotline Update

*Norma Phelps,  
Washington, DC*

Here are the ideas received on the GIPSA Idea Hotline during February and March 2004. If you have questions about any ideas or the Hotline, please call me at 202-720-1017.

### Ideas Received During February and March 2004

Scott Cooley, Olympia, WA -- Publish Newsletter Article on Developing Market Applicable Tests for Measuring End-Use Functionality Based on Gluten Quality

Carol Carter, Denver, CO -- Include On-The-Job Training in the Training Database

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 202720-1015; 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.**

**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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FAX (202) 205-9237  
[dana.b.stewart@usda.gov](mailto:dana.b.stewart@usda.gov)

**by April 25, 2004!**

### **Outlook**, *from page 1.*

The presentations were followed by a lively question and answer session. Attendees were quoted as saying "this session was one of the best in the Forum."

GIPSA Administrator **Donna Reifschneider** agreed. "Thanks to **Larry Haller** and the Economic Statistical Support Staff (ESS) for organizing this very worthwhile session," said GIPSA administrator **Donna Reifschneider**. "The panel helped bring perspective to the changes that the industry is facing both in market structure and with the impact of the BSE case."

## New USDA Web Presence



USDA has launched its new web presence. Check out [www.usda.gov](http://www.usda.gov) to experience the new look and feel.

**Take Our  
Daughters and  
Sons to Work  
Day**  
*Today's Vision,  
Tomorrow's Reality*



**April 22, 2004**

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AND STOCKYARDS ADMINISTRATION  
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