



GIPSA News

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

April 2006

Preparing for Bird Flu – The Government and You

Jaime Adams and Pat Donohue-Galvin, Washington, DC

The U.S. government and governments around the world are preparing for the potential of an avian influenza, or “bird flu” pandemic. A pandemic is a global disease outbreak that occurs when a new influenza virus emerges for which people have little or no immunity, and for which there is no vaccine. The disease spreads easily person-to-person, causes serious illness, and can sweep across the country and around the world in very short time. It is difficult to predict when the next influenza pandemic will occur or how severe it will be. Wherever and whenever a pandemic starts, everyone around the world is at risk.

Health professionals are concerned that the continued spread of a highly pathogenic avian H5N1 influenza virus across eastern Asia and other countries represents a significant threat to human health. This avian influenza is very contagious among birds and can make some domesticated birds, including chickens, ducks, and turkeys, very sick and kill them.

Since 2003, a growing number of human H5N1 cases have been reported in Azerbaijan, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Iraq, Thailand, Turkey, and Vietnam. More than half of the people infected with the H5N1 virus have died. Most of these cases are all believed to have been caused by exposure to infected poultry. There has been no sustained human-to-human transmission of the disease, but the concern is that H5N1 will evolve into a virus capable of human-to-human transmission.

In the event of a pandemic, countries might, through measures such as border closures, treating sick and exposed people with antivirals; isolating sick people in hospitals, homes, or other facilities; identifying and quarantining exposed people; closing schools and workplaces as needed; canceling public events, and restricting travel, delay arrival of the virus, but cannot stop it.

The potential for a pandemic is giving rise to a great deal of planning on the part of the U.S. government,

businesses, and individuals. Businesses, including GIPSA, are developing strategies to deal with a potential pandemic which could cause an estimated 40 percent decrease in staffing levels due to illness. GIPSA will be issuing guidance to supervisors and managers in the near future and your immediate supervisor will then be able to discuss issues with you.

As individuals, you can help protect yourself and your family by getting seasonal flu shots, washing hands frequently with soap and water, staying away from people who are sick, and staying home if sick. In addition, you can prepare for this emergency as you would for any other. *See the Emergency Planning Guide on page 10 for specifics.*

For more information, see <http://www.pandemicflu.gov/> and <http://www.ready.gov/>. Specific information for individual and family preparedness can be found at: <http://www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/tab3.html>.

Names in the News

RETIREMENTS

Jan Hart, Compliance Division, Washington, DC, retired on April 1 with 30 years of Federal service. Jan began public service as a student cooperator for the Agricultural Research Service in Beltsville, Maryland, for 2 years while attending the University of Maryland Graduate School. After graduating, she joined the Agricultural Marketing Service's Grain Division, and then FGIS, as an agricultural commodity grader in export markets in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and Baltimore, Maryland. She moved to Washington DC to become a grain marketing specialist/compliance officer for the Compliance Division's Delegation/Designation, Regulatory, and Review

Branches. **Jan** became chief of the Review Branch in 1994, and then served as deputy division director before her retirement. **Jan** and her husband **Ray**, who retired in February, have planned frequent getaways, day trips, dinners out, concerts, and movies. They are both involved in a number of social organizations. And, **Jan** notes, "there are also enough projects to keep us busy around the house for the next 10 years!" We wish **Jan** (and **Ray**!) a wonderful retirement.

Evert Hastie, Jr. and **Rex Moore**, agricultural commodity graders in the Wichita Field Office, retired on March 3, 2006. **Evert** had 29 years of service; **Rex** had 34. We wish **Evert** and **Rex** all the best as they begin their new adventure.

CONDOLENCES

Jimmy Young, agricultural commodity grader, New Orleans, passed away on March 11, 2006. He began his career with USDA in 1978 as an agricultural commodity technician in the former Lutcher Field Office. **Jimmy** was a veteran of the Vietnam War. He is survived by his wife, one daughter, and his grandchildren. **Jimmy** will be greatly missed by his family and coworkers.

AWARDS

Bill Bates, Field Management Division, Washington, D.C., received a spot award for providing outstanding support and coordination to the grain industry exhibitions resulting in efficient and problem-free exhibits at national conventions.

Anita Heckenbach, Field Management Division, Kansas City, MO, received an award for providing the extra effort to effectively retrieve and distribute corn aflatoxin information on short notice to the agency and to a U.S. grain trade mission team, which resulted in a successful meeting which further fostered export corn sales to Japan.

Terri Liberty, Sara Ludwig, and Marsha Schwartz each received a spot award for a very rapid response in addressing time and attendance accounting errors. This was an outstanding effort consistent with the mission of GIPSA.

Ganga Murthy, chemist, received a certificate of merit in recognition for her personal efforts in furthering the mission of the Quality Systems & Services Unit by assuming additional duties associated with the reorganization of the Division, and for her extra efforts and contributions to furthering the goals and mission of GIPSA. She is also recognized for this professionalism, employee relations, productivity, and superior customer service.

Continued, see Names on page 6.

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Knight and Gerguis Receive Strategic Honor Awards

John Pitchford, Washington, DC

On March 7, **Vernett Knight**, New Orleans, and **Sabri Gerguis**, League City, received Strategic Honor Awards from the USDA Foreign Agricultural Service.

U.S. wheat exports to Iraq this year are expected to catapult the country to the rank of our 4th largest market. U.S. rice has also started to be exported to Iraq. In addition, a tender is currently outstanding for dried beans. These results and opportunities for U.S. farm products are certainly the outcome of the persistent efforts of many people. Several individuals, however, have distinguished themselves over the past 12 to 18 months as catalysts and leaders in the myriad educational efforts, activities, and visits arranged for Iraqi inspectors, buyers, and high level officials. Some of them have risked personal safety by traveling to Iraq and have persevered despite many technical, institutional, and staff encumbrances. They have consistently excelled in reaching out and establishing professional relationships of trust and confidence with Iraqi public and private buyers and inspectors. They have been instrumental in establishing fair and equitable Iraqi standards for tenders that are consistent with world standards, enabling U.S. exporters to bid competitively for large Iraqi purchases. Their single-minded devotion and commitment to U.S. norms in their respective fields and U.S. goals should be held up as models to follow for FAS, USDA and other professionals.

Vernett and **Sabri** each received a Strategic Honor Award in recognition of their leadership, determination, and personal commitment in successfully establishing a fair, equitable Iraqi tendering system for food grains that has significantly advanced U.S.-Iraqi commercial relations.

New Leader Program 2006

The GIPSA participants selected for the 2006 Graduate School USDA's New Leader Program are **Patricia Ogunyale** from the Information Technology staff in Washington and **Vernett Knight** from the New Orleans Field office. They are embarking on a 6-month journey of assessment, skill building, developmental work, and experiential learning.

The 6 months will be challenging for **Pat** and **Vernett** as they juggle the program with their current position responsibilities. Based on the views of past participants, the reward is well worth the extra effort required.

Congratulations and good luck to **Pat** and **Vernett**!

Issuances

Terri Henry, Washington, D.C.

New Issuances

- FGIS Program Directive 9180.79, "Verification Service." Also Appendix 1 - The Process Verified Program
- FGIS Program Directive 9180.38 "Falling Number Determination for Wheat"

Please call **Terri Henry** at (202) 205-8281, Fax to (202) 690-2755, or e-mail to Terri.L.Henry@usda.gov if you have questions or suggestions.

Regulatory Info

Tess Butler, Washington, DC

Federal Register Publications

- Opportunity for Designation to Provide Official Services in Texas – Published March 13, 2006
- Purchase of Schneider (IN) and Amendment to the Champaign (IL) Area – Published March 1, 2006
- Opportunity for Designation in the Idaho, Lewiston (ID), Ohio Valley (IN), and Utah Areas, and Request for Comments on the Official Agencies Serving These Areas – Published March 1, 2006
- Designation for Jamestown (ND), Lincoln (NJE), Memphis (TN), Omaha (NE), and Sioux city (IA) Areas – Published March 1, 2006

Carol Remmers Receives CISSP Certification

Gerald Bromley, Washington, DC

Carol Remmers, Information Systems Security Program Manager (ISSPM), Information Technology Staff, Washington, DC, recently became a Certified Information Systems Security Professional (CISSP). The CISSP represents one of the highest levels of recognition in the Information Technology security profession. Carol is now among only a handful of USDA ISSPMs to have attained this high level of expertise and recognition.

Carol was selected in 2000 as the very first GIPSA ISSPM and has been responsible for establishing and continually improving all aspects of the GIPSA security program. As **Carol** has continued to improve the security of our computer programs and electronic data storage over the last several years, she has also continued to increase her knowledge and abilities in the information security profession as exhibited by her recent certification.

The E-Government Act, which went into effect in 2002, recognizes the importance of information security to the economic and national security interests of the United States. Title III of the Act, entitled the Federal Information Security Management Act (FISMA), requires each Federal agency to develop, document, and implement an agency-wide program to provide information security for the information and information systems that support the operations and assets of the agency, including those provided or managed by another agency, contractor, or other source.

One of Carol's main responsibilities for GIPSA is to translate the FISMA requirements into appropriate policies and programs to ensure that thorough and cost-effective security measures are in place for all agency information systems. Besides completing the seemingly endless FISMA reporting requirements, Carol can be found performing "hands on" security work on a daily basis. This might include reviewing logs from the virus scanning system to look for viruses that have not been automatically removed or reviewing the Intrusion Detection System (IDS) logs for computers that are broadcasting or receiving inappropriate network traffic. She continually monitors multiple sources of information for the latest threats that GIPSA information systems may encounter and prepares appropriate responses and counter measures for each threat.

Carol recently returned from the Federal Information Systems Security Educators Association conference with some disturbing news. More security attacks on information systems are coming in the form of "social engineering"—perpetrators are gaining illegal access to an agency information system by tricking an agency employee into revealing logins and passwords. No amount of additional computer equipment will eliminate this threat and the only way to address this security risk is through increasing employee awareness with additional articles, posters, and training. **Carol** has indicated that she will be working diligently over the next few months to raise the awareness of

all GIPSA employees to this latest threat.

Next time you see **Carol** be sure to congratulate her on completing this major milestone in her career. You can also e-mail your congratulations but I would not recommend you include your login and password as that tends to upset her to no end.

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

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

Corpus Christi Elevator Explosion – 25 Years Ago

Becca Riese, Washington, DC

April 7, 2006, will mark the 25th anniversary of the devastating explosion at Corpus Christi Public Elevator. The deadly explosion killed 9 people and injured more than 30 people, 7 of whom were FGIS employees. **Albert Tripp, Kevin Saunders, Ruben Alvarado, Jose Escareno, Jesus Lopez, Jud Scott,** and **James Davis** were in the process of making routine grain inspections when the blast ripped through the elevator silos. **Albert Tripp** later died as a result of his injuries. **Kevin Saunders** was left paralyzed from the waist down. **James Davis** was treated and released the same day. The others, **Ruben Alvarado, Jose Escareno, Jesus Lopez,** and **Jud Scott,** were treated for various broken bones, burns, and cuts. All were released after extended hospital stays. **James Davis** is the only employee to still work with FGIS; he has remained in the Corpus Christi Suboffice.

Following the explosion, FGIS began major safety studies and improvements that made our workplaces safer. In 1981, FGIS issued the first Safety and Health Handbook, which established safety policies for all employees. An Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) hazard recognition course and first aid training were given to employees in the field offices. In addition, export elevators either moved or were moving FGIS inspection labs to locations at least 100 feet from the elevator head house. In 1982, the USDA Secretary created a committee to coordinate grain storage, handling, and processing safety activities for all USDA. FGIS funded, in part, explosion research by the National Academy of Sciences, testified at Congressional Subcommittee hearings, and funded a 2-year research project by Purdue University to study dust accumulation and various grain handling methods to develop ways to measure dust emissions and develop methods to decelerate grain with minimum damage and dust formation.

The grain industry also took a number of steps to decrease dust explosions. Throughout the years, grain companies adopted advanced technology, and implemented new elevator design or retrofitted and modified existing facilities to preclude explosions. Although the volume of grain moving through export elevators has increased during the years, government, industry, union, and trade association efforts have lowered the incidence of explosions through the increased awareness of explosion risk potential, improved control procedures, and explosion preventive measure.

OSHA's Standard CFR 1910.272 on Grain Handling Facilities has also played an important role in reducing injuries and fatalities in grain elevators. A regulatory review of the standard in 2003 found that since its implementation in 1988, there has been a 55 percent decrease in injuries and 70 percent drop in deaths due to grain explosions.

While many improvements have been made in the past 25 years to make the grain industry safer, we must never lose our focus on "safety first." And, we must never forget April 7, 1981, a day of tragedy for FGIS and a day that brought great change for the betterment of all of grain industry.

Travel Bits & Pieces

Peggy Smith, Washington, DC

Rules of Behavior when Using FedTraveler. As mentioned in a recent e-mail message, you must annually certify that you have read the Rules of Behavior. Here are the main rules:

- ➔ Only use data for which you have been granted authorization.
- ➔ Do not retrieve information for someone who does not have authority to access the information.
- ➔ Do not access, research, or change any user account, file, directory, table, or record not required to perform your OFFICIAL duties.
- ➔ Behave in an ethical, technically proficient, informed, and trustworthy manner.
- ➔ Logout of the system whenever you leave the vicinity of your PC.
- ➔ Do not allow confidential information to remain on the PC screen when someone who is not authorized to that data is in the vicinity.
- ➔ Do not use FedTraveler for personal use.

Passwords shall:

- ➔ Be changed or expire in 90 days or less.
- ➔ Contain: at least 8 characters; a combination of alphabetic, numeric, and special characters; a nonnumeric in the first and last position; and no more than three identical consecutive characters in any position from the previous password.

Names, from page 1.

Administrator Link Visits TSD

Sharon Lathrop, Technical Center

Dave Morris, agricultural commodity grader, received a certificate of merit in recognition for his personal efforts in furthering the mission of the Quality Systems & Services Unit by assuming additional duties within the Division, and for his extra efforts and contributions to furthering the goals and mission of GIPSA. He is also recognized for his professionalism, productivity, and superior customer service.

Mark Ruth, agricultural commodity grader, received a spot award for the resourcefulness and dedication demonstrated toward improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the official inspection system.

30-YEAR SERVICE AWARDS

Nabil Azmy, Kansas City, MO
Carl Beckwith, New Orleans, LA
Martin Begley, Washington, DC
James Brown, New Orleans, LA
Greg Bula, Cedar Rapids, IA
Rufus Campbell, New Orleans, LA
Martha Carver, Toledo, OH
Alonzo Craighton, New Orleans, LA
Larry Giles, New Orleans, LA
Janet Hart, Washington, DC
Garey Holmes, New Orleans, LA
Alan Houchin, Lexington, KY
Frank Jackson, New Orleans, LA
Judith Johnston, Wichita, KS
Ray Kirkpatrick, Jr., Portland, OR
James Lambert, Kansas City, MO
Roy Lyon, Wichita, KS
Ronald Metz, Cedar Rapids, IA
Earl Monroe, New Orleans, LA
Willard Shilling, New Orleans, LA
Clemmie Smith, Jr., League City, TX
Bobby Webb, New Orleans, LA
Daniel White, Portland, OR
James Woodard, New Orleans, LA

On March 2, Administrator Jim Link visited the Technical Services Division. While at TSD, he took some time to share with TSD employees his views of FGIS and the critical role we play not only in the grain industry but in the economic health of America. Mr. Link expressed his confidence and support for the work of FGIS and TSD's critical support role. He also applauded FGIS field personnel in the Gulf for their dedication and role in quickly reestablishing the grain trade to operation after the hurricanes. Mr. Link also provided TSD employees with an overview of the issues facing the Packers and Stockyards Program. After speaking to the employees, Mr. Link toured the Technical Center.

TSD employees appreciated Mr. Link's directness and willingness to address employee questions on a variety of issues, from his beliefs related to biotechnology in grain to the likelihood of hurricanes this year again impacting on FGIS operations. We look forward to his next visit.



Mike Eustrom and Administrator Link in the Board of Appeals room.



Touring TSD's Media Lab: (left to right) Eric Poling, Shane Rumsey, Don Kendall, Jim Link, Steve Tanner and Dave Funk.

20-YEAR SERVICE AWARDS

Rhondalyn Edwards, New Orleans, LA
Gunnard Eskilsen, Washington, DC
Lane Lejeune, New Orleans, LA
Robin Rother, Kansas City, MO

10-YEAR SERVICE AWARDS

Vera Bohannon, Stuttgart, AR
Allen Duplechin, Jr., League City, TX
Lawrence Haller, Washington, DC
Gilbert Knight, League City, TX
Jeffrey Lyons, Toledo, OH
Brian Teer, Stuttgart, AR

Digital Media Update

Roger Friedrich, Technical Center

Grain Grading Tutorials. We have completed the update of the barley, corn, sorghum, soybean, and wheat grading tutorials and posted the new versions online. The canola and rye tutorials are nearly complete and should be posted by next week. The tutorials have been updated to conform to the USDA web content style guide and the graphics and photos have also been updated.

The most significant change to the tutorials is the addition of Flash Video to the content. Our online content now contains the same videos previously only available on CD. You will need Macromedia Flash Player installed on your PC to view the content. Those of you with Mac Mini's already have it—if you're using a Windows PC, ask IT to install it.

You will also notice that the content no longer contains audio narration except for the flash video. The size of the audio files slowed the viewing of the course and made it very difficult to revise the content.

If you notice any mistakes or problems with the courses please let me know. As we receive reports of errors/bugs in the content, we will correct them and post updates.

NOTE: Visual Reference links and eLearning courses open in “pop-up” windows. Your browser's Pop-up Blocker must be turned off and/or set to allow pop-ups from this site (archive.gipsa.usda.gov) to view them. Internet Explorer users may need to press and hold the Control key while clicking on the link until the “Course Loading” window opens to temporarily disable your Pop-up Blocker.

We are also in the final stages of posting the Corn Grading Tutorial on AgLearn. It should be available in the course list in early April. If all goes well with getting corn online, we will quickly post the other updated tutorials on AgLearn.

CD Content. Many of you have been requesting our CDs to hand out at trade shows and grading schools. To date, more than 25,000 have been distributed. This year, we completely revised the CD content to incorporate the changes to the tutorials.

The biggest change is that we no longer will offer separate CDs for each grain. With the implementation of flash video and elimination of audio narration, we can now release all of the updated tutorials on a single CD. This will significantly reduce our costs and the volume of CDs you will need to carry to your event.

The new Grain Inspection Resource CD contains all of the updated tutorials, the VRI Interpretive Lines, VRI Appearance Factors, all Inspection related handbooks and directives, brochures, grading mats, Act and Regulations, Standards, and the TSD and Harvest to Harbor videos. The content is html based and has a great menu for navigating to the content. The CD will autostart on PCs, and on the Mac just by clicking on the **CLICK HERE TO OPEN.htm** icon to access the content.

When we get a chance, we will update the PowerPoint versions of our tutorials for your instructors and add them to the CD.

We will update the Available CD menu on the website to reflect the changes soon.

Rice Grading Tutorials. We are in the final stages of work on the Rough Rice, Brown Rice, and Milled Rice trainers.

Soybean Damage Trainer. We have the images scanned and processed and will begin programming the content as soon as we complete the updates to the grading tutorials.

Wheat Classification. We have scanned the images for the PNW and Upper Midwest Red Wheat Classification Trainers and are working on the descriptions. We will work on finalizing this content after we finish the soybean damage trainer.

Wheat Damage Trainer. We need to begin collecting kernels to be used in this trainer. Those of you in the field that routinely see damaged wheat samples, we need you to assist us by sending us kernels to be used in the trainer. We do not need large volumes of grain, we prefer that you just send us small samples of suspected damage. We need about 1,000 kernels total nationwide of all damage types and classes of wheat. The kernels must not be scraped or cut and we need both damaged and not quite damaged kernels. If you come across some good material, send it to me at the Technical Services Division. Put the kernels in a coin envelope marked with the class of wheat, type of suspected damage, and your location.

Rice Color Lines. We have printed and laminated the new Rice Color Lines and will have them ready to distribute soon.

Continued, see Digital Media on page 8.

GIPSA Accountability and Procedures Statement

GIPSA is firmly committed to ensuring that no employee or applicant shall be discriminated against regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, sexual orientation, marital or family status, political beliefs, parental status, or protected genetic information. GIPSA fully supports compliance with all Federal civil rights laws, regulations, rules, policies and procedures.

All GIPSA employees, especially managers and supervisors are expected to support and comply with the Secretary's Civil Rights Statement and the underlying principles of that statement. Discrimination, retaliation, or harassment in any form is not tolerated. All employees will be held accountable for civil rights and misconduct violations. The USDA, Office of Civil Rights has established Departmental Regulation (DR) 4300-010, "Civil Rights Accountability Policy and Procedures" to strengthen existing civil rights policies within USDA and encourage agencies to resolve complaints at the earliest stage possible. This DR can be found at <http://www.ocio.usda.gov/directives/files/dr/DR4300-010.pdf>.

TSD Celebrates Black History Month

On February 14, the Technical Services Division (TSD) celebrated Black History Month with a luncheon and guest speaker **Catherine Cole**, Department of Housing and Urban Development. **Ms. Cole** talked about "Black Americans: Their Contribution to Government Service." She is also the Chair of the Kansas City Federal Executive Board's Black Federal Employees Council.

During her presentation, Catherine highlighted the lives of major Black contributors to the Civil War, the Renaissance, and the Civil Rights Movement. Among those she discussed were the first 13 Black Officers in the military, Catherine M. Johnson, Sojourner Truth, W.E.B. Dubois, George Washington Carver, Thurgood Marshall, Mary McLeod Bethune, and Shirley Chisholm.

The function was well attended, the presentation well received, and **Steve Tanner** presented a certificate of appreciation to **Ms. Cole**.



Luccile Clark, Catherine Cole, and Steven Tanner at the TSD Black History Month Luncheon.

Digital Media, from page 7

We are also working on an online version which will be added to the VRI General Appearance Factors.

Industry Training. We have begun developing online versions of our industry training content. We are currently developing an Overview of the Official Inspection System course, and are also planning courses on Sampling, the Grain Standards, NIRT Overview, and Inspection Equipment Overview. These courses will be targeted to the interests of the industry and posted on the website.

Projects on the Drawing Board. We have initiated a project to develop a Laboratory Scale Testing course. This will be the first of a series of equipment related training. We are also planning a DON testing course. We are developing an Overview of the Official Inspection System video to replace the aging Harvest to Harbor.

Designation Renewals

Virginia Roseberry, Washington, DC

Official agencies provide permissive domestic grain inspection services on an official basis to the grain trade and related industries on behalf of GIPSA. GIPSA granted designations to the following five official agencies to provide official inspection services under the authority of the U.S. Grain Standards Act (USGSA): Grain Inspection, Inc. (Jamestown) 3-year designation; Lincoln Inspection Service, Inc. (Lincoln) 3-year designation; Midsouth Grain Inspection Service (Midsouth) 1-year designation; Omaha Grain Inspection Service, Inc. (Omaha) 1-year designation; and Sioux City Inspection and Weighing Service Company (Sioux City) 3-year designation.

Jamestown provides inspection services for barley, oats, and wheat in south central North Dakota, and now west central Minnesota. Jamestown operates a specified service point (SSP) at its headquarters in Jamestown, another full-service SSP in Appleton, Minnesota, and four applicant specific SSPs. During fiscal year 2005, they performed about 27,300 full grade inspections (hopper cars and submits), 4,000 factor-only inspections, 15,500 wheat protein tests, 10,000 vomitoxin tests, and 400 StarLink™ tests.

A group of retirees, bankers, farmers, and business people owns Jamestown's corporation. **Jack Trautman** has been the official agency manager since 2001. Jamestown recently expanded their designation area by applying competitively for a portion of Minnesota.

Lincoln provides inspection services for corn, sorghum, soybeans,

and wheat in southwestern Iowa and southeastern Nebraska. In addition to the Lincoln headquarters SSP, they have four applicant-specific SSPs in Iowa and Nebraska. During fiscal year 2005, they provided about 33,300 full grade inspections (hopper cars, and submits), 34,000 official commercial inspections (submits), 100 stowage examinations, 3,000 wheat protein tests, 3,100 aflatoxin tests, and 1,400 StarLink™ tests.

Lincoln is a conflict-of-interest agency stemming from their relationship to the Lincoln Grain Exchange, which has ties to the grain trade. The president and official agency manager is **Mark Fulmer**.

Midsouth (formerly known as Memphis) provides inspection services for corn, sorghum, soybeans, and wheat in the entire State of Arkansas, the entire State of Mississippi, southwestern Tennessee, and northeastern Texas. In addition to the headquarters SSP located in Memphis, they have full-service SSPs in Little Rock, Arkansas, and Stoneville, Mississippi. During FY 2005, they provided about 7,700 full grade inspections (barges, hopper cars, and submits), 300 wheat protein tests, 500 vomitoxin tests, and 100 StarLink tests.

GIPSA grants a waiver of the conflict of interest originating from Midsouth's relationship to the Memphis Board of Trade, one of the oldest grain exchanges in the country. **Tim Adams** is the Official Agency Manager.

Omaha provides inspection services for corn, sorghum, soybeans, and wheat in southwestern Iowa and

eastern central Nebraska. In addition to their headquarters SSP in Omaha, they maintain two applicant specific SSPs. During FY 2005, they provided about 27,800 full grade inspections (hopper cars), 400 wheat protein tests, and 4,200 aflatoxin tests.

Richard Probst owns the agency, but sons **Bruce** and **Brian** handle the day-to-day management and operations. **Bruce** serves as the official agency manager.

Sioux City provides inspection services for corn, soybeans, and wheat northwestern Iowa, southwest Minnesota, northeastern Nebraska, and southeastern South Dakota. In addition to the Sioux City headquarters SSP, they have full time SSPs in Sioux City, Fort Dodge, Iowa, and Windom, Minnesota. Sioux City maintains 29 applicant-specific SSPs (9 of which are weighing sites) throughout Iowa, Minnesota, and South Dakota. During FY 2005, they provided about 38,000 full grade inspections (hopper cars and submits), 6,000 reinspections, 45,700 official commercial inspections (trucks and submits), 2,500 aflatoxin tests, and 500 StarLink™ tests.

The official agency manager is **Tom Dahl** and the president is **Rick Robinette**.

Sioux City has greatly expanded their designated service area in the last year. In August, they purchased the assets of the corporation held by A.V. Tischer and Son, Inc. In December, they applied for, and were awarded designation in a portion of the Minnesota area.

Emergency Planning Guide

PLANNING FOR AN EMERGENCY/PANDEMIC

- Store a supply of water and food. During an emergency/pandemic, if you cannot get to a store, or if stores are out of supplies, it will be important for you to have extra supplies on hand. This can be useful in other types of emergencies, such as power outages and disasters.
- Have any nonprescription drugs and other health supplies on hand, including pain relievers, stomach remedies, cough and cold medicines, fluids with electrolytes, and vitamins.
- Talk with family members and loved ones about how they would be cared for if they got sick, or what will be needed to care for them in your home.
- Volunteer with local groups to prepare and assist with emergency response.
- Get involved in your community as it works to prepare for an emergency/influenza pandemic.

PANDEMIC FLU PLANNING CHECKLIST

You can prepare for an influenza pandemic now. You should know both the magnitude of what can happen during a pandemic outbreak and what actions you can take to help lessen the impact of an influenza pandemic on you and your family. This checklist will help you gather the information and resources you may need in case of a flu pandemic.

To limit the spread of germs and prevent infection:

- Teach your children to wash hands frequently with soap and water, and model the correct behavior.
- Teach your children to cover coughs and sneezes with tissues, and be sure to model that behavior.
- Teach your children to stay away from others as much as possible if they are sick.
- Stay home from work and school if sick.

Items to have on hand for an extended stay at home:

- Examples of food and non-perishables
- Ready-to-eat canned meats, fruits, vegetables, and soups
- Protein or fruit bars
- Dry cereal or granola
- Peanut butter or nuts
- Dried fruit
- Crackers
- Canned juices
- Bottled water
- Canned or jarred baby food and formula
- Pet food

Medical, health, and emergency supplies might include:

- Prescribed medical supplies such as glucose and blood-pressure monitoring equipment
- Soap and water, or alcohol-based hand wash
- Medicines for fever, such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen
- Thermometer
- Anti-diarrhea medication
- Vitamins
- Fluids with electrolytes
- Cleansing agent/soap
- Flashlight
- Batteries
- Portable radio
- Manual can opener
- Garbage bags
- Tissues, toilet paper, disposable diapers

For Your Health

Mavis Rogers, Washington, DC

More than 18 million Americans have diabetes and 5 million more have it and don't know. Scary, as uncontrolled diabetes can lead to nerve and kidney damage, and blindness. Diabetes also increases the risks for heart disease and stroke. If you have diabetes, take stock of your pantry and think creatively about food to lower your risks of these conditions.

Carbohydrate control is where the rubber hits the road for a diabetic. Your body is no longer able to efficiently absorb sugars from food. So, give up the cake—its time to overhaul your pantry.

Some foods need to go. Pastries, frosted cereals, and sugary candies can all be taken off the shelf, as can regular soft drinks, fruit punches, and other sugary beverages, which can drive blood sugars through the roof. Replace them with water and artificially sweetened beverages. Alcoholic drinks are empty calories and make diabetes-related problems like high blood pressure, nerve damage, and high-triglycerides levels worse. Also, alcohol can block the action of some diabetes medicines. You can have these foods on occasion, but consider "Is it really worth it?" The best way to keep these foods out of your body is to keep them out of your house.

Now you can explore a broader array of other carbohydrate sources. As a diabetic, you can enjoy wholesome carbohydrates in controlled amounts. Switch to whole-grain pastas and brown rice as well as fat-free or low-fat milk. Eat fruits and drink 100 percent fruit juices. Foods like greens, carrots, summer squash, and

other non-starchy vegetables contain lower amounts of carbohydrates. Eat these foods abundantly.

Remember that sugar-free does not mean carbohydrate-free. Grocery stores have dietetic foods such as sugar-free cookies, candies, and other snacks. Although sugar-free foods have no simple sugars, they usually contain other carbohydrates that can make your blood sugar high. Words for the wise: a carbohydrate is a carbohydrate. Beware whenever you see the words carbohydrate, sugar, complex carbohydrate, sugar alcohol, or even fiber on a food label. They are all carbohydrates and can affect your blood sugar. Learn how these foods fit into your diet.

As a diabetic or a person who cooks for one, start reading food labels carefully. Know the serving sizes of carbohydrate-rich foods and how they fit into your meal plan. To learn more about carbohydrate intake and other elements of good diabetes management, take a diabetes education class or seek the help of a registered dietitian or certificated diabetes educator. They can teach you how to make the most of your meal plan and enjoy a variety of wholesome foods.

Search cookbooks and credible magazines for creative new spins on old favorites. Fill half of your plate with non-starchy vegetables. Add more salads and steamed vegetables at dinner and cut the amount of potatoes, rice, and corn. Beef up your favorite casserole with extra vegetables and whole-wheat pasta. Munch on salad or raw vegetables

with your thin-crust veggie pizza. Snack on mini bags of microwaveable, low-fat popcorn instead of potato chips.

Take charge of your life by restocking your pantry. Healthy eating can help reduce your chances of suffering more health problems like blindness, nerve damage, or kidney problems. Healthy eating as a diabetic looks a lot like healthy eating for everyone. You and your whole family will enjoy the benefits of a new relationship with healthier food.

Resources: American Diabetic Association; American Dietetic Association; National Diabetes Education Program; National Diabetes Information Clearinghouse; National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases.

Courtesy of Dr. Keecha Harris for MSN Health & Fitness. Dr. Harris is President of Harris and Associates, a food systems and public health consulting firm based in Birmingham, Alabama.

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:

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by April 25, 2006!

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