



GIPSA News

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

May 2001

New TSD Biotech Branch

Steve Tanner, Technical Center

In March 2001, TSD's Biotechnology Branch became operational. **Don Kendall**, former chief of the Analytical, Reference, and Testing Services Branch, was reassigned to head the new branch. The branch's staff includes **Suzie Asfaw**, **Louis Bussjaeger**, **Terri Liberty**, and **Sandy Lockridge**.

GIPSA's biotechnology laboratory was completed in December 2000. This is a state of the art laboratory equipped with current biotechnology testing technology. In the interest of U.S. producers and grain handlers and to facilitate trade in accordance with GIPSA's mission, the Biotechnology Branch will carry out three main processes:

DNA-Based Laboratory

Accreditation Program. GIPSA plans to accredit private and State laboratories that test grains for the presence of biotechnology-derived materials using Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) or other DNA-based technologies. Some 30 laboratories have expressed interest in the accreditation program.

Biotechnology Rapid Test

Evaluation Program. GIPSA will evaluate the performance of rapid test kits commercially available in the United States to test for the presence of biotechnology-derived grains as claimed by the manufacturers. To date, we've evaluated seven kits to



The Biotechnology Branch (left to right): front row -- Terri Liberty, Sandy Lockridge, and Suzie Asfaw; back row -- Don Kendall, Louis Bussjaeger, and Ron Jenkins.

detect StarLink™ and found them to operate in accordance with manufacturer claims.

Develop Standard Reference Materials for Biotechnology. To evaluate and standardize methods for testing biotech grains, standard reference materials must be made available to the testing industry. In cooperation with life science organi-

zations, the National Institute for Standards and Technology, and the Joint Research Centre of the European Union, the Biotechnology Branch will facilitate the development of internationally recognized reference materials.

Initially, Branch efforts will provide standardization information on tests used in the grain industry that determine whether grain is biotech or not biotech (identification).

Most biotech crops now in production have agronomic traits that are valued by the producer, such as Round Up Ready soybeans. In the future, biotech crops will have specific end-use traits that are valued by the processor or consumer. The nature, focus, and need for standardization of biotech testing will change as new biotech crops are introduced. This will be a significant, ongoing challenge for GIPSA. As grain biotechnology progresses, GIPSA must evaluate the need for more relevant test methods to verify the presence of improved traits that add value to the grain markets.

Names in the News

PERSONNEL

Congratulations to **Dave Funk**, Technical Services Division, who recently earned his doctoral degree in physics. **Dave's** doctorate is from University of Missouri-Kansas City. He's been working on this at night for some time now and is very happy to have successfully completed the process. **Dave** said his doctoral defense went well - they didn't even ask him any hard questions. In fact, he said it was fun — he got to talk about his favorite subject! Congratulations **Dr. Funk!**

FAREWELL

Farewell to **Monica Christian**, computer specialist, Washington, DC, who has taken a position with the Department of Justice.

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Farewell also to Denver regional supervisor **Keith Kienow**, who retired last month. **Keith** started his USDA career in 1972 as a market news reporter, first in Amarillo, TX, and later in Indianapolis, IN. **Keith's** career with P&S started in 1974 as a marketing specialist in Indianapolis. In 1977, he landed in Portland, OR as a supervisory marketing specialist. Next on **Keith's** career ladder was a regional supervisor position in Omaha, NE, where he stayed for 15 years, until the P&S reorganization in 1998 moved him to the Denver Regional Office. After 26 years with the agency, **Keith** has decided it's time to retire and get on with some of the other things he would like to do.

AWARDS

Wil Arce-Arana, marketing specialist, Des Moines, received a spot award in recognition for sustained effort, dedication and professional attitude in promoting diversity in the Des Moines regional office.

Ruth Goff, Technical Services Division (TSD), received a spot award for the initiative and assistance provided in processing 26 Board Appeals which enabled the Board of Appeals and Review to provide timely customer service.

Karen Guagliardo and **Bob Krouse**, Review Branch, Compliance Division, received time-off awards for giving up their weekends at home and traveling to complete the mission of the Branch.

Larry McDonald, TSD, received a spot award for unsurpassed leader-

ship and coordination of the TSD foreign and domestic visitor program, especially his diplomacy with foreign dignitaries.

Vicki Lacefield, Policies and Procedures Branch (PPB), received a time-off award for serving as a team member during a compliance review. This was the last review that **Vicki** went on for the Review Branch after transferring to PPB, and her assistance was very much appreciated.

CONDOLENCES

Gary Wingerson, President, A.V. Tischer and Son, Inc., passed away April 4, 2001.

Advisory Committee to Meet

GIPSA's Grain Inspection Advisory Committee will meet on May 8, 2001 in Kansas City, MO. The meeting will take place from 7:30 a.m.- 5 p.m. at the Hilton Kansas City Airport. Topics to be discussed include GIPSA's financial status, biotechnology, component end-use testing, information technology initiatives, the status of the official commodity program, and other related issues concerning the delivery of grain inspection and weighing services to American agriculture.

The Advisory Committee provides advice to the GIPSA administrator on the delivery of grain inspection and weighing services to American agriculture under the U.S. Grain Standards Act.

GIPSA Employees: You're in Pretty Good Shape!

Mack Manis, Washington, DC

What do you call a 45-year-old man who has worked for the Federal government for more than 20 years, is a non-smoker and moderate drinker, tends to be overweight, but has pretty good blood pressure and cholesterol values? You'd call that person your average GIPSA employee. In fact, according to Federal Occupational Health (FOH), GIPSA employees are significantly healthier (in most regards) than the general population of the United States.

Recently, FOH—which is a division of the Public Health Service—issued their FY 2000 “Summary of Health Statistics” for GIPSA. The report provides a statistical summary of data along with some analysis and commentary obtained from a review of the occupational screening examinations performed on GIPSA employees during FY 2000. According to the report, the health habits of FGIS employees (as represented by those who had medical surveillance physicals last year) continue to improve. For example:

- ★ Less than 11% of GIPSA employees, in the sample population, smoke tobacco compared to 20-25 % of the U.S. population.
- ★ 12% of the sample population had high blood pressure compared to an average of 30-40% nationwide.

On the downside, the report indicated that **66% of the GIPSA sample population was overweight** compared to 33% of the general population. Also, a higher than expected number of GIPSA employees in the sample show signs of diabetes, and most had no-better-than-average cholesterol values (excess weight may contribute to both problems).

The overall favorable trend in the health of GIPSA employees is undoubtedly due to a number of factors. Perhaps, as we get older, we are getting wiser. Part of the credit must also go to the availability of Employee Assistance Program (EAP) at all agency work sites, as well as the medical surveillance/physical examination program itself. Whatever it is, it's working.

And now about your weight ...

Travel Bits & Pieces

Peggy Smith, Washington, DC

Compensation for Voluntarily Vacating an Airline Seat. Chapter 301-10.117 of the Federal Travel Regulations states that a federal employee on official business who voluntarily vacates their seat on a scheduled airline flight when the airline asks for volunteers may keep the compensation offered by the airline when the following criteria are met:

- ➔ If voluntarily vacating their seat will not interfere with performing their official duties; and
- ➔ If additional travel expenses, incurred as a result of vacating their seat, are borne by the employee and are not reimbursed; but
- ➔ If volunteering delays their travel during duty hours, their agency will charge the employee with annual leave for the additional hours.

Fees for Rice and Commodity Inspections Increased

Effective May 4, 2001, GIPSA increased fees by 3.7 percent for all hourly rates and certain unit rates for rice and commodity inspection services performed under the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946.

These increases are needed to cover increased operational costs resulting from the mandated January 2001 Federal pay increase.

Technical information contact: David Orr, Director, Field Management Division, telephone 202-720-0228, or via e-mail dorr@gipsadc.usda.gov.

Savings Bond Drive Kicks Off

Virginia Roseberry,
Washington, DC

As the GIPSA Savings Bond Coordinator for the 2001 Savings Bond Drive, I would like to introduce the keyworkers for each office.

Carmen Adam, Grand Forks
Bill Ashley, Office of the Administrator
Wilmer Brandt, Technical Center
Tess Butler, Compliance Division
Lynn Cain, League City
Ken Carter, Greenville
Martha Carver, Toledo
Donald Damm, Minneapolis
Erin Dubroc, New Orleans
Jim Elswick, Denver
John Flemm, Olympia
Richard Frudenthal, Portland
Bruce Gardner, Des Moines
Joe Garrity, Information Technology Staff
David Grady, Montreal
Mary Hill, Stuttgart
Michael Johnson, California
Judy Johnston, Wichita
Elsie Jones, New Orleans Area 2
Fred Kelley, Baltimore
Vernett Knight, New Orleans Area 3
Jacqueline LaCour, New Orleans Area 1
Regina Landry, Crowley
Michael Meadows, Atlanta
Jay Mitchell, Field Management Division
Dennis Murray, P&S 3rd floor HQ
Dianne Palecek, Kansas City
Denise Ruggles, Cedar Rapids
Debbie Shipman, P&S 1st floor HQ
Bill Strickland, Jonesboro
Danny Williams, New Orleans Area 4

The campaign kicks off this month, and will run from May 1 through June 15, 2001. The keyworkers will be talking to you about the benefits of allotting part of your savings to U.S. backed bonds!

The Patriarch of P&S

Dennis Murray, Washington, DC



P&S Patriarch Bobby Smith

Shreveport, Louisiana was founded and re-admitted to the Union in 1868. It is one of the most colorful cities in the South. Shreveport is the birthplace of one of P&S' most dedicated and beloved employees. In 1928, on a clear day in Shreveport, **Bobby Smith**, marketing specialist with the P&S Trade Practices Branch, was born. **Bobby** spent most of his youth in Bernice, about 80 miles east of Shreveport. His grandparents raised him after the passing of his father. He lived a simple life enjoying the fresh environment of a small town.

After high school, **Bobby** attended Louisiana Tech University, studying general agricultural, and learning all he could to achieve his goal of getting a good job. During his college years, he enjoyed life and his friends. After college, **Bobby** was drafted into the Army and was stationed in Berlin, Germany for 2 years. After severing in an infantry unit in Germany, **Bobby's** sergeant asked for volunteers who had college degrees. **Bobby** and several of his fellow soldiers who raised their hands were later transferred to desk jobs at the Berlin Military Post. This was a rewarding opportunity for **Bobby**.

After serving in the Army, **Bobby** attended the University of Illinois graduate school where he earned his Master's degree in animal industry. His professor suggested that he talk to a USDA recruiter who was coming to the college. **John Sanders**, from the Packers and Stockyards Branch, was interviewing students for positions with USDA, and recruited **Bobby** as a marketing specialist. In 1959, **Bobby** started his career with USDA, Packers and Stockyards Branch, Indianapolis, Indiana and was employed there for 1 year before transferring to Montgomery, Alabama (1960-1963); Atlanta, Georgia (1963-1975); and Indianapolis, Indiana, as supervisory marketing specialist (1975-1983). From 1983 to present, **Bobby** has been in Washington, DC, working as a marketing specialist handling trade issues.

Bobby has worked for USDA since the Eisenhower Administration and has worked under 13 Secretaries of Agriculture. Just imagine the changes in agriculture and government that he has witnessed since joining USDA.

Bobby recently received a spot award for his exceptional effort in handling the activities of the Trade Practices Branch. His positive attitude towards life and his work makes him a gold medal winner. As he walks through the halls of USDA, you know he's on a mission. His long strides and fast pace keep him young at 73 years of age.

Bobby loves to discuss Packers and Stockyards Programs and has strong feelings about what is happening with our farmers and trade issues in America. He has seen a lot and done a lot. He continues to work hard and has a kind word to say to you each and everyday. That is why it is easy to like this man.

South Building Space Relocation

Jan Hart, Washington, DC

The USDA South Building in Washington, DC, is being renovated for modernization and space efficiency. Currently, our grain and packers employees are housed in different locations throughout the building. Several years ago, we asked the Department to relocate all GIPSA employees to one area within the building to increase our operational effectiveness. In response to our request, the Department has assigned us new space on the second floor of the South Building that will house all GIPSA Washington, DC, headquarters personnel. This space includes the entire fourth wing and the “headhouse” (Independence Avenue corridor of the building) stretching from the third to the fifth wings.

Dave Shipman created a relocation team to start the process. The team was tasked with working with Departmental officials and Agency managers employees to identify each unit’s space needs and develop a plan. According to the plan, division directors and higher will receive full-sized offices, branch chiefs half-sized offices, and all others will be in some form of shared space with workstation arrangements. The shared space will allow each work unit to have their own “suite” of offices. Each suite will include private work areas where employees can meet privately or work on projects together without disturbing coworkers. Employees in the shared space will receive new furniture, provided by the Department at no cost to our Agency.

At a recent meeting, Departmental officials approved GIPSA’s plan. Our relocation is underway. Starting in 2002, the Field Management Division (FMD), Office of Policy and Litigation Support, and both programs’ information technology and resources offices, which will be located across the hall from each other, will move into the 2400 wing.

The Department will start renovating another area of the South Building in 2003, which will affect the remaining packers’ employees in the third floor headhouse. Rather than relocating them into temporary “swing space,” we proposed that the Department move them into FMD’s vacated offices along the first floor sixth wing. This will allow them better access to the Administrator’s office and conference room, and proximity to other GIPSA employees.

All remaining GIPSA employees in Washington, DC, headquarters units will move into renovated space in the second floor headhouse sometime after 2003. When the project is finished, our entire Agency will be housed together on the second floor in very nice, renovated space. The team will provide you with further information on the new space in the future.

CDSHOs on the Potomac

Mack Manis, Washington, DC

Washington, DC may never be the same. Recently, more than 25 FGIS collateral duty safety and health officers (CDSHOs), National Safety Committee representatives, safety and health specialists, and even two high-level safety officials from the Canadian Grain Commission converged on the Nation’s capital for three days of talks on safety and health.

Despite cooler-than-normal temperatures, the **FGIS Safety and Health Conference** was an unqualified success. The 3-day conference kicked-off on April 17, with a keynote address by **David Shipman**. Other featured speakers included **James Stevens**, director, USDA Safety and Health; **Regina Durso**, regional director, Magellan Health Care; and **Kay Orr**, agreement manager, Federal Occupational Health.

In addition to top-flight speakers, the conference included a number of panel discussions where CDSHOs talked about topics ranging from grain elevator safety to emergency preparedness.

All in all, it was great time of networking, sharing, and learning how we can make FGIS an even better place to work.



GIPSA Idea Hotline Update

Norma Phelps, Washington, DC



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

Suggestor

Suggestion

Ahmad Gorabi, Des Moines, IA

Team Awards Should Be Based on the Team's Performance
GIPSA Should Have An "Employee of the Year" or "Extra Mile" Award
Have the GIPSA Violation Hotline Phone Number on First Page of
GIPSA Website

Stefanie Osterman, Des Moines, IA
Elkin Parter, Indianapolis, IN

Send Traditional Certified Mail Via the Internet
Place An Updated Version of the Packers and Stockyards Act on the Internet
Revise Time Distribution and Work Measurement Report to Track Financial
Costs

Robert Medley, New Orleans, LA

Put Books II and III on CD ROM
Payments for Airline Tickets Should Be Sent to the Government Credit
Card Account
Publish Cu-Sum on the GIPSA HomePage

April's tee-shirt winner: **Robert Medley!**

GIPSA Hotline Ideas Accepted and Approved for Implementation During April 2001

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.



Revise Time Distribution and Work Measurement Report to Track Financial Costs

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.**

GIPSA's Executive Potential Program

Dennis S. Murray Sr.

On March 30, 2001, **Dan Van Ackeren**, director, Office of Field Operations; **Dave Orr**, director, Field Management Division; **John Giler**, **Rosemary Mayne**, and I attended the graduation ceremony for the 2000 Executive Potential Program (EPP). The USDA Graduate School sponsors the EPP, a competency-based leadership development program designed to enhance the skills needed to become a more effective leader.

This year we honored two GIPSA graduates, **John Barthel**, acting regional supervisor, Atlanta, and **John Sharpe**, agricultural marketing specialist, Data and Information Analysis Branch, Washington, DC. After the reception both graduates shared their experiences with me.

John Barthel discussed his assigned EPP group and work with the USDA Food and Nutrition Service's southeast regional office. **John's** assignments included working with an outside contractor on a leadership initiative called "Where do we go from here." **John** and his group assessed the commitments of managers and staff towards continuing their leadership initiatives. While **John** was on detail, the group held a facilitated work day for the managers that was recognized by OPM.

John's program was comprised of other projects with government and private sector entities, including the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) and Halliburton Inc., where the group benchmarked management practices. **Vice President Cheney** was Halliburton's CEO be-

fore moving back into public life. All these programs were a continuing developmental process that expanded **John's** growth potential. **John's** commitment to his team exemplifies his character and professionalism as a GIPSA employee. Overall, the EPP provided a challenging opportunity to see the best and worst of organizations.



John Barthel



John Sharpe

After graduation, **John** went on a long-needed vacation to a wonderful day at a practice round of the Master's Golf Tournament. He even saw some stars, including **Tiger Woods** and **V.J. Singh**.

John Sharpe's EPP experiences were a little different than **Barthel's**. **John Sharpe** noted that his activities in GIPSA are mainly behind the scenes. His EPP assignments were high profile positions. His first assignment was as the chief of the Commodity Procurement Branch with the Agricultural Marketing Service, where **John** oversaw the purchase of meat items for the various USDA food programs such as the National School Lunch Program. The detail was especially rewarding because

the branch was implementing enhanced quality provisions into their purchase specifications during **John's** tenure.

John's second developmental detail was as acting chief of the Farm Operation Branch, Agricultural Research Service. **John** oversaw all farming operations supporting the research scientists, the facility's roads and grounds maintenance, and its intrusion alarms. He supervised more than 50 employees ranging from laborers to professionals in four separate sections. The assignment helped him understand what it takes to handle a position such as branch chief.

John Sharpe's EPP group chose to help the INS improve its front-counter customer service procedures. **John** traveled to INS district offices in Dallas and Atlanta to assess their needs. The team developed new signs, forms, and distribution procedures and analyzed their effectiveness, which will be placed in all INS offices nationwide.

John's EPP experiences provided him the opportunity to learn about other agencies, and to explore different working environments and responsibilities. He learned about the organizational cultures and missions of other agencies and how they differ from GIPSA's. He used untapped skills that allowed him to develop leadership in an unfamiliar organization.

Both were successful in their EPP assignments and grateful for the opportunity to participate in the program. Both agreed that others should be encouraged to participate in the EPP program.

Designation Renewals

Jan Hart, Washington, DC

Last month, FGIS granted designations to six official agencies to provide domestic official grain inspection services. These designation renewals are granted under the authority of the U.S. Grain Standards Act. The six official agencies, and the number of official inspections they provided in FY 2000, are:

- **Champaign-Danville Grain Inspection Departments, Inc.** (50,990)
- **Detroit Grain Inspection Service, Inc.** (6,414)
- **Eastern Iowa Grain Inspection and Weighing Service, Inc.** (9,124)
- **Enid Grain Inspection Company, Inc.** (29,818)
- **Keokuk Grain Inspection Service** (4,523)
- **Michigan Grain Inspection Services, Inc.** (33,310)

Champaign and Enid were also designated to provide official domestic weighing.

FGIS is fortunate to have such strong committed partner official agencies. They provide the front line inspection and weighing services for much of the domestic grain moving throughout this country — professional and valued services to the grain trade and related industries on GIPSA's behalf. Let's get to know these agencies and their managers...

Champaign is owned by **Dave Ayers** and two partners. **Dave** started his grain career in 1976 as a licensed sampler for the Sioux City, IA, official agency, and became their manager in 1982. He bought Champaign in 1992. **Dave** has served on the FGIS Grain Inspection Advisory Committee and as president of the American Association of Grain Inspection and Weighing Agencies.

Champaign, a private company since 1929, incorporated in 1985. **Dave** and his partners became Champaign's fourth set of owners when they purchased it in 1992. Champaign was later selected competitively by FGIS to provide service to the Terre Haute, Indiana, and Gibson City, Illinois, areas. Champaign is also the first private agency (i.e. non-State agency) to provide official services under the Agricultural Marketing Act. Champaign provides official services through the midsections of Illinois and Indiana at 3 full-time and 8 applicant-based grain inspection laboratories, and at one approved weighing location.

Detroit is owned by **Norman Marchetti**. **Norman** has an accounting degree, and was first licensed in 1993. His father, **Roy**, bought the agency from the Detroit Board of Trade in 1978. He and wife **Rita**, who does the administrative and bookkeeping responsibilities, are still involved in the day-to-day operations of the agency.

The Detroit Board of Trade was formed in 1856 with grain inspection added in the 1920s. Detroit split off from the Board of Trade in 1978, and moved to their current location in Emmett, Michigan, in 1980, to provide better service to the trade in their area. Detroit operates in eastern Michigan at one full-time and five applicant-based grain inspection laboratories.

Eastern Iowa is also a second-generation business, now owned by **Dave Slater** and his brother, **Joe Slater, Jr.** **Dave** has a business degree from Iowa State University. He started as a sampler in 1977, received his grain license in 1981, and took over as manager from his father, **Joe, Sr.**, in 1991. **Dave's** father passed away several years ago, but he carries on the tradition.

Joe, Sr., moved to Iowa from the Buffalo/Lake Erie area, where he had been a licensed inspector since the early 1940s. He became the chief inspector for the Davenport Board of Trade in the early 1950s, and purchased the Muscatine Board of Trade in the early 1970s. Eastern Iowa became a private agency by incorporating in 1972 and obtained the Dubuque, Iowa, area at the same time. Eastern Iowa was later selected competitively by FGIS to provide service to the Burlington, Iowa, and northern Illinois areas. Eastern Iowa now serves in the eastern section of Iowa and northern section of Illinois at 4 full-time and 3 applicant-based grain inspection laboratories.

Enid's second-generation owner is **Barry Hibbets**. **Barry** is a business graduate from Oklahoma State University. He was an accountant for Farmland Industries from 1973 to 1981 when he began his grain inspection career when he purchased Enid.

*Continued, see Designations
on page 9.*

Designations, from page 8.

Enid started as a Board of Trade in the early 1900s, shortly after the Oklahoma land run. **G.C. Rhodes** began operating it as a private agency in 1923. After one interim owner, **Harold Hibbets (Barry's father)** purchased the agency in 1963. **Barry** bought the business in 1981 after **Harold** retired.

Enid was selected competitively for part of the Alva, Oklahoma, area. Enid works throughout most of Oklahoma at 2 full-time grain inspection laboratories and at one approved weighing location.

Keokuk is also a family operation, now in its fourth generation. **Bill Mills** is the current manager. It was **Bill's** wife **Meg's** grandfather who started the agency in 1925. Her father took over in 1946, expanding it to include barge inspections. He retired in 1981. **Bill** came aboard in 1975. He managed the business after his father-in-law's retirement until 1985, when he purchased it. **Bill** and **Meg's** son **Ben** now works part-time as a sampler.

Keokuk was selected competitively by FGIS to provide service to the Havana, Illinois, and Quincy, Illinois, areas. Keokuk functions through the midsections of the States of Iowa and Illinois at 2 full-time and 1 applicant-based grain inspection laboratories.

Michigan is owned by **Jeff Keller** and his spouse **Meg**, who is active in the agency's day-to-day operations. **Jeff** is a graduate of Ohio State University, and a former FGIS employee.

He started his grain inspection career as a sampler in Toledo, Ohio, in 1976. From there, he worked for the Board of Appeals and Review in Washington, DC, and Kansas City, Missouri. He returned to Toledo as the assistant quality assurance specialist, and served for a couple of years as the field office manager, before purchasing Michigan.

The agency began as Grain Inspection Services, Inc., Battle Creek, Michigan. In 1986, that agency's designation was not renewed and the area was competitively awarded to three existing official agencies and a new official agency, Michigan, owned by **Andy Matako**. The **Kellers** purchased Michigan from him in 1991. Michigan was later selected competitively to provide service to the domestic area around the former FGIS Saginaw Field Office; two counties in Michigan; Michigan's Upper Peninsula; and the Lima, Ohio, area. Michigan provides service throughout much of the State of Michigan and the northwestern part of the State of Ohio at 3 full-time and 17 applicant-based grain inspection laboratories.

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

Excel 97: Getting Data from a Web Page

Ahmad Gorabi, Des Moines

If you ever need to manipulate data from a 'web page' (say it has a list of addresses that is needed), you can easily accomplish this from within Microsoft Excel. Here's the how-to:

First Open the 'NotePad' Application and then get started:

1. Click on the Windows Start button, then choose RUN
2. Type notepad, then click OK
3. Then type these three lines into the **NotePad**:

WEB

1
http://address of site from which
you want to get information.html

4. Click on File_SaveAs (choose a path and a file name — make sure it has the extension of iqy for 'internet query', e.g., **Cost.iqy**). In my PC, I use the path:

C:\Program Files\Microsoft Office\Queries\cost.iqy

You are now ready to get the data (i.e., ready to run the 'Web Query').

5. Open a 'new file' in Excel 97, click on **Data_Get External Data_Run Web Query...** Choose your file name (e.g., **cost.iqy**) then click **OK**.

Go ahead, manipulate the data!

For Your Health

Mavis Rogers, Washington, DC

Clear the Air - Quit Smoking. Just the thought of quitting is enough to make you light up. It just seems too hard. But, some people do quit. In fact, millions of people do every year. How do they do it?

The first step is deciding to quit. Because quitting smoking can be difficult, you have to want to do it. The reasons you smoke and don't want to stop are very personal. That is why just taking an honest look at your smoking habit can be an important step in making a decision to quit. Try answering the following questions:

- ? How does smoking get in the way of your goals and dreams?
- ? What kind of life would be possible if I were free from needing to smoke?
- ? Could I exercise more, feel more in control, spend more time with friends and family?
- ? How does my smoking make me feel about myself?
- ? How do I look when I smoke, and how do I think others see me?
- ? Do I hide my smoking from loved ones, friends or coworkers? If so, why?
- ? Does smoking isolate me? If so, how?
- ? What situations trigger my urge to smoke?
- ? What would it be like to feel the pride that quitting smoking would bring?
- ? What might motivate me to quit (for instance, seeing my kids grow up or getting in shape)?
- ? What would have to happen for me to feel that quitting is more important than smoking?

Quitting smoking is not a one-shot deal. Just becoming motivated to quit is an achievement, a beginning step of one of the most important journeys you can ever make—the journey to a smoke-free life.

Allergies and Asthma. Allergies are a main causes of asthma attacks. About half of all adults with asthma and 85% of asthmatic children are allergic to pollen, mold, dust mites, certain foods, pet dander or other common irritants. If allergies are triggering your asthma attacks, avoiding allergens can help. Once you know what you are allergic to, you need to determine how to avoid these triggers. Here are some common allergens and steps you can take to counteract them.

- **Dust Mites:** Place an airtight cover over mattresses and pillows; choose polyester over feather pillows; remove all carpets from bedrooms; use a dehumidifier set at or below 50% humidity; wear a dust mask if you have to clean or vacuum; consider purchasing an air filter and vacuum with high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters.

- **Dogs and Cats:** If you decide to keep your dog or cat, here are some steps to take to minimize allergic reactions: make the bedroom out-of-bounds for pets; ask someone who is not allergic to bathe the pet once a week; close heating air ducts in the bedroom if you have forced-air heating; and, again, consider a HEPA air filter and vacuum.

- **Cockroaches:** Ask a nonallergic person to spray insecticide and put out roach traps; be diligent about

keeping a tidy kitchen; and plug any cracks in floors or walls.

- **Pollen:** Use air conditioning and keep windows closed when the pollen count is high; schedule outdoor activities for early or late in the day when the pollen count is lowest, or after rain has cleaned the air; and consider a HEPA air filter and vacuum.

- **Mold:** Regularly open windows or turn on exhaust fans to air out bathrooms, kitchens, and basements; if your basement is damp, use a dehumidifier set for 26 to 49% humidity; avoid raking wet leaves and other damp materials where mold lurks.

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

A Celebration to be Remembered

Janet Walton, SEPM,
New Orleans

In celebrating National's Women Month, we invited **Mrs. Kim Lee** as our honored guest/speaker. **Mrs. Lee** is vice president of performance management for Entergy Corporation. She gave a very enlightening, inspirational, and motivational presentation about the changing workforce and the role of women in these changes. She also talked about the importance and value of diversity in the workforce. That the future will be quite different than the past.

She also spoke about setting goals in life, cross training, career transitions, updating skills, and continual learning. She said, "What may work for one person may not work for another." Life is about making choices as one decide goals or expectations they want to achieve in life. She opened the floor for questions and answers, and for any comments anyone had to share. Many participated and shared some of their experiences.

Field office manager **John Shropshire** presented **Mrs. Lee** with a certificate of appreciation. We all appreciated the information she shared with us. **Mrs. Lee** thanked all of us for inviting her.

Over 30 field office employees attended the event. Everyone had a good time. It was a celebration to be remembered and will forever remained etched in our minds.

Diversity Day

Jim Vanderwielen, Des Moines



William Arce-Arana

William Arce-Arana, marketing specialist, Des Moines, IA, presented a speech on Diversity Day on March 14, 2001. **William's** speech was based on his own real life experience as an "immigrant" from Puerto Rico. Being a member of the Joint Interagency Civil Rights committee, **Will** was one of five from across Iowa to do a presentation on Diversity Day. **Will** was also recently appointed the National Hispanic Emphasis Program Manager for GIPSA.

The Diversity Day program was sponsored by a Joint Interagency Civil Rights Committee held via the Iowa Communications Network. It was well attended by the P&S Des Moines office, other USDA agencies, and other Federal and state agencies. The focus of this year's program was the Governor's 2010 initiative to increase the workforce in Iowa, and the increasing diversity of our population. The goal of this program was to help to implement our common goal of better serving the underserved groups in Iowa.

DON Test Kit Approved

GIPSA approved the Veratox 5/5 DON Test Kit, manufactured by Neogen Corporation, for official testing of deoxynivalenol in the national grain inspection system.

Deoxynivalenol, or DON, is a toxin produced by a mold and can be present in wheat, barley, corn, and other grains. GIPSA authorizes the use of the Veratox 5/5 DON test kit to determine deoxynivalenol in wheat, barley, malted barley, oats, and corn.

Approval of this test kit expands the choice of DON test kits available to the national inspection system.

Technical information contact: Ron Bicsak, Technical Services Division, 816-891-0431.

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 May 25, 2001!

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