



GIPSA News

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

May 2002

Welcome to Administrator Donna Reifschneider

On April 15, 2002, GIPSA welcomed Administrator Donna Reifschneider.

Donna comes to USDA from Illinois. Recently, she was an executive committee member of the Meat Export Federation since 1999. Prior to that, she was president of the National Pork Producers Council, coordinating state and national policy and strategy and negotiating with Canadian and Mexican pork organizations on trade issues.

Donna and her family own and operate a 600-sow, 1,000-acre hog and grain farm in southern Illinois. While she doesn't mind driving a tractor, her main job was managing the farm's finances and production.

Over the past 30 years, Donna has been active in the pork and other agricultural industries. She was president of the National Pork Producers Council from 1998-1999; chaired the Pork Quality Assurance, Pork Food Safety, and Consumer Product Mar-



GIPSA Administrator Donna Reifschneider

keting/Demand Enhancement committees, and was a member of the Trade and Environmental Committees. As a member of the Trade Committee, she participated in trade missions to China, Japan, Argentina, and Brazil.

Donna is a participant in Illinois Governor Edgar's Commission on Animal Agriculture, the University of Illinois Blue Ribbon Task Force on Extension, the Illinois Agricultural Leadership Program, and the St. Louis Agribusiness Club.

She is a graduate of Southern Illinois University.

"As administrator," Donna said, "I'm looking forward to working with GIPSA and meeting all of the people who make this agency work. I hope to bring my farm background into decisions and policies that serve our customers."

"These are interesting times, filled with both challenges and opportunities for GIPSA. Biotechnology, market structure,

and e-government are just a few issues that are challenging status quo and impacting our work. All of agriculture is in a mode of change," she noted. "We will need to look at how to serve our customers, not only now, but also in the future in a rapidly changing domestic and international market."

"I'm very glad to be here," she concluded. "I hope to build on GIPSA's successes and help move this Agency further down the road."

Names in the News

PERSONNEL

Welcome to **Jeffrey Feirick**, legal specialist, Des Moines.

After 16 years with the Stuttgart Field Office, **Mary Jo Hill**, office support assistant, retired on April 19, 2002.

Farewell to **James Hood**, marketing specialist, Atlanta, who accepted a position with the Department of Interior, and to **Nathan Gardner**, industrial specialist, Denver, who accepted a position with the Oregon Department of Agriculture, Measurement Standards Division.

The Compliance Division's Review Branch would like to thank these individuals who are scheduled to assist Branch team coordinators in conducting official agency reviews during the third quarter of fiscal year 2002. **Don Akers**, quality assurance spe-

cialist, Corpus Christi Suboffice, will help us evaluate a private agency, Grand Forks Grain Inspection Department, Inc., located in the Grand Forks Field Office circuit. This is a followup compliance review of the Grand Forks official agency. **Jimmy Cadle**, agricultural commodity grader, Jonesboro Suboffice, **Scott Cooley**, quality assurance specialist, Washington Federal Office, **Carl Jackson**, protein coordinator, New Orleans Field Office, **Donnell Keith**, agricultural commodity grader, Portland Field Office, and **Max Peterson**, agricultural commodity grader, Wichita Field Office, will help us evaluate a private conflict-of-interest agency, Kansas Grain Inspection Service, Inc. **Bill Ashley**, deputy director, Executive Resources Staff, will help us evaluate Kansas' financial operations. And, **Shane Minden**, agricultural commodity technician, Moscow Suboffice, will help us evaluate the Utah Department of Agriculture and a private agency, Idaho Grain Inspection Service, located in the Portland Field Office circuit. A big thanks to these employees for contributing to the review program's success.

ceived an extra effort group award for their contributions in creating a revised GIPSA Records Management Handbook.

Wade S. Berteau, New Orleans, LA, received a performance award for sustained superior performance contributing to the increased effectiveness and efficiency of the New Orleans Field Office and the Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration.

William R. Braker, Toledo, OH, received a time-off award for his suggestion to replace pan tickets with inspection log on unit trains, thus saving time and money and for assisting in replacing lights and rearranging grading desks to bring lights up to proper candle power.

Alonzo Craighton, ACG, New Orleans Field Office received a time-off award in recognition of his role in enhancing GIPSA's ability to provide timely service.

Warren Dicus, Washington, DC, received a time-off award for his effort in expeditiously converting the rice certificate program to allow it to be remotely printed.

John E. Godfrey and **Philip P. Tate**, Toledo, received time-off awards for initiating and taking corrective action in replacing lights and rearranging the grading desk in the field office to bring lights up to the proper candle power.

Florence Hamm, ACG, New Orleans, received a time-off award for the extra effort she puts forth to ensure that the needs and services of our customers are met.

Continued, see Names page 10.

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AWARDS

Bill Ashley, Bruce Boor, Larry Haller, Tim Hansen, Tanika Harris, Jan Hart, Ray Jones, Norma Phelps, Ellie Speelman, and support personnel **Tess Butler** and **Jeri Fisher**, Washington, DC, and **Larry McDonald**, Technical Center, re-

In Memory of Ron Cates

GIPSA mourns the passing of **Ron Cates**, field office manager, League City, who lost his battle with leukemia on April 22, 2002.

Ron had been part of FGIS from the agency's beginnings. He joined the Portland, OR, office in 1976 as an agricultural commodity grader. His successful career took him from there to Galveston and Pasadena, TX, Belle Chasse and Litcher, LA, back to Portland, and finally to League City, TX, where he was field office manager from 1998 until his passing.

Ron was in the first class of FGIS' management training program and authored the agency's original billing system. Throughout his 28 years with the agency, he poured his vision, energy, and talents into making FGIS the respected and valued service organization it is today.

For those interested, donations may be made in **Ron's** name to:

M.D. Anderson Clinic
P.O. Box 297153
Houston, TX 77297

We will long miss and mourn him.

FGIS Regulatory Management Info

Tess Butler, Washington, DC

Federal Register Publications:

- Deposting of Stockyards;
Correction published on
April 10, 2002

Travel Bits & Pieces

Peggy Smith, Washington, DC

Frequent Flyer Benefits. On April 12, 2002, the General Services Administration issued a final rule that amends the Federal Travel Regulations to **remove** provisions requiring that promotional benefits, including frequent flyer miles, earned on official travel are considered the property of the government and may only be used for official travel. This final rule was effective April 12, 2002, and applies to travel performed on or after December 28, 2002, which is the date President Bush signed into law a provision that Federal employees may retain such promotional items for personal use.

As a result of this April 12 final rule, listed below are a few frequently asked questions and answers:

- **When may I use first-class airline accommodations?** You may upgrade to first-class at your personal expense, including through redemption of frequent flyer benefits.
- **When may I use premium-class other than first-class airline accommodations?** You may upgrade to premium-class other than first-class at your personal expense, including through redemption of frequent flyer benefits.
- **How may I use frequent traveler benefits?** You may use frequent traveler benefits earned on official travel to obtain travel services for a subsequent official travel assignment, however, you may also retain such benefits for personal use, including upgrading to a higher class of service.
- **Is a denied boarding benefit considered a promotional item for which I may retain compensation received from an airline whether voluntary or involuntary?** A denied boarding benefit (e.g., cash, free ticket coupon) is not a promotional item given by an airline. If you are performing official travel and a carrier denies you a confirmed reserved seat (involuntary) on a plane, you must give your agency any payment you receive for liquidated damages. If you are performing official travel and you voluntarily vacate your seat, you may keep the compensation given by the airline **if** voluntarily vacating will not interfere with performing your official duties; and if additional travel expenses, incurred as a result of vacating your seat, are borne by you and are not reimbursed; but if volunteering delays your travel during duty hours, you will be charged with annual leave for the additional hours.

Online Reservation Booking. For employees who use Carlson Wagonlit Travel's online reservation booking services, be aware that booking online reservations over the weekend for travel that departs the same weekend or early Monday morning does not mean that an electronic ticket will be issued. The online booking tool only creates the reservation. The ticketing process is not automated. An agent must manually process the ticket in the same manner as reservations that are phoned in to an agent. If you need to make a reservation after close of regular business hours on a Friday (5:30 p.m. EST) for travel departing before 12 noon on Monday, call the reservation into the Carlson Wagonlit Emergency Center at 800-383-6723.

A Poet Among Us

Chuck Britton, Sacramento

As many of us know, there are many individuals throughout our organization and the official inspection system that have many different and unique talents, besides being an expert inspector or grader. One such person is Bill Davis, who happens to be the agency quality assurance specialist (AQAS) in the California Federal/State office.

Bill has worked over 40 years in the grain inspection field after starting out with a private inspection agency in Wichita Falls, TX, in 1960. He later managed to head out to California and worked with an inspection agency in Los Angeles, and then began his career with the California Department of Food and Agriculture in 1972 in Long Beach. He later transferred to San Francisco as chief inspector, and has been the AQAS in Sacramento since 1984. Bill is unique in that he holds every grading license possible under the USGSA and AMA, along with being a protein and equipment expert.

However, Bill's most notable claim to fame may lie in the fact that he is an accomplished "Cowboy Poet" who goes by the name of Billy James. Bill recently returned from the annual National Cowboy Poets Gathering, which is held every February in Elko, NV, and attracts more than 8,000 people from around the world. Bill was recognized as one of the new and upcoming poets. One poem, "Who's There," was published by New West Library in a popular Western poetry book entitled "The Big Roundup." Bill also has several poems listed on a Cowboy Poetry website called "Omar west Bar D Ranch (www.cowboypoetry.com). He also has poems in American Western magazine (www.readthewest.com). Bill is proud to have maybe the shortest cowboy poem that goes like this:

I Got to Go
I Shot my toe

By: Billy James

For all you cowboys and country/western fans, take a minute to visit the websites mentioned to read more poetry by Billy James.

Employee Assistance Program

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

GIPSA's Movie Star

Nilsa Ramos, resident agent, Tallahassee, FL, recently became a movie star! On April 1, 2002, **Nilsa** was in a recruitment video called "Career-USDA." She was filmed working at Thomasville Stockyards, Inc., Thomasville, GA. The video focuses on USDA's mission and the roles of each mission area.

In 1989, **Nilsa** received a BS degree in Animal Science from the University of Puerto Rico and accepted a Market News reporter position with Poultry Market News Service at USDA. She became the acting supervisor in the California Market News Office in 1990. **Nilsa** accepted a position in 1994 as Marketing Specialist in Atlanta's Regional Office, and later assisted the Assistant Supervisor in supervising 11 resident agents. She started work in January 2001 as a Resident Agent in Tallahassee, FL, and now conducts investigations that help enforce the Packers and Stockyards Act.

During April's video taping, **Nilsa** was asked what advice she would give people interested in working for the Department. Her response was that "we work for a great industry, agriculture, and what we do impacts someone's life."

Nilsa said the filming was fun and different. It was especially interesting to see how so much time spent shooting was edited down to a few seconds.

This isn't **Nilsa's** first claim to fame. As a member of Puerto Rico's synchronized swimming team, she was in a commercial for a company that made commercials for movie theaters.

Instant Messaging

Donna Wolf, Denver

Not having a handle on the information that flows into and out of the agency is a frightening situation for any IT manager. But that's the challenge when employees download consumer-grade instant-messaging applications, such as America On Line (AOL) and Yahoo Instant messengers, and share Agency information with internal and external sources. Unlike agency e-mail, which is password protected, archived, administered, and managed by an IT department, consumer instant messaging (IM) applications reside on the user's hard drive and are not safeguarded by a firewall.

Instant messaging is not considered a secure way to communicate. Your messages and connection information are maintained on servers controlled by the provider (e.g., AOL or Yahoo). Most utilities provide a certain level of encryption, but they are not so secure that you should send any confidential information through the system. There have been reported cases of IM user logs being captured and used by hackers.

Carnegie Mellon's Computer Emergency Response Team Coordination Center reports that hackers are using instant messaging and internet relay chat (IRC) messages to dupe users into visiting dangerous Web sites and downloading "malicious software", or malware, that can enable distributed denial-of-service attacks. A denial-of-service attack (DDoS) is an action(s) that prevents any part of an automated information system from functioning in accordance with its intended purpose. This social engineering scheme

bypasses e-mail defenses and introduces vulnerabilities into agency systems. Trojan horse and back door programs are being propagated via similar techniques.

In a typical scenario, an unsuspecting user receives a message that either entices them (promised gift) or frightens them (virus horror story) to download dangerous software. Or, the Web site itself may commandeer the user's machine or data. The same message may go to thousands using automated software that takes advantage of IM or IRC. You wouldn't follow a stranger down a dark alley, so don't believe what anonymous hackers say. Following is an example of one such message:

"You are infected with a virus that lets hackers get into your machine and read ur files, etc. I suggest you to download [*malicious url*] and clean ur infected machine. Otherwise you will be banned from [*IRC network*]."

How will this affect you? First, on systems that are compromised by

users running untrusted software, intruders may exercise remote control; expose confidential data; install other malicious software; or change or delete files.

These risks are not limited to the installation of DDoS agents. In fact, there are dangers any time a user runs untrusted software. The secondary impact is to the sites targeted by the DDoS agents. Sites undergoing a DDoS attack may experience unusually heavy traffic volumes or high packet rates, resulting in degradation of services or loss of connectivity altogether.

To keep our systems safe from hackers, follow the directives on the inGIPSA web site or contact your local ISSM or GIPSA's ISSPM **Carol Remmers** for guidance.

Sources: Information Security Magazine, CERT Incident Notes, Informationweek.com, Howstuffworks.com, Inforsec News in consultation with Carol Remmers and Bruce Griffith.

**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

Mid Iowa Grain Inspection Interview

David Skallerud, Cedar Rapids

A 30-pound, long toothed, predatory fish hangs on the office walls. These people play just as hard as they work! Mid Iowa Grain Inspection took breath when **Gene Polaski** purchased the inspection service from the Cedar Rapids' Chamber of Commerce in the mid 1970s. Today, the firm inspects trucks for the ADM Corn Processing plant in Cedar Rapids, and hopper cars and submits for several country elevators and barges in Clayton, Iowa.

Already the largest truck inspector in the Cedar Rapids' circuit, Mid Iowa boosted this amount by 50 percent in February as they expanded their operations to grade corn at the ADM Corn Processing plant in Clinton, IA. This is being accomplished in one of the smaller designations in Cedar Rapids' circuit!

Most of the moves **Jeff** and **Mike Polaski**, owners/managers of Mid Iowa, and their dad **Gene**, have made over the past 25 years have been successful.

Mike commented, "Mid Iowa, as a business and a team, works like a pyramid. Mid Iowa turns the paradigm of having lot of samplers, and fewer technicians and inspectors upside down. We have a lot of inspectors, fewer technicians, and even fewer samplers. Through lots of cross-training and training and by allowing our personnel to gain an expertise (plus compensation), we give them the authority to identify and stop a problem on the spot. This increases their productivity. We rotate positions to alleviate boredom/frustration."

Through advances in technology

and their own initiative, Mid Iowa's staff has become much more productive. Probing and inspecting 350 trucks 20 years ago took 15 to 18 hours. Today, they complete this many trucks and perform additional tests in 7 hours. "It's easier to manage now, and much safer with a reduced ulcer factor." Mechanical probes, the GAC 2100, better placement and design of inspection facilities, improved truck staging areas, and better training of personnel helped improve these services.

How has business changed since your Dad bought the firm 25 years ago? **Jeff** and **Mike** said, "The applicants are bigger. The co-ops are merging, trucks are bigger, and truckers are affiliated with a specific firm." About grain inspection, they note that "specialty grains are much more prevalent, such as waxy and high-oil corn, soybeans, and non-GMO products to Japan. Through the years, we've lost business to in-house inspection. The key for us is we have learned the specialty side of things. We gain market share back because of our expertise."

By capitalizing on specialization, Mid Iowa began testing for Cry9C (Starlink™) before FGIS officially recognized it. To date, they have conducted more Starlink tests than any other agency.

They plan on increasing their business through proactive moves like the ones mentioned. Becoming the "vendor of choice" through good customer service is a key ingredient.

Jeff's definition of customer service is: "Be able to offer what the

customer wants and change overnight if necessary. Industry doesn't want to wait."

The **Polaskis** and Mid Iowa's staff are strong supporters of FGIS and official inspection. They believe that "leaner" could be the way of the future. "There have been lots of changes and there will continue to be more changes."

But because of these changes, **Mike** and **Jeff** feel that the industry doesn't have the grading and inspection expertise in specialty grains and GMOs that the official system does. "Industry will be turning to us because we hold this knowledge. It's up to us, as agencies, to be prepared and have this knowledge. This is why we have a high oil machine, the ability to test for waxy, and can test for Starlink™."

They mentioned that grain inspection agencies must let their customers know about every new test available or in the pipeline, even if the test isn't "officially approved." This gives the customers confidence in knowing the value of the grain they are buying, shipping, and processing. Thus, the customers won't be looking elsewhere to obtain inspection services.

Much of this agency's success is due to their aggressiveness in finding more business. But, they give FGIS credit in "keeping us straight. We're good at what we do because we follow the rules and regulations set up by FGIS."

*Continued, see Mid-Iowa
on page 7.*

Mid-Iowa, from page 6.

They said that their agency benefits from some of our services such as reviews and grain seminars. They also commented on improvements FGIS implemented recently: "We were allowed to do Starlink™ before the Feds officially approved it. Five years ago, we weren't allowed to do so. If it wasn't on our fee schedule, we weren't allowed to do it. This (type of) change is very positive. I don't think it's been given enough credit. Every year it's getting better. We're allowed to give services above and beyond normal services. You can do many, many more things for your customers."

Mike added, "Being affiliated with FGIS gives us information that allows us to understand the markets in Iowa, western Illinois, Nebraska, Missouri, Minnesota, Wisconsin -- like understanding that the ADM processing plant in Cedar Rapids takes grain from all of these areas. Therefore, we must be proficient in taking grain from these areas: cob rot frost and that crop conditions from other regions have a direct effect on us."

Jeff and **Mike** think that official inspection "can and could be the way of the future. If you become in tune with the market, keep an open eye/ear to market change, prepare yourself, and are structured in such a way to change and let your customer know you're working on their behalf to become their first choice, (the future of) official inspection is nothing but great."

Father **Gene** obviously prepared **Jeff** and **Mike** for their grain inspection careers. Both probed hundreds of trucks and railcars with the samplers. They dumped files and watched other samplers, technicians and inspectors. They know the system from the bottom up. **Mike's** "read" on this is: "Dad didn't give us fish. He taught us to fish." The trophies will increase.

Wheat Protein Calibration Adjustments

Effective May 1, 2002, GIPSA made bias adjustments to the Hard Red Winter wheat (HRW) and Soft White wheat (SWH) protein calibrations for official near-infrared transmittance (NIRT) instruments.

GIPSA annually reviews wheat protein calibrations to measure the performance of NIRT instruments compared to the standard reference method, the Combustion Nitrogen Analyzer. This change will more closely align official HRW and SWH wheat NIRT protein results with the standard reference method and is expected to improve the accuracy of official protein measurements for HRW and SWH wheat. The bias adjustment will lower the protein results for both HRW and SWH by 0.10 percent across the full protein range.

The existing HRW wheat protein calibration has been in place, with no adjustments, since 1993. In May 1999, the SWH wheat protein calibration was adjusted.

Periodic calibration updates and adjustments provide the grain industry with the best possible information from which to determine end-product yield and quality of grain.

For Your Health

Mavis Rogers, Washington, DC

Gardening tends the body and the spirit. Studies show that heavy yard work reduces heart disease risk as much as structured exercise programs. And, even leisurely paced gardening can provide exercise for the soul by helping to relieve daily stress. You can multiply the health benefits of gardening by cultivating and eating your own vegetables.

Carrots. Carrots promote healthy eyes. They are also rich in beta-carotene, an antioxidant that may protect against cancer and heart disease. For container gardening, choose short varieties of carrots. And, use pots that are at least 12 inches deep.

Red Peppers. Colorful and tasty, they are a great source of vitamin C. This vital nutrient may help prevent cancer, heart disease, and cataracts. In containers, provide at least ¾ cubic foot of soil per plant.

Spinach. Popeye was onto something when it came to spinach. This green, leafy vegetable is high in folate, a B vitamin that may prevent cervical cancer and heart disease. Pregnant women who get plenty of folate also protect their unborn children against birth defects. Spinach prefers cool weather, so plant seeds in the late summer for a fall harvest.

Tomatoes. Research shows that tomatoes are high in lycopene, a compound that may protect against cancers of the prostate, stomach, and lung. For containers, try dwarf varieties that only need 1 cubic foot of soil. Or, grow cherry tomatoes in a hanging basket.

Courtesy George Washington University Vital Signs.

FGIS Directives Info

Jan Hart, Washington, DC

We've made a major change to our issuance management system this month in response to a number of questions and comments we received about how you access GIPSA's administrative directives. These were previously stored on GIPSA's internal website, but they will now be stored on GIPSA's external website. This change will allow us to have all of our issuances in one location and to make the issuances more easily accessible to our users.

ISSUANCES

MRP Directive 4550.2, "Premium Pay," dated 3/18/02 (Distribution: AMS, APHIS, GIPSA)

GIPSA Directive 4610.3, "Utilization of Current Employees with Documented Medical Conditions – Limited/Light Duty Guidelines," dated 3/8/02 (Distribution: GIPSA)

FGIS Directive 9181.1, "Testing for StarLink Corn - Lateral Flow Test Strip Method," dated 3/18/02. (Distribution: A,C,E)

FGIS Directive 9180.70, "Inspection of Cracked Corn," dated 3/18/02. (Distribution: A,C,E)

FGIS Directive 9180.72, "Inspection of Millet Seed," dated 4-5-02 (Distribution: A, U, X)

FGIS Directive 9180.73, "Inspection of Crambe Seed," dated 4-5-02 (Distribution: A, U, X)

FGIS PN-02-03, "Soft White Wheat Protein Calibration Adjustment," dated 4-8-02 (Distribution: A, C, E)

FGIS PN-02-04, "Hard Red Winter Wheat Protein Calibration Adjustment," dated 4-8-02 (Distribution: A, C, E)

MRP Administrative Notice 02-2, "Annual Reminder to High-Mileage Drivers," dated 3/7/02. (Distribution: AMS, APHIS, GIPSA)

PEN AND INK CHANGE

GIPSA Directive 4451.2, "Gainsharing Travel Savings Program," dated 01/02/00, set to expire July 02, 2001, was extended to December 31, 2001, and is now extended to December 31, 2002

CANCELLATIONS

FGIS Directive 4550.2 (old 335.1), "Premium Pay., dated 7/21/93

FGIS Directive 4610.3 (old 306.3), "Utilization of Employees Partially Disabled—Limited/Light Duty Guidelines," dated 9/21/93

Review Branch Welcomes Don Akers

Jan Hart, Washington, DC

Don Akers is a field-based GIPSA employee who will join the permanent staff of the Review Branch, Compliance Division, in June. He will work from a satellite location – Pleasanton, Texas, just south of San Antonio – rather than our headquarters office in Washington, DC. This arrangement has positives for both sides, including cutting down on relocation expenses for GIPSA, and allowing the employee to stay in an area where they have established roots. **Don** will conduct onsite compliance reviews and perform other support duties.

Don started his Federal career in 1972 working for the Agricultural Research Service in Weslaco, TX. He transferred agencies and locations by accepting a position as an agricultural commodity grader in our New Orleans, Louisiana, office in 1974. From there, he moved to Laredo, Texas, again switching agencies, to work for the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service as a "tick rider" in 1976. **Don** rejoined GIPSA as an ACG in our Corpus Christi, Texas, office in 1979. He was later selected as the quality assurance specialist in that office in 1984, and has worked there since that time.

Don and his wife **Penny** reside in Pleasanton, Texas. **Don** has two children and four grandchildren. **Don** ranches cattle on his farm, and his hobbies include hunting, fishing, river rafting, and attending rodeos.

Don is a very welcome addition to the Branch!

GIPSA Civil Rights Staff

Dawn Cowan, Washington, DC

GIPSA's Civil Rights Staff provides advice and assistance on issues relating to EEO and Civil Rights to the Agency's employees.

The Civil Rights Staff provides affirmative employment planning, oversight of special emphasis programs, liaison with special emphasis program managers, compliance reviews, training, and education. We also focus on areas such as program delivery, underrepresentation of minority groups, workforce diversity, and complaint prevention and reduction.

The GIPSA Civil Rights Staff is comprised of a director, EEO complaints manager, EEO counselor, EEO assistant, and secretary. Director Eugene Bass is responsible for all Civil Rights programs within GIPSA. Complaints Manager Raymond Jones handles all aspects of formal EEO complaints processing and management. EEO counselor Wanda Jimenez provides a full range of informal complaint counseling services, with emphasis on resolving complaints early and at the lowest level. EEO assistant Linda Alston prepares the annual Affirmative Employment Plan and Federal Equal Opportunity Recruitment Plan, gathers and maintains employment data and statistics, and maintains accurate filing systems for employment data, correspondence, reports of investigation and the EEO complaint hearing process. As secretary, I provide administrative and secretarial support.

For assistance or information, the Civil Rights Staff can be reached at 202-720-0216.

Safety & Health Statement

GIPSA is committed to maintaining the highest standards for occupational safety and health, and protecting the environment. We will—as an agency and as individuals—comply with all applicable laws and regulations, and work hard to integrate environmental stewardship, health, and safety into every aspect of the agency's operation.

Goal of Zero Injuries and Incidents. We believe that all occupational injuries and illnesses, and environmental incidents are preventable. Injuries and incidents are not mere chance occurrences, but represent a system failure. Each employee must accept responsibility for his or her personal health and safety, as well as that of fellow employees.

Strive to Eliminate Waste and Emissions. We believe that all wastes and emissions represent defects in our processes. We will work toward zero waste generation at the source, and are committed to pollution prevention.

Continuously Improve Processes. We will continually analyze our processes to maximize efficiency and reduce health, safety, and environmental risks through the entire life cycle of our services. We will encourage recycling and conservation of energy and natural resources.

Encourage Employee and Community Outreach. We will openly communicate our environmental and safety performance, and work with our communities by supporting environmental and other worthy initiatives.

Demonstrate Management Leadership. We will make environmental stewardship, health, and safety a way of life in GIPSA, by holding supervisors and managers accountable and by the personal commitment of all employees.

An Addition to the BAR

The Technical Services Division's (TSD) Board of Appeals and Review (BAR) Branch recently was restructured to create a technical information and resource group. The new unit will provide the agency and our customers the tools they need to better perform grain quality assessments. They will develop and distribute new line prints, video CDs, prints on CD; explore digital inspector calibration techniques and tools; and conduct research on remote grading via computer imaging and related topics.

Roger Friedrich will lead the group in this exciting new step TSD is taking to better serve GIPSA and the official inspection system.



GIPSA Idea Hotline Update

Norma Phelps, Washington, DC

Here are the ideas received on the GIPSA Idea Hotline during April 2002. If you have questions about any ideas or the Hotline, please call me at 202-720-1017.

<i>Suggestor</i>	<i>Suggestion</i>
Charles Britton, Sacramento, CA	Standardize Milling Weights for Medium Grain Rough Rice Appraisal
Dawn M. Cowan, Washington, DC	Post Fillable Forms on inGIPSA Website
Carol A. Remmers, Washington, DC	Establish an Employee Orientation Program for GIPSA Employees
Philip Tate, Toledo, OH	Purchase Mandatory Florescent Bulbs Directly From the Manufacturer
Tom Wrenn, Grand Forks, ND	Have an inGIPSA Under Information System Security to Send Messages to Help Desk

GIPSA Hotline Ideas Accepted and Approved for Implementation During April 2002

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.

- 25th Anniversary — Recognize Employees Killed in the December 1977 Elevator Explosion
- Modify Complaint and Investigation Log
- Packers and Stockyards Programs Forms Should Be Revamped

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.**

Names, from page 2.

Elsie Jones, ACT, New Orleans, received a time-off award for providing exceptional and efficient service to our external customers.

Stephen Michel, ACG, New Orleans, received a time-off award for sustained superior work he has done in the performance of his duties.

Kraig Roesch, legal specialist, Denver, received an extra effort award for sustained dedication and willingness to contribute substantial extra effort while individually performing the workload typical of two legal specialists.

Gregory Tomas, Baltimore, MD, received a performance award for sustained superior performance contributing to the increased effectiveness and efficiency of the field office and mission of the Agency.

Beale Williams, ACG, New Orleans, received a time-off award for solving the cu-sum default problem at Peavey and posting the solution for co-workers.

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
Dana.B.Stewart@usda.gov

by May 25, 2002!

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