



GIPSA *NEWS*

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE EMPLOYEES OF THE GRAIN
INSPECTION, PACKERS AND STOCKYARDS
ADMINISTRATION

APRIL 2012

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FGIS Matters...!

Randall Jones, Washington, DC



This past month we have spent an incredible amount of time and energy regarding the transition to the implementation of new moisture meter technology. This is a historic event as in the last 70 years there have been just two other instances in which there has been a change of the Official moisture meter. In the early 1950s, the Motomco was introduced and subsequently replaced in the early 1990s by the current official moisture meter, the GAC 2100. Earlier this month, FGIS announced that two meters, the Dickey-john GAC 2500 UGMA and the Perten AM 5200-A passed certification and will serve as the new official moisture meters beginning September 1, 2012. A new webpage has been provided on the GIPSA website to share information about these meters and answer any questions you or the industry may have. I would like to recognize **Mary Alonzo**, Director, Technology and Science Division (TSD), and **Dave Funk**, Chief Scientist, TSD, for the leadership in the effort.

The handlers of grain, export and country elevators and others, are keenly engaged in this transition as it is critical to their operations. On April 24, **Mary, Dave, Bob Lijewski**, Director, Field Management Division, and I traveled to New Orleans and met with the export elevators managers which represented the major grain handlers and exports in the U.S. At the meeting, representatives from DICKEY-john and Perten, attended and demonstrated their equipment. Earlier in the month, DICKEY-john and Perten provided a demonstration of their moisture measurement equipment in Kansas City for all Official Agency managers as well as FGIS managers from around the country. From all reports, the machines are vastly improved as compared to the current moisture measurement machine currently in use. We will see improved accuracy, test results in mere seconds, and machines that are less sensitive to temperature extreme (they won't freeze-up in the dead of winter while loading a unit car train in the upper Midwest!). Needless to say, there is much excitement about this transition to improved technology.

In May, as the crops are starting to grow in the fields, we start the budget planning for the next year. For fiscal year 2013, we anticipate another budget reduction of 5-8 percent, this is on top of the 7.4 percent reduction we sustained for 2012. We entered the current fiscal year with a balance in the Export User Fee Trust Fund of just under \$8 million. The April financial reports show that, for

Continued, see FGIS Matters...! on page 2.

FGIS Matters...!, from page 1

“As we look for how we can continue to deliver our high quality services, hearing ideas from those on the front line of inspection and supervision is critical.”

the first 6 months of the year, our expenditures have exceeded revenue by slightly more than \$3 million. While our expenditures have decreased as compared to last year, we have seen an even greater reduction in revenue due to substantial decrease in the volume of soybean and wheat exports.

Much of the revenue that supports our export services is generated by a fee based on the volume of grain that is exported. Consequently, the reduced volume of grain exports has resulted in revenue that is less than the costs to provide the services. Wheat exports are down 29 percent which equates to 5.5 million metric tons (MMT). We have seen even a larger decrease in the volume of soybeans – 6.9 MMT or 20 percent. Sorghum exports are also substantially reduced by 1.4 MMT or 65 percent. Corn is holding relatively steady with only a slight reduction of less than 1percent.

During the first 6 months of this fiscal year, the Export Trust Fund has been reduced by approximately \$2.8 million and is projected to decline by \$700,000 per month. At this rate, the Export Trust Fund could be depleted in early 2013. A primary focus of our management team will be to look for ways in which we can reduce our expenditures while maintaining our commitment to staff and to quality services.

With the many challenges our grain industry stakeholders faces today, it is more important than ever that we continue to invest in innovative solutions that will further improve the services we provide while operating within an ever shrinking budget. As we look for how we can continue to deliver our high quality services, hearing ideas from those on the front line of inspection and supervision is critical. In last month’s newsletter I shared with you several initiatives that are active across FGIS. As we look forward to next year, our initiatives will continue to be focused on identifying innovative strategies to deliver quality services. I want to hear your ideas as we work to identify our operational initiatives for 2013. You can submit ideas by working through the Change Control Working Group or by emailing me directly.

Until next time, keep up the good work and stay safe!



**It might seem like small change...
but it can turn into a money idea!**

Submit your change request form available at *InGIPSA*
and email it to: FGIS-CCWG@usda.gov

Names in the News

Personnel

Rita Bhanot from the Civil Rights Staff, is leaving GIPSA. Rita has accepted a position with the Federal Housing Finance Agency to work on their Civil Rights staff. All who had the pleasure of working with Rita over the past two years will miss her dedication, hard-work, diplomacy, and good nature.

Jeff L'Heureux was selected as the Domestic Inspection Operations Office (DIOO) Program Coordinator. Jeff grew up on a Nebraska farm and graduated with an Agricultural Business degree from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. He has experience working for multiple official service providers performing a wide range of interior inspection activities. He is well versed in FGIS mandated management plans, online programs, inspection plans, sampling methods, and certification. Jeff has four years of experience working in an interior field office including gaining proficiency in multiple grains and graduating from the GIPSA Leadership Development Program.

Retirements

William Bates, Industrial Specialist with the Policies, Procedures, and Market Analysis Branch, retired on April 30, 2012. He began his career in grain inspection in 1975 at the Baltimore Chamber of Commerce as a sampler, and later was a licensed inspector for that agency. In 1978, Bill accepted a position with the FGIS field office in Baltimore, as an inspector. During his time at the Baltimore Field Office, Bill served as

Equipment Specialist, Scale Specialist, and Shift Supervisor. Bill moved to the GIPSA Headquarters in Washington, DC, in 1992, accepting a position in the Review Branch, Compliance Division in 1992. Since 1994, Bill has worked as an Industrial Specialist at GIPSA Headquarters in Washington, DC, in the Weighing and Equipment Branch, Field Management Division, which was merged with the Standards and Procedures Branch to form the Policies and Procedures Branch. During his retirement, Bill plans to take a cruise to Bermuda, and spend more time with his friends and family.

Ray Minks, Agricultural Marketing Specialist, retired on April 30, 2012, after 34 years of service with the Packers and Stockyards Program. Ray is from Collins, Missouri. He earned a Bachelor's Degree in Accounting and a Master of Business Administration (MBA) from Central Missouri State University. Ray served in the United State Army for 18 months prior to beginning his career with Packers and Stockyards in 1978. Over the last 34 years, Ray has been an Auditor in the former Kansas City regional office, and Assistant to the Director of the former Office of Policy/Litigation Support in Washington, DC. Most recently, Ray has been an Agricultural Marketing Specialist with the Policy and Litigation Division. In his retirement, Ray and his wife, Sarah, plan to enjoy life and travel.

David Lowe, Chairman of the Board of Appeals and Review (BAR), retired on April 30, 2012, with 36 years of federal service. David grew up on a

dairy farm in Texas and graduated from Texas A&M University with a degree in Agronomy in 1976. In 1976, he started his career with the grain division of AMS in Seattle, Washington. While in Seattle, he was responsible for supervising the State of Washington and coordinated the commodity and equipment program. In 1977, he transferred to the Galveston Field Office under a federal takeover for the newly formed Federal Grain Inspection Service (FGIS). While in Galveston, he served as the Training Officer, Equipment Specialist, Protein Specialist, Shift Supervisor, Quality Assurance Specialist, and Assistant Field Office Manager. After 10 years in Galveston, he transferred to the Board of Appeals and Review (BAR) where he was a Senior Board Member for 23 years.

As a senior board member, David traveled throughout the United States addressing quality issues for various grains, beans, peas, and lentils. As a member of the BAR, he presented over 100 training classes, instructed over 1500 individuals, and gave over 50 training seminars for foreign trade groups to promote U.S. agriculture.

In 2008, David was the recipient of the "President's Call to Service Award" for volunteer service. David was also an active volunteer with the Boy Scouts of America organization in the Kansas City area for more than 20 years. He was the Eagle Advisor and had 75 young men achieve the honor of "Eagle Scout," which is the highest award of the organization. In December 2009, David was selected as the Chairman of the Board of Appeals and Review.

Names in the News, from page 3

In his retirement, he looks forward to traveling, visiting the grandkids, golfing, fishing, and performing community service.

Stuart Conser, Agricultural Commodity Grader, in the Portland Field Office is retiring on May 3, 2012, after 34 years of federal service. Stuart began his career with the Oregon State Department of Agriculture in 1973, and then went to work with FGIS in 1978. Stuart is looking forward to traveling, volunteering, and spending more time with his family in retirement.

Robert Carter is retiring on May 3, 2012, after serving 42 years. Slightly after graduating from Prairie View University, Robert began his career with FGIS in the Houston, Texas, Field Office, on April 6, 1970. He began working as an Agricultural Commodity Grader (ACG) in the Rice Program, conducting all types of Stowage Exams, AMA sampling and inspection of numerous commodities for nine years. In 1979, Robert was promoted to a Shift Supervisor as the grain exchange began to merge. Within his 42 years of service, Robert has experienced many details going to Brownsville, Texas; Corpus Christi, Texas; Kansas City,

Missouri; and Washington, DC. His most memorable detail was working on the Board of Review and Appeals in Baltimore, Maryland. Robert has spent his last years as a Shift Supervisor in Channelview, Texas.

Upon retirement Robert will stay busy with his farming and ranching duties. He will also try to get back to working on his cars and spend time with his four grandchildren. Robert would like for everyone to know "there are not many days that I haven't enjoyed working here".

Chuck Britton, Quality Assurance Specialist, will retire on May 19, 2012. Chuck started his career as an Agricultural Commodity Aid GS-4 on June 27, 1979, with Consumer and Marketing Service, Grain Division in the Portland Field Office. He was later promoted through the ranks to Agricultural Commodity Grader in 1975. In 1977, he transferred to Galveston, Texas, as a shift supervisor following the FGIS takeover of private official agency and creation of Galveston Field Office. He was laterally transferred back to Portland due to the takeover of the Oregon Department of Agriculture Grain Division, and establishment of the official inspection field office in June 1978. In 1984, Chuck was trans-

ferred to Sacramento, California, as Quality Assurance Specialist in the new established California Federal/State cooperative agreement office.

Highlights of his career include working in several different field offices on detail assignments for the Field Management and Compliance Division and traveling for the FGIS Office of International Affairs (OIA) (currently DIIA), on different projects and assignments. In 2002, Chuck was selected as a Collateral Duty Officer and was assigned for two and four month assignments in Mexico and Asia (based out of Kuala Lumpur Malaysia) over a span of ten years. The opportunities with OIA and DIIA included visiting over 22 countries since 1978, and incredible experiences, with eight separate visits to China. A one week visit to North Korea in 1999 and another trip to Yeman during the same year were very special opportunities and experiences.

His plans for retirement include spending more time traveling and visiting family and friends, improving his golf game, attending more high school and collegiate sporting events, volunteering in the community, and gardening.

To all mothers in our GIPSA family,

Happy Mother's Day!
5/13/2012

"All that I am or ever hope to be, I owe to my angel Mother."

Abraham Lincoln



¿Habla Usted Español?

Amy Blechinger, Washington, DC

How would you respond if someone asked you the question above? Would you know what the person was asking you? If you know Spanish, you would understand that he or she is asking, "Do you speak Spanish?" If you took a little Spanish in Junior or Senior High School like I did, you might remember enough Spanish to respond, "*Hablo un poco de Español*" which means, "I speak a little Spanish", or "No" (thankfully that word means the same thing in both Spanish and English). If you do not know any Spanish, you would probably resort to shaking your head side to side to say "no" and find someone else to translate for you.

What if that person is an unpaid livestock seller? How would you help him or her understand how to file a bond claim? In the past, if you didn't speak Spanish, you would have had to find someone who does speak Spanish to assist you in explaining it, and then wonder whether the recipient fully understood the importance of filing their claim on time, in writing, and to whom.

However, **Secretary Vilsack's** Cultural Transformation directive calls for employees to make a commitment to improve USDA's past and future record on Civil Rights, including expanded outreach efforts to socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers. It also challenges us to be more respectful of the diversity among our colleagues and our constituencies. So we needed to improve our approach!

Last year **Nilsa Ramos-Taylor**, Tallahassee, Florida, submitted a change request to the P&SP Change Control Working Group (CCWG), which pointed out a need for Spanish translations of our more critical publications. However, contracting an outside firm to translate P&SP's publications was cost prohibitive, so the CCWG explored other options. After visiting with several employees who speak Spanish and finding them eager to contribute to an effort like this, the CCWG recommended that the P&SP Management Team (PMT) approve the change request for implementation in-house. The PMT agreed and approved a team of employees to translate some of our publications into Spanish.

The first of those translations, the Spanish version of *How to File a Bond Claim*, entitled *Cómo Presentar un Reclamo de Fianza*, is now available on the P&SP publications page of the GIPSA public website at http://www.gipsa.usda.gov/Publications/pub_psp.html. We expect to translate more P&SP publications into Spanish in the future.

In the meantime, please share the most applicable version of the *How to File a Bond Claim* publication with the industry whenever you are working on a potential bond claim situation. Also, please join me in saying "*¡Gracias!*" (pronounced "Grah-see-us") to **Nilsa Ramos-Taylor**; **William Arce-Arana**, Des Moines, Iowa; **Shoshana Avrishon**, Bosque Farms, New Mexico; and **Idelisse Rodriguez**, Washington, DC, for translating this publication. Thanks to them we have a great new tool for reaching out to Spanish speaking members of the livestock industry!



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 Civil Rights Staff at
202-720-0216



FGIS Mentoring Program: Your Opportunity is Now!

Mary Alonzo, Kansas City, MO, and Caroline Thorpe, Washington, DC

FGIS is inviting all employees to participate in the new mentoring program either as a mentor or mentee. The Mentoring Program was announced on March 30, 2012, and all Mentoring Program materials were issued on April 20, 2012. You now have a window of opportunity to join the FGIS Mentoring Program. All applications are due May 18, 2012.

“Never forget: the secret of creating riches for oneself is to create them for others.”

— Sir John Templeton:
Pioneer global investor
and philanthropist.

What is Mentoring? Mentoring is a personal enhancement strategy or developmental partnership between two people who invest time, know-how, and effort by sharing known resources, expertise, values, skills, perspectives, attitudes, and proficiencies. It is a mutually beneficial, formal relationship.

What is a Mentor? A mentor is an individual who facilitates personal and professional growth by sharing knowledge and insights learned throughout the years. The mentor recognizes, encourages, and fosters the mentee’s potential. He or she listens, helps the mentee clarify career goals, passes on knowledge and skills, coaches and teaches, provides both professional and personal encouragement and support, acts as a role model, challenges the mentee to grow, and serves as a sounding board.

What is a Mentee? A mentee is someone who works in partnership with usually a more senior employee in order to strengthen personal and career development. Qualities of a mentee would include: willingness to take initiative, risks, be trustworthy and willingness to work with a mentor.

Why Mentoring? Over 45 percent of GIPSA employees will be retirement eligible by 2015 and between now and then, many valued members of this group may leave. Therefore, FGIS is asking more senior staff to participate in this developmental activity as mentors with experience and expertise to help leave a lasting legacy. The potential retirement of some of our most experienced staff may open up many opportunities for employees to grow and expand their careers, whether that means finding exciting, new, and interesting work or moving into leadership positions. This situation is common throughout the Department and was identified as a key issue to address through the Cultural Transformation initiative.

As a result, FGIS’ goal is to implement a program to enhance the informal transmission of knowledge relevant to work, career, professional development or retirement. Mentoring strengthens:

- ◇ succession planning – since many employees in FGIS are or will soon be retirement eligible, employment opportunities may arise down the road for remaining employees;
- ◇ transfer of knowledge from one generation of employees to another;
- ◇ career networks that allow greater exposure within FGIS or USDA;
- ◇ retention of existing employees;
- ◇ cross functional cooperation within FGIS; and
- ◇ individual employee growth.

Participation Requirements: Participation in the mentoring program is voluntary and open to all FGIS employees. Both mentors and mentees will need to fill out an application and an Individual Development Plans (IDPs). For more details find the [Mentoring Handbook](#) on the inGIPSA training website. Updated IDP information will be available very shortly.

For more details contact: Mary Coffey Alonzo, Director, Technology and Science Division, at 816-891-0463, or e-mail, mary.c.alonzo@usda.gov or Caroline Thorpe, FGIS Training Officer at 202-690-2332 or e-mail caroline.c.thorpe@usda.gov.

While FGIS Mentoring Program focuses on work related mentoring you can practice this informally also, whether in family life, fun, investing, and organizing. The FGIS formal mentoring program will allow you to get and give free information to strengthen your career and current work environment. Mentoring is one of the best ways to share and to learn about your organization and create a lasting personal awareness that enhances everyone’s experience and job performance.

GIPSA Financial Management Training

Denise Ruggles, Kansas City, MO, and Ruth Ortiz, Washington, DC

On March 26-29, 2012, GIPSA held a financial training at the National Grain Center (NGC) led by **Ruth Ortiz**, Management and Budget Services; **Piere Martin- Williams**, APHIS Washington Financial Systems Branch; and **Denise Ruggles**, Field Management Division.

During this financial training, presenters provided information about GIPSA financial tracking tools (employee rosters and operating plans), Financial Management Modernization Initiative's (FMMI) reporting, how to research data in FMMI, and overview of the FGISonline GIPSA Billing Application (GBA).

The face-to-face meeting allowed everyone to work together, assist each other, discuss differences within offices, and to share the tricks (or shortcuts) found in the system. Attendees appreciated the hands-on training format as they had the opportunity to maneuver the FMMI system, run reports for their specific offices, and discuss the data with trainers. Information was provided on the business changes we will face at fiscal year-end under the new financial system.

The group in Kansas City left confident and excited to get back to their offices and continue to work with reports that meet their needs. The training in Washington, DC, has been rescheduled for May 1, due to unforeseen network issues at the Department. This training will give management the opportunity to see the new FMMI system.



Back row (standing) from left to right: Deborah Edwards, Piere Martin-Williams, Glenda Lasseigne, Heather Schlecht, Kaye Burnep, Carla Kania, Tim Johnson, Tina Crane, Penny Kilbride, Kristi Pirtle, Pam Lake, and Ruth Ortiz

Front row, from left to right: John Flemm, Vicki Kottke, Denise Ruggles, and Terry Taylor



**Asian Pacific American Heritage
Month**
*Striving for Excellence in
Leadership, Diversity, and Inclusion*
May 2012

USDA's OIG: A Resource to Remember

Brett Offutt, Washington, DC

USDA's Office of Inspector General, more commonly known as OIG, has jurisdiction to conduct audits and investigations Department-wide. GIPSA employees may be most familiar with OIG's audit unit, which conducts independent and objective audits of the Department's programs. In 2005, the OIG conducted an audit of GIPSA's management and oversight of the Packers and Stockyards Program and released its report in January 2006. Audits such as that 2005 audit are aimed to promote economy, efficiency and effectiveness. The audit unit also strives to prevent and detect fraud, waste, and abuse. After looking at agency records and information, OIG is able to offer analysis and advice on agency initiatives and recommend possible solutions to identified problems.

OIG's investigations unit is the Department's law enforcement unit. OIG Special Agents conduct investigations of significant criminal activities involving USDA programs, operations, and personnel. Special Agents are authorized to make arrests, execute warrants, and carry firearms. You will frequently find OIG agents conducting investigations involving fraud in subsidy, price support, benefits, and insurance programs; significant thefts of Government property or funds; bribery; extortion; smuggling; and assaults on employees. Investigations involving criminal activity that affects the health and safety of the public, such as meat packers, who knowingly sell hazardous food products and individuals who tamper with food regulated by USDA, are also high-profile investigative priorities. OIG Special Agents are prepared to respond in emergency situations, including acts of terrorism affecting USDA regulated industries.

From time to time, GIPSA employees uncover criminal behavior while performing their duties. GIPSA and OIG have coordinated on several major investigations over the past decade that have resulted in the discovery and prosecution of criminal violations involving livestock. It is important for employees to remember that, when criminal conduct is suspected, OIG may be able to help. Employees who discover suspected criminal behavior in the regulated industry should report that information to their supervisors so that a referral to OIG can be considered. There are other means for reporting information to OIG as well. OIG maintains a Hotline telephone number at 800-424-9121 to receive tips and complaints. It also

has a website (<http://www.usda.gov/oig/index.htm>) and email address (usda.hotline@oig.usda.gov). Finally, each agency has a designated liaison with the OIG headquarters staff in Washington. GIPSA's OIG liaison is Brett Offutt, Director of the Policy and Litigation Division for the Packers and Stockyards Program. Brett can be reached at 202-720-7363 or by email at s.brettoffutt@usda.gov.

USDA OIG has headquarters offices in Washington, D.C., and regional offices in Atlanta, Chicago, New York, Oakland, and Temple (TX). It was formed in 1962 by the Department and later legislatively created by Congress under the Inspector General Act of 1978.

USDA Hotline
 REPORT VIOLATIONS OF LAWS AND REGULATIONS RELATING TO USDA PROGRAMS

- ✓ Criminal Activity, such as:
 - Bribery
 - Smuggling
 - Theft
 - Fraud
 - Endangerment of Public Health or Safety
- ✓ Mismanagement / Waste of Funds
- ✓ Workplace Violence
- ✓ Employee Misconduct
- ✓ Research Misconduct
- ✓ Conflict of Interest

call > **800.424.9121**
202.690.1622
202.690.1202 (TDD)

fax > **202.690.2474**
 or

write > **United States Department of Agriculture**
Office of Inspector General
PO Box 23399
Washington, DC 20026-3399

website > **www.usda.gov/oig**
 e-mail > **usda.hotline@oig.usda.gov**

reward > Cash rewards may be paid for information leading to the conviction of individuals involved in the commission of particular felonies.
 The identity of writers and callers is protected under the provisions of the Whistleblower Protection Act of 1989.

USDA United States Department of Agriculture • Office of Inspector General

Team USDA-NOFO Participates in 5K

Robbie Julian, New Orleans, LA



From Left to Right : Robbie Julian, Benjamin Cotton Sr., Melba Garza, Kristen Preucil, and Larry Giles Sr.

On March 31, 2012, GIPSA employees from the New Orleans Field Office participated in one of United Way of St. Charles Parish’s biggest fund raisers: The 16th Annual United Way of St. Charles 5K/10K Bridge Run/Walk. Along with over 1200 runners and walkers, **Robbie Julian, Benjamin Cotton Sr., Melba Garza, and Kristen Preucil**, enthusiastically walked while **Larry Giles Sr.** whole heartedly ran the 5K. The group signed up as Team USDA-NOFO and was very honored and proud to support United Way’s fundraiser. All funds raised will

be used to support local agencies and programs targeting the areas of education, income, and health. The group stated “it was fun, energetic, very satisfying, and it will become a yearly event”.

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
(800) 222-0364
(888) 262-7848 (TTY)
<http://www.FOH4You.com>
Confidential toll-free number
24 hours a day/7 days a week

USDA Art and Agriculture Contest

Angela Emrich, Washington, DC

Congratulations to **Morgan Arvaneh, Susan Von Struensee, and Angela Emrich**, on their selection as finalists of the 150th USDA Anniversary’s Art and Agriculture contest! Their entries made it through the first round of the contest which was determined by employees’ votes. The final round will be judged from May 7-11, 2012, by professional artist jurors. Winners will be announced May 15, including the announcement for “Best of Show”. The 100 winning pieces will be displayed for the remainder of the year around USDA facilities. Winners will also be announced publicly by the USDA Office of Cultural Transformation.

Visit the Cultural Transformation webpage to see all entries (e-authentication required):

<http://culturaltransformation.usda.gov/>

Angela Emrich’s entry	One of Morgan Arvaneh’s entries	One of Susan Von Struensee’s entries

Employees Influencing Change

Idelisse Rodríguez, Washington, DC

Most of you will receive an e-mail invitation from the Office of Personnel Management to participate in the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS). This yearly, web-based survey will be administered from May 2, 2012, through June 11, 2012, to GIPSA employees who have been randomly selected to take the FEVS. There are 84 basic questions, 14 demographic questions, and three USDA-specific questions on the survey, which will take approximately 20 to 30 minutes to complete. Your participation in the survey is voluntary and confidential.

I encourage you to take this opportunity to let your voice be heard. Responding to the survey is an effective way to let GIPSA managers know what is working and what is not working. As a result of previous feedback from the 2011 FEVS, we brought back the newsletter, held an all-employee meeting in the headquarters, and created three teams in charge of identifying opportunities for improvement in the areas of training, teleworking, and recognition. This year's theme is "Employees Influencing Change" and survey results will be used to influence positive change in GIPSA and the USDA. GIPSA Management will closely analyze results and take action to address those areas in need of improvement.

GP needs your help!

Our dear cow, GP, is lost! She wants to return to the herd and needs your help! Please help GP follow the "Grain Trail" by completing the **Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS)**. The FEVS will be administered from May 2, 2012, through June 11, 2012, to randomly selected employees. GP will advance each week based on GIPSA's response rate. We need to reach 50% and above to take her back to the herd. Stay tuned for updates on her progress!

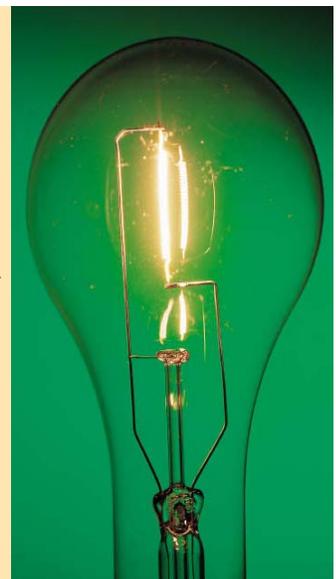


Checklist of Important Dates

- ◇ **May 18, 2012** - Mentoring Program Applications Due; FGIS Employees Only
- ◇ **May 2– June 11, 2012** - Look for the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey; Randomly Selected Employees
- ◇ **June 30, 2012** - Ethics Training Due; All Employees
- ◇ **July 31, 2012** – IDPs Due; All Employees

GIPSA Idea Hotline

The GIPSA Idea Hotline is open for business. Please send your suggestions or ideas to GIPSA-Ideas@usda.gov; fax them to 202-690-2173; or telephone them to 1-800-455-3447 or 202-720-7045. It is best to send them via fax or email to re-duce the possibility of transcription errors; however, ideas will be accepted regardless of the method of transmission.





IDP's: Your Target in Changing Times

Caroline Thorpe, Washington, DC

So what are your work, career, and life plans this year? Have you identified an area of focus in work and life? Where do you want to go? There are many options, changes and choices, Individual Development Plans (IDPs) are a tool to assist you and are due July 31, 2012.

When considering your own development during change, there are often many distractions. Experts recommend focusing on one or at most three areas. Marshall Goldsmith in "Coaching for Leadership" states if you want to change, focus on only one item or your plans can get watered down and nothing happens. Also according to [Richard Koch](#) in his book "The 80/20 Principle: The Secret of Achieving More with Less":

The 80/20 Principle asserts that a minority of causes, inputs or effort usually lead to a majority of the results, outputs or rewards. Taken literally, this means that, for example, 80 percent of what you achieve in your job comes from 20 percent of the time spent.

The 80/20 Principle can raise personal effectiveness and happiness. It can multiply the profitability of corporations and the effectiveness of any organization. It even holds the key to raising the quality and quantity of public services while cutting their cost.

Your IDP can help you focus on what that one item is or identify the 20 percent of time that will help ensure 80 percent of your success. There are many choices in GIPSA.

For Employees:

- ◇ Goal Setting
- ◇ Communication
- ◇ Diversity and Inclusion Training or Cultural Transformation
- ◇ Technical Training improvement
- ◇ Flexibility (Time Management)
- ◇ Technology
- ◇ Career Development (a mentoring program formal or informal)
- ◇ Retirement
- ◇ Work/Life Balance

For Supervisors it might be:

- ◇ Rewarding Employees
- ◇ Developing Employees
- ◇ Leadership

The key is to narrow down your development to one to three changes and your chance of success can be greatly increased. See the inGipsa website for much more information on IDP development.

Happy Cinco de Mayo!

Idelisse Rodríguez, Washington, DC



On May 5, we have an opportunity to celebrate our cultural diversity. **Cinco de Mayo** marks the victory of the Mexican Army over the French Army at the Battle of Puebla on May 5, 1862. This battle was remarkable because the Mexican small, poorly equipped army defeated the larger, well-equipped French Army. The Mexicans were eventually defeated in the war, but the "Batalla de Puebla" now represents a symbol of Mexican unity and patriotism. Some scholars believe that had the French defeated México at *Puebla*, France would have aided the South in the American Civil War and could have had an impact on the war.

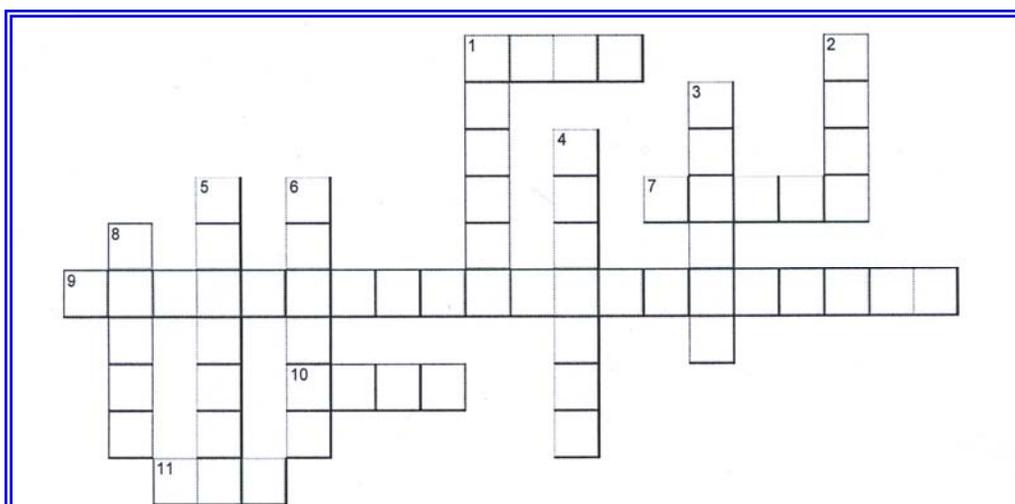
Cinco de Mayo is wrongly equated with Mexican Independence which took place fifty two years before on September 16, 1810. Cinco de Mayo is celebrated on a much larger scale here in the United States than it is in Mexico because of the strong presence of the Chicano community (Mexican Americans) who appreciate its cultural significance – patriotism and victory in the face of great odds. People celebrate this day by having parades, mariachi music, piñatas, folkloric dancing, and margaritas. **Happy Cinco de Mayo!**

Honoring Asian Pacific American Heritage

Equal Employment Opportunity Advisory Committee and Special Emphasis Program Managers

May is Asian Pacific American Heritage month and GIPSA's Equal Employment Opportunity Advisory Committee and its Special Emphasis Program Managers (EEOAC/SEPM) would like to celebrate with you. For your entertainment and education, we have included a crossword puzzle to honor the rich diversity of Asian-Pacific heritage in America. The first five GIPSA employees that complete the crossword puzzle with all correct answers will receive a prize courtesy of the Civil Rights Staff and EEOAC/SEPM. Please hand-deliver or e-mail your results to Linda Alston, Room 2514, Linda.M.Alston@usda.gov to be considered for a prize.

Clue: One of the answers has numbers in it (not just letters).



ACROSS

- 1 President who extended the week long celebration to one month
- 7 Where the Cherry Blossoms came from
- 9 Landmark legislation passed to prohibit discrimination
- 10 Title VII created this to implement the law
- 11 Famous Chinese martial arts expert

DOWN

- 1 GIPSA Informal Complaints Manager
- 2 Appeared in the "Rush Hour" movies
- 3 Animal celebrated this Chinese new year
- 4 Japan is composed of many of these
- 5 Immigrants of this descent helped to construct the Transcontinental Railroad in 1869
- 6 President who proclaimed the first 10 days of May as Asian-Pacific American Heritage Week
- 8 Your agency

Equal Employment Opportunity Advisory Committee:

Linda Alston
Susan McBryde
Desmond Coker
Dawn M. Cowan
Andrew Greenfield
Erik Mojica
Regina Willis
George Lewis

Special Emphasis Program Managers:

African American Program
Valerie Collins
Mark Kemp

American Indian/Alaskan Native Program
Dawn Cowan
Michael Meadows

Asian Pacific Islander Program
Rangan Chinnaswamy
Rita Bhanot

Disability Employment Program
Jeana Harbison

Federal Women's Program
Jody Boydston-Johnson
Onetisha Anderson

Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Program
Rita Bhanot

Hispanic Employment Program
Ana Trujillo
Idelisse Rodríguez

Veteran's Program
Shoshana Avrishon

Issuance Report

Terri Henry, Washington, DC

The following FGIS Policies and Program Notices were deleted from the GIPSA Website and are no longer valid:

- ◆ FGIS Ref # 220, Removal of Expired Mycotoxin Test Methods, dated 3/9/09
- ◆ FGIS Ref # 222, Removal of Charm Sciences DONQ Supplemental Analysis Procedure, dated 8/6/09
- ◆ FGIS Ref # 234, Mycotoxin Approved Grain/Commodity List, dated 6/2/10
- ◆ FGIS Ref # 237, Inspection of Insect Damage Kernels in Wheat, dated 5/5/11
- ◆ FGIS PN-10-09, National Soybean Sample Collection Plan for the Pesticide Residue Program, dated 7/23/10
- ◆ FGIS PN-10-10, Official Starlink Testing Discontinued, dated 8/9/10
- ◆ FGIS PN-11-01, National Soybean Export Assessment Sample Collection Plan for Export Field Offices, dated 10/11/10
- ◆ FGIS PN-11-02, National Soybean Export Assessment Sample Collection Plan for Interior Field Offices, dated 11/4/10
- ◆ FGIS PN-11-03, Near Infrared Transmittance (NIRT) Soybean Protein and Oil Calibrations, dated 12/9/10
- ◆ FGIS PN-11-05, Inspection of Flood Damaged Grain, dated 2/28/11
- ◆ FGIS PN-11-12, National Soybean Export Assessment Sample Collection Plan for Interior Offices, dated 10/12/11

Travel Tidbits

Rose Alexander, Washington, DC

- ◆ **Travel Vouchers** - The Agriculture Travel Regulation states that travelers must submit a travel voucher within five days after the trip is completed. If an employee is in continuous travel status, then the traveler must submit a travel voucher every two weeks.
- ◆ **Rental Car** – Rental cars should only be authorized if they are advantageous to the government and should not be rented for convenience. The determination of most advantageous to the government is determined by discussions between the traveler and authorizing official after considering factors such as cost, number of passengers, security, location of rental facilities, office hours, and wait times. The Departments preferred class of car is economy, using the lowest cost vendor.
- ◆ **ATM Cash Advances** – Cash advances are limited to meals and incidental expenses for the location of the temporary duty location and other cash expenses such as parking, taxi, tips, local transportation, etc., and should not exceed \$50 per day. Travel cardholders should limit ATM withdrawals to avoid paying unnecessary ATM fees. Cash obtained from the ATM in amounts greater than required for the travel duration are considered excessive cash advances.

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:

Idelisse Rodríguez
USDA, GIPSA, Stop 3649
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-3649
Phone (202) 720-5688
FAX (202) 690-2173
Idelisse.Rodriguez@usda.gov

by **May 25, 2012.**

Retiring? To be included on our email distribution list after you retire from GIPSA, please send your email address to Idelisse.Rodriguez@usda.gov.



USDA, GIPSA, Stop 3649
Management and Budget Services
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-3649
Phone (202) 720-5688