



GIPSA News

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

May 2000

From My Desk

Jim Baker

It's May - seven months have already gone by in FY 2000 and in what I had planned to accomplish this year.

I believe our Millennium event will provide the stage to showcase what GIPSA strives daily to share with stakeholders and critics. For those who haven't heard about it, the conference will take place May 9-10, in Kansas City. It will provide a forum that will help ensure the future of America's family farms in the 21st century. Farmers, ranchers, and others face challenges and opportunities due to technological advancements, international forces, consumer demands, industry concentration, and the use of production and marketing contracts. At our conference, family farmers, and senior representatives of the grain and livestock industries, academia, and State and Federal governments will gather to discuss the impacts and implications of these changes, and public policies relating to marketing America's livestock and grain in a global market.

Anything worthwhile takes commitment and effort. I share the following poem as a tribute to those involved in planning GIPSA's Millennium conference.

IT COULDN'T BE DONE

Somebody said that it couldn't be done,
But he with a chuckle replied,
That "maybe it couldn't, but he would be one
Who wouldn't say so till he tried."
So he buckled right in with the trace of a grin
On his face. If he worried he hid it.
He started to sing as he tackled the thing
That couldn't be done, and he did it.
Somebody scoffed: "Oh, you'll never do that,
At least no one ever has done it;"
But he took off his coat and he took off his hat,
And the first thing we knew he'd begun it,
With a lift of his chin and a bit of a grin,
Without an doubting or quiddit,
He started to sing as he tackled the thing
That couldn't be done, and he did it.
There are thousands to tell you it cannot be done,
There are thousands to prophesy failure;
There are thousands to point out to you, one by one,
The dangers that wait to assail you,
But just buckle in with a bit of a grin,
Just take off your coat and go to it;
Just start to sing as you tackle the thing
That "cannot be done," and you'll do it.

Edgar A. Guest

Names in the News

Personnel

Welcome to **Stefanie Cruz** and **Justin Terry**, economists, Des Moines.

Tracy Gerke was promoted to fill a computer specialist position in the Information Systems Support Staff at the Technical Services Division. This is a new position that will be primarily dedicated to working on the LIMS system.

Barbara Van Til was selected for a microbiologist position in GIPSA's new biotech reference laboratory.

Awards

Virgil Kelly, TSD, received a spot award for finding a way to check and replace the Infracore power supply circuit board resulting in savings of \$1,900 to the government.

Robert Lijewski, Washington, D.C., received a spot award for his outstanding support to the grain inspection program by interacting well

with his counterparts at TSD for the programs involving mycotoxins, protein, fall number, and oil determinations.

Joseph Lopez, David Lowe, Dale Phetteplace, Daniel Murphy, Nabil Azmy, Lawrence Poling, Lewis Dempsey, Mark Ruth, and Eddie Clark received spot awards in recognition of their collaborative efforts, initiative, and unselfish attitudes displayed during the relocation of the Board of Appeals and Review's grading laboratory and cooler space, which allowed the BAR to continue providing quality and reliable service.

Paul Manol, Washington, D.C., received a spot award for his outstanding contribution to the recent Grain Quality Workshop in Washington, D.C. His written paper and oral presentation resulted in a very successful meeting for the industry.

Susan Martin, Washington, D.C. received a time-off award from the Field Management Division for her willingness to provide clerical assistance to the Field Management Division, in addition to her regular duties.

Steve Qualls, Jonesboro, Arkansas, received an employee suggestion award for submitting a GIPSA Hotline Idea recommending eliminating hand adjustments when doing rice checktests on rice equipment and D/T samplers.

Mohsen Younes, Toledo, Ohio, received a spot award for his efforts to improve site visits to official agencies and the reports that are made for them.

40-Year Service Award

Robert Soderstrom, Washington, DC

35-Year Service Award

Howard Suter, League City, TX

30-Year Service Award

Robert Carter, League City, TX

25-Year Service Awards

George Banks, New Orleans, LA
Eugene Bass, Jr., Washington, DC
Robert Campbell, League City, TX
Henry Greenwood, Washington, DC
Myron Hall, New Orleans, LA
Dennis Thalacker, Washington, DC
Richard Uehara, Baltimore, MD
Donald Wray, Portland, OR

20-Year Service Award

Irene Omade, Washington, DC
Nancy Morris, Atlanta, GA
John Sharpe, Washington, DC

15-Year Service Awards

Donna Burke, Stuttgart, AR
Catherine Grasso, Washington, DC
Rosemary Mayne, Washington, DC
Patricia Smith, Wichita, KS

10-Year Service Award

Stuart Frank, Des Moines, IA
Jamie Pitman, Kansas City, MO

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HQ Shifts

There have been some organizational changes at FGIS Washington, DC, headquarters recently. Here's what's going on:

➤ **Information Technology Staff.**

This staff, formerly the Automation and Program Services Branch, has been renamed and moved from under Field Management Division to the Office of the Deputy Administrator. The Staff now encompasses all FGIS information technology activities and personnel in Washington, D.C. and at the Technical Center in Kansas City.

➤ **Issuance Management Staff.**

This new staff is comprised of **Charles Turner**, who handles all FGIS' program and administrative issuances, and regulatory specialist **Sharon Vassiliades**, who coordinates GIPSA's rulemaking process. **Charlie** was with the Standards and Procedures Branch; **Sharon** was with the Audiovisual, Regulatory, and Training Staff. The new staff reports to the Office of the Director, Compliance Division.

➤ **Safety and Health Unit.** This unit, previously under the supervision of the Office of the Deputy Administrator, is now part of the Compliance Division. The staff is comprised of **Mack Manis**, safety officer, and **Mavis Rogers**, safety technician.

The telephone numbers and e-mails of the personnel on these staffs are unchanged.

Social Engineering & Computer Security

Carol Remmers, Washington, DC

Social Engineering is a term used among hackers for cracking techniques that rely on weakness in human nature rather than software; the goal is to trick people into revealing passwords or other information that compromises security.

A classic scam includes phoning a person who has the required information and posing as a field service technician or a fellow employee with an "urgent" access problem. The caller will try to trick someone into revealing passwords or other sensitive information like operating systems, logon ID's, server names, application names, etc.

- NEVER! Never! Never! Give your password to anyone for any reason!
- Verify the identity of all callers.
- Don't give out information about other employees (e.g., names, positions)
- Never type commands into a computer that someone tells you to UNLESS you know exactly what the results of the commands are, or a known Computer Specialist is assisting you.
- Don't give out the dial-in phone numbers to any computer system unless you know them to be valid users.
- Never answer questions from telephone surveys. Tell the caller that employees do not participate in telephone surveys from vendors. If they need information, they should contact procurement personnel.

What Should You Do?

- If the number of the caller is available on Caller ID, write the number down.
- Take detailed notes of the conversation; get as much information as possible.
- Contact me, GIPSA's Information Systems Security Program Manager (ISSPM) at (202) 690-0044 immediately.

**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



P&S Investigators Save the Day!

Dennis Murray, Washington, DC

In today's fast paced world, people seldom go out of their way to solve someone else's problem. But, P&S investigators **Robby Obiekwe** and **Jacques Meadows**, Atlanta Regional Office, went above and beyond the call of duty for farmer **Ronnie Hearn**.

When a farmer sells his cattle to a market, the last thing he expects is a non-negotiable check. However, this is just what occurred when **Mr. Hearn** sold his cattle to Central Virginia Livestock Market, Amherst, VA.

On February 24, 2000, **Mr. Hearn** was given a custodial check by a market for \$27,958.46. However, when he presented the custodial check to the bank he learned that the custodial account had insufficient funds to cash the check. **Mr. Hearn** reported the incident to investigators **Obiekwe** and **Meadows**. They immediately investigated the issue and advised the owners of Central Virginia Market that they were in violation of the P&S Act.

Thanks to the tenacity of investigators **Obiekwe** and **Meadows**, this matter was rectified immediately. Not only did they have the owners wire money into the account, but **Mr. Hearn** received a cashier's check the same day. Thus, he was able cash the check and pay his son's college tuition. Thank you, Investigators **Obiekwe** and **Meadows** for saving the day for farmer **Hearn**!

Memphis Designation

Jan Hart, Washington, DC

Administrator **Jim Baker** visited Memphis Grain Inspection Service (Memphis), Memphis, TN, on March 30, to present the agency with a designation document and certificate. Memphis' designation was renewed to provide official grain inspection services for a 3-year period.

Also representing GIPSA at the designation ceremony were Stuttgart Field Office manager **Clyde Steves**, and Jonesboro Suboffice officer-in-charge **Bill Strickland**. Representing Memphis at the ceremony were official agency manager **Tim Adams** and president **David Colby**. **Tim** started his career with Memphis in 1974 as a licensed sampler and worked his way up to an inspector, eventually becoming the official agency manager.

The Memphis Merchants Exchange, one of the oldest grain exchanges in the country, was organized in 1882. It developed quality standards and established a grain and hay inspection department in 1904, which was incorporated the next year as the Memphis Grain and Hay Association (Association). The Association began providing grain inspection services in Arkansas and Tennessee under the newly enacted U.S. Grain Standards Act (USGSA) in 1916. The Memphis Merchants Exchange changed its name in 1954 to the current Memphis Board of Trade.

The 1976 amendments to the USGSA authorized FGIS to formally designate official agencies and assign geographic area to them. The Association received an interim designation in November 1978, and obtained their full designation as an official agency in February 1979. Their designation was granted with a waiver of the conflict of interest stemming from their relationship as a subsidiary under the Memphis Board of Trade, which has ties to the grain trade. The Association changed their name in 1994 to the current Memphis Grain Inspection Service. In 1998, Memphis added additional territory in Arkansas and Texas, which was formerly served by Arkansas Grain Inspection Service. Memphis has provided service from their main specified service point (SSP) on President's Island in Memphis since 1962. Memphis also operates a second SSP in Little Rock, AR. At the two SSP's, they performed 6,225 inspections in fiscal year 1999. Of these inspections, 600 were for rail, 1,400 barge, and 3,800 submitted sample. Memphis also provides aflatoxin testing services for their customers.

Administrator Baker said that it was a real pleasure for him to visit Memphis and make this presentation.



Memphis' David Colby (left) and Tim Adams (right) accept their designation from Administrator Jim Baker.

April Issuances

*Charlie Turner,
Washington, DC*

- ❑ FGIS PN-00-4, "Sample Collection Responsibilities For Verifying the Accuracy of Moisture Meter Calibrations Crop Year 2000," dated 5-1-00.
- ❑ FGIS PN-00-5, "Fees for FGIS Rice Inspection," dated 5-1-00.
- ❑ FGIS PN-00-6, "Fees For FGIS Official Inspection And Weighing Services Performed By FGIS in The United States and Canada And For Supervision of Official Inspection And Weighing Services Performed By Agencies," dated 5/1/00.

GIPSA - A Great Place to Grow

Terry Taylor, Des Moines

Through an informal cooperative agreement with a local business college, AIB College of Business, and the Des Moines Regional Office, students work while attending college full-time. Currently two AIB students are employed at the Des Moines Regional Office.

Jackie Mougin began working October 1998 as an office automation clerk, a position she held for over a year. Based on her dedication and willingness to learn, **Jackie** has been given the opportunity to participate in USDA's Student Career Experience Program (SCEP) as a trainee auditor.

Jackie is continuing her education with the goal of obtaining her B.A. in Business Administration with a minor in Finance. One of her career goals is to become an auditor with P&S.

Over her spring break, **Jackie** traveled with senior auditor **George Pulwicz**



Jackie Mougin (left) and LeDondra Moon (right) are learning and growing at the Des Moines Regional Office.

to begin training and learning how to perform different types of investigations. **Jackie** stated, "Des Moines has a great group of people working here who are helping me meet my goals and use my strengths to get me where I should be."

LaDondra Moon joined P&S in January of this year. She is pursuing her education in Business Administration with an ultimate education goal of a master's degree. **LaDondra** feels that working with P&S will put her one step closer to accomplishing her goals.

LaDondra already has been a valuable asset in the short period she has been with us and shows even greater potential. She appreciates the opportunity to broaden her horizons by working in a professional office.

Vintage Photo Results

Last month, we published a vintage photo provided by the Stuttgart field office asking you to identify the persons in the photo and where it was taken. The results are in and we have all but one last name.



The persons were identified as. Front row, left to right, Miffie Giovannie, Lake Charles, Bink Erhart, Dewitt, Florence (??) New Orleans, Lee Helton, New Orleans, Jimmy Getz, Mobile. Second row, left to right Rodney Hoffpauier, Greenville, Roy Guilleny, Crowley, Larry Nafzinger, Houston, Milton Blust, New Orleans, Bud White, Sacramento, Ron Roberson

BAR, Elton Lege, BAR. Third row, left to right Jacob Monroe, Jonesboro, Don Gassler, Memphis, Lee Regan, Stuttgart, Jerome Merta, El Campo, Chuck Landry, Beaumont, Murry Bell, BAR. We appoligize for any misspelled names. It was thought that this was a meeting of the Rice Board held in New Orleans in the early 70's.

Thanks to the following contributors for their information; Gary Bothwell, Myron Hall, Ron Hanson, Scott Hartman, John Marshal, Brian McKee, Wayne Melvin, Tom Meyer, and the Stuttgart Field Office.



GIPSA Idea Hotline Update

Norma Phelps, Washington, DC



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

Suggestor

Suggestion

| | |
|---|---|
| Sharon Vassiliades, Washington, DC | Include P&S Regional Office Employees in the Complete GIPSA Directory List Headings Alphabetically on inGIPSA Page |
| Ahmad B. Gorabi, Des Moines, IA | Lower the Travel Credit Card Limit for Employees Who Seldom Travel |
| Jeannene Henehan, Washington, DC | GIPSA Should Consider Hiring Under the Worker/Trainee Program |
| William Strickland, Jonesboro, AR | Amend AMA to Provide for Single Factor Reinspections/Appeals |
| Kathy Lynch, A.V. Tischer and Son, Inc., Fort Dodge, IA | Add Pictures of Other Grain (Einkorn, Ghar, Etc.) on the Website |

April's tee-shirt winner: **Sharon Vassiliades, Washington, D.C.!**

GIPSA Hotline Ideas Accepted and Approved for Implementation During Month 1999

This list does not necessarily indicate that the idea was implemented as suggested or that it is currently in place (it could be in the development/implementation stage). To avoid the chance of misinterpretation, please call the Hotline if you have any concerns or questions regarding the following list of ideas.

- Place the Employee Manual on the Computer
- Furnish P&S Employees Internet-based Training in Microsoft Word and Excel
- Include P&S Regional Office Employees in the Complete GIPSA Directory
- List Headings Alphabetically on inGIPSA Page
- Furnish Reflective Vests for FGIS Personnel
- Update and Reprint the FGIS Correspondence Manual
- Develop Temperature Correction Chart for Volume Testing on Test Weight Kettle

Keep those ideas coming in! Send your ideas to the GIPSA Idea Hotline via e-mail: gipsa-ideas@gipsadc.usda.gov; FAX to 202-720-1015; or telephone 800-455-3447 or 202-720-1013. **We encourage you to send ideas via fax or e-mail to reduce the possibility of transcription errors; however, ideas will be accepted regardless of the method you choose to use.**

Electronic Carcass Evaluation Equipment

Duane Short, Des Moines

Hog sales have gradually shifted from a live weight basis to a carcass weight and grade basis since the early 1980s. This has led hog processors to increase their dependence on electronic carcass evaluation equipment. In 1998, pork producers in the United States marketed \$8.7 billion of slaughter hogs with approximately 75% of the transactions being carcass weight transactions.

Electronic carcass evaluation devices measure physical characteristics used to estimate lean in market hog carcasses. The estimated lean is then used to determine premiums or discounts in the formula to price market hogs on a grade and weight basis. The equipment allows the buyer to determine the value of each carcass and pay the producer in a timely manner. Line speeds at packing plants reach 1,200 carcasses per hour. This allows the operator approximately three seconds to accurately measure each carcass.

Devices currently in use are:

- Handheld optical probes that measure backfat and loin eye depth through

the differences in reflectivity of fat and muscle;

- Handheld ultrasound devices that use ultrasound to measure backfat and loin eye depth;
- Whole carcass ultrasound devices that estimate the fat and lean in the whole carcass;
- Whole carcass devices that use electromagnetic scanning similar to MRI to estimate fat and lean in the whole carcass; and
- Vision systems that use digital photographic image analysis to estimate fat and lean in the whole carcass.

Technology continues to progress at a rapid pace. Some companies are analyzing pH measuring devices and the use of pH in their payment formula. Devices are being developed to measure other characteristics of meat quality including color. Fat quality is also being researched as a measurement and payment factor.

P&S performs periodic reviews of the accuracy of electronic carcass evaluation devices and their application at all hog slaughtering facilities. It was through one of these assessments that the Excel case was developed. P&S has alleged that Excel changed the percent lean formula without notifying their producers. The result was approximately 1% less lean and \$0.91 less payment per head, depending on the carcass. Total damages have been alleged to be \$1.8 million.

Two devices determine the value of billions of dollars of livestock sold in the United States – a scale and an electronic carcass evaluation device. Scales are regulated through the

National Type Evaluation Program (NTEP). We are working with industry, state weights and measures officials, regional weights and measures associations, and the National Conference on Weights and Measures to develop a similar oversight program for electronic carcass evaluation equipment that will protect the livestock producer by insuring the accuracy of these devices.

New Employees Guide Available on Web

Lynn Barba, APHIS

A guide for new employees is now available through the MRP Human Resources home page. From the MRPHR site (www.aphis.usda.gov/mb/mrphr), click on the “Guides & Directives” button to go to FEDweek’s “Welcome to the Federal Government” Guide. It provides generic information for Federal employees on: pay and other sources of compensation; leave; health and life insurance; retirement and the Thrift Savings Plan; promotions and transfers; and more!

Basic employee information is also available in a user-friendly brochure. The brochure is a handy reference for new employees and provides valuable Internet addresses for experienced employees to use when researching employment-related topics. Copies of the brochure may be obtained by calling Human Resources at (202) 720-3519.

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

Research Coordination Team Meets

Jan Hart, Washington, DC

The Research Coordination Team met last month in Manhattan, KS at the Agricultural Research Service's (ARS) Grain Marketing and Production Research Center (GMPRC). We met there rather than Kansas City to visit the GMPRC and the American Institute of Baking (AIB). GMPRC director Don Koeltzow, formerly a branch chief in the Technical Services Division, was a very hospitable host, as were all of his employees.

We toured the GMPRC facility, talked with researchers, and saw various both general research projects and those specifically dedicated to FGIS needs. GMPRC has the only fully functioning experimental grain elevator in the United States.

At AIB, Ken Embers, the director of admissions and financial aid, and international student advisor, led our tour. We saw the "hands-on" laboratory training and lecture facilities that they offer for those already in the milling and baking industries who are trying to improve their skills.

After the tour, we met with Jim Psotka, the director of cereal quality analysis, and Maureen Olewnik, the vice president of cereal products, research and development. They discussed the different classes of wheat, production areas, ingredi-

ents, and impact on the goods produced by the milling and baking industries.

During the "roll up your sleeves" part of the meeting, we discussed changes in grain inspection and industry needs, and discussed at length and then updated the ARS and FGIS lists of prioritized research needs for 2000. FGIS will later formally present ARS with our needs list so that there will be common understanding between FGIS and ARS about projects to which ARS should dedicate resources on our behalf. The team identified a large number of projects

Management Division, and myself, Compliance Division; Diane Palecek, Kansas City Field Office, and Kerry Petit, New Orleans Field Office; and Tom Meyer, Kansas Grain Inspection Service, Inc., and Kevin Bredthauer, Lincoln Inspection Service, Inc. Tom was unable to attend this meeting because he was doing outreach activities with grain exporters in Mexico. Kevin is the "new kid on the block," replacing former team member Tim Lawrence, Missouri Department of Agriculture. Kevin's grain career started in 1978, working first as a licensed sampler then in-

pector for Lincoln. From there, he was the manager for Idaho Grain Inspection Service, Pocatello, Idaho; agency quality assurance specialist back in Lincoln; agricultural commodity grader in the Cedar Rapids Field Office; and finally returned back to Lincoln as the official agency manager. Kevin said, "He keeps coming back like a bad penny!"

The team's work is ongoing, and our next meeting is scheduled for August in Kansas City. The team welcomes input on FGIS' research needs.



The Research Coordination Team. Pictured at ARS' experimental grain elevator are, left to right, Jan Hart, Kevin Bredthauer, Kerry Petit, Dave Funk, Don Kendall, John Giler, Diane Palecek.

in areas as diverse as inspection automation, biotechnology, and wheat inspection.

Team members are: leader Dave Funk and Don Kendall, Technical Services Division, John Giler, Field

Travel Bits & Pieces

Peggy Smith, Washington, DC

Travel Management Centers. By now your Travel Management Center (TMC) is probably charging a transaction fee for each airline ticket issued. If the transaction fee is billed to your Bank of America VISA statement at the time you file your voucher, please add this fee to the cost of your airline ticket and put this amount on your travel voucher.

If you are billed for this fee after you have filed your travel voucher or for a fee from previous travel, please complete an SF-1164 - Claim for Reimbursement for Expenditures for Official Travel, and submit this form along with a copy of your VISA statement or a copy of your itinerary that shows the transaction fee to the appropriate person in your office who can issue you a convenience check as reimbursement for the transaction fee. You can also claim this fee on your next travel voucher. If you choose to do this, please claim the fee as a miscellaneous expense with an explanation in the remarks section of the voucher.

If you use American Express Travel in Arlington, VA, as your TMC, please be aware that this TMC charges a \$15 transaction fee per ticket. When e-tickets are issued on an itinerary that has different airlines for different segments of the trip, each segment is considered a separate ticket. Therefore, American Express Travel was charging \$15 for each segment. GSA has worked with American Express Travel to resolve this problem and now multi-airline tickets will be issued as paper tickets only. If you insist on e-tickets for multi-airline tickets and your office is willing to pay the multiple fees (your supervisor must approve), American Express will issue e-tickets with approval from the travel coordinator.

If American Express Travel is not your TMC, please check with your TMC to see how you are billed for multi-airline tickets.

Online Airline Reservation

Confirmation. If you use American Express Travel as your TMC, you can print a copy of your itinerary from the Internet. You must first get your Sabre reservation number from American Express Travel, log onto www.sabre.com, click on Sabre Virtually There, and enter your Sabre reservation number and your name.

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
USDA, GIPSA, Stop 3601
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-3601
Phone (202) 720-5091
FAX (202) 205-9237
dstewart@gipsadc.usda.gov

by May 25, 2000!

New Feed Weighing Regulations

GIPSA has announced new feed weighing regulations under the Packers and Stockyards Act. The regulations, which are intended assure livestock and poultry growers that feed weight is accurately or reasonably determined, went into effect on May 5, 2000.

The new regulations will help ensure that feed weight is properly documented whenever it affects payment or settlement to livestock and poultry growers. This regulation applies when livestock or poultry is produced under a contract growing arrangement.

The regulations address contract poultry growers' concerns that integrators use their dominant positions to impose unfair or unjust discriminatory terms or conditions upon them. A Notice of Proposed Rulemaking appeared in the April 2, 1999, Federal Register that solicited comments on the proposed regulations.

"The new regulations provide a measure of integrity and credibility to growers and companies to ensure accurate feed weights," commented administrator **Jim Baker**.

"They also provide a measure of confidence for growers," said **Michael V. Dunn**, USDA under secretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs. "The regulations," he added, "are part of USDA's continuing effort to address the special needs of family farmers on contract issues."

OFFICE OF THE ADMINISTRATOR
USDA, GRAIN INSPECTION, PACKERS
AND STOCKYARDS ADMINISTRATION
STOP 3601
1400 INDEPENDENCE AVENUE, SW
WASHINGTON, DC 20250-3601
