



# GIPSA News

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

*May 2004*

## GIPSA Helps Bring U.S. Wheat to Iraq

*Pat McCluskey, Washington, DC*

The people of Iraq are once again on the threshold of consuming U.S.-grown wheat — and GIPSA played a role. When the United Nations World Food Program (WFP) issued tenders on behalf of Iraq's Ministry of Trade (MOT) for "hard milling wheat" in March 2004, American grain exporters successfully offered bids and sold 325,000 metric tons (MT) of Hard Red Winter (HRW) wheat. The first sale of 110,000 MT was reported by USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) on March 16, 2004. An additional 50,000 MT sale was made shortly thereafter, followed by yet another sale of 165,000 MT. These represent the first wheat sales to Iraq since Saddam Hussein banned U.S. farm exports in 1998. Since that time, Iraq's market has been dominated by Australia. Later this year, Iraq's MOT will assume responsibilities for grain and feedstuffs procurement.

How did GIPSA help bring about this recent purchase? The Agency was actually involved in two ways. First, in February 2004, **Sabri Gerguis**, supervisor, League City,

joined USDA Cooperators in Amman, Jordan, at meetings with the Iraqi Grain Board. These meetings reacquainted the Iraqis with representatives of wheat and other commodity groups from the United States. **Sabri** discussed GIPSA's roles and responsibilities in inspecting U.S. grains and commodities, and participated in side meetings to provide technical consultations on purchase specifications for U.S. wheat, rice, and pulses. These discussions helped the Iraqis better understand how to specify wheat quality factors and the importance of specifying that GIPSA perform non-grade determining tests (protein, falling number, etc.).

In addition to **Sabri's** good work, **Ed Durgin** and **Byron Reilly**, Office of International Affairs, and **I** helped FAS personnel rewrite the WFP wheat tender specifications. The specifications previously used by the WFP did not allow most nations, including the United States, to bid on the tenders. The revised specification that FAS presented to the WFP ultimately resulted in the awarding of

contracts for U.S. HRW.

The unexpected WFP sale to Iraq had another effect. In part, because an Egyptian purchase of 120,000 tons of U.S. wheat was announced around the same time as the initial Iraqi sale, the Kansas City Board of Trade futures market jumped 21 cents, or nearly 6 percent, on March 17, 2004. Other factors influenced the market that day, including new highs in the soybean and corn markets and record warm temperatures that stressed the HRW crop in parts of the U.S. High Plains, but the Iraqi sales definitely surprised the market.

U.S. Wheat Associates is currently working with the USA Rice Federation, U.S. Rice Producers, and other USDA Cooperators to further educate the Iraqi Grain Board about the U.S. grain and commodity marketing systems. Plans are in the works to invite MOT representatives to visit the United States.

GIPSA looks forward to continuing to support efforts to open Iraq's markets to U.S. agricultural products.

# Names in the News

## PERSONNEL

**Eric Jabs** joined the Field Management Division's Market Analysis and Standards Branch as an agricultural marketing specialist on May 3. **Eric** will be responsible for monitoring and analyzing market developments, revenue forecasting, and economic analyses. **Eric** has extensive knowledge of the grain and commodity systems, and has worked on the family farm, for ConAgra Trade Group, Inc., and for the Lake Region Grain Cooperative. **Eric** hails from North Dakota and earned both his B.S. and M.S. degrees in agricultural economics at North Dakota State University.

**Idelisse Rodriguez**, former HACU summer intern, will report to work with the Compliance Division this summer as a full-time employee under the Student Career Enhancement Program. **Idelisse** is graduating from Haverford College, Pennsylvania.

## RETIREMENTS

After 32 years of government service, **Bill Thomison**, agricultural commodity grader, Wichita, retired on May 1, 2004. **Bill** began his Federal service with the U.S. Army from 1967 until 1970 as a medic, and worked for the Veterans Administration from 1971 until 1982. He joined FGIS in 1985 as an agricultural commodity technician in the Wichita, Kansas, field office. **Bill** had previ-

ously worked as a processed commodity sampler for the Wichita office from 1983 until 1985. After attaining agricultural commodity grader status in 1987, he was soon assigned the difficult position of commodity specialist for the office and continued that responsibility until his retirement.

**Bill** plans to relocate to Las Vegas, Nevada, where his son lives.

## CONDOLENCES

**Morgan W. Stephens**, former P&S scales and weighing specialist, Scales and Weighing Branch, Washington, DC, died on April 7. **Morgan** began his career with the Department of Agriculture as a scales and weighing specialist in Montgomery, AL. He retired in the late 1970s to Florida.

## AWARDS

**Pat McCluskey**, Field Management Division, Washington, DC; **Sabri Gerguis**, League City; and **Ed Durgin**, and **Byron Reilly**, Office of International Affairs, received time-off awards for their excellent work developing Iraqi wheat specifications, which lead to recent successful sales of U.S. wheat to Iraq.

**Denise Ruggles**, Cedar Rapids, received a time-off award for her invaluable assistance and support to GIPSA during the implementation of the FFIS system and the EIDS and Brio reporting system.

## In This Issue

Names in the News .....	2
Old is New .....	3
Landmark Decision .....	3
Issuances .....	3
ASTM Standards .....	4
Beam Me Aboard .....	5
Travel BIts & Pieces .....	5
Designation Presentation .....	5
Advisory Committee .....	6
Idea Hotline .....	6
For Your Health .....	7

## Public and Congressional Relations Staff Realigned

To optimize existing resources, the Public and Congressional Relations staff has been reassigned to directly support our program areas. **Leah Tahiry** and **Debbie Shipman** were reassigned to the Packers and Stockyards Programs, and **Terri Henry** is now with the FGIS compliance division. **Greg Hawkins** will continue to provide public/Congressional affairs support to the Agency.

## Asian Pacific American Heritage Month

*Freedom For All,  
A Nation We Call Our Own*



**May 2004**

# Old is New

## *The Des Moines Regional Office*

GIPSA's upgrade of its computer system to Microsoft Windows XP left the Packers & Stockyards Programs' offices with a number of older, 200 MHz computers that could not run the XP image. Equipment that no longer met the Agency's needs found homes with several schools and non-profit organizations.

The Des Moines regional office donated computers to two senior citizens' facilities and three school districts. Some schools set aside the computers for use by their agricultural departments.

The Southeast Warren Community School system was so excited about receiving the greatly needed equipment that they sent a bus load of their Future Farmers of American (FFA) students, who were on the way home from their annual FFA Convention, to the Des Moines regional office to get the computers. It was quite a sight to see them all dressed up with their FFA jackets parading through the Federal building,

each carrying a computer or monitor. The students loaded the equipment on their bus and then were treated to a presentation and question and answer session with **Jay Johnson**, regional supervisor. It would not be a surprise to see some of these aspiring youth come to work for GIPSA one day.



*Excited FFA students stop by the Des Moines Regional Office to pick up donated computers.*

---

## GIPSA Brings About Landmark \$1.16 Million Decision

*Leah Tahiry, Washington, DC*

Thanks to tenacious and detailed field work by P&SP, a recent landmark \$1.16 million judgment was issued against Mark Porter (Porter) and MVP Livestock (MVP), Sunnyside, WA.

GIPSA had won an administrative order against Porter and MVP for failure to pay for livestock, insufficient funds checks, and failure to pay when due for the livestock he purchased. Porter and MVP were supposed to be suspended for 5 years, or a minimum of 150 days, if he paid everyone in full for the amounts he owed. The suspension was due to start in January 1999. However, Porter and MVP continued to operate while suspended.

Resident agent **Liz Hughes** put a case together that showed that he was operating in violation of a suspension order, and that Porter and MVP were in violation of a Secretarial order for continuing to issue insufficient funds checks, failing to pay when due, failing to pay for livestock, and operating without bond coverage. The case went to the U.S. Attorney's Office in Spokane, Washington, and the March 27, 2004, decision was based on **Liz'** case work.

Congratulations on the hard work and persistence that led to this decision.

---

## Issuances

*Fred Kelley, Washington, DC*

### New Issuances

- FGIS Policy Bulletin Board, Reference #202, "Certifying Dehulled Oats," dated April 5, 2004 (Distribution: FGIS).
- FGIS PN-04-11, "In-Transit Fumigation of Shipholds with Separations," dated April 19, 2004 (Distribution: A, C, E).

Please call me at 202-720-0259, Fax to 202-690-2755 or e-mail to [Fred.H.Kelley@usda.gov](mailto:Fred.H.Kelley@usda.gov) if you have any concerns or suggestions.

# ASTM Approves Two Standards

*James A. Vanderwielen, Des Moines*

The American Society for Testing and Materials, International (ASTM) Committee F10 on Livestock, Meat, and Poultry Evaluation Systems met on March 25-26, 2004, in Salt Lake City, UT. The Committee approved two standards: "Standard Test Methods of Livestock, Meat and Poultry Evaluating Devices" and "Standard Specification for Developing and Validating Prediction Equation(s) or Model (s) Used in Connection with Livestock, Meat, and Poultry Evaluation Device(s) or System(s) to Determine Value." These two standards were the last of four that were under review for approval by ASTM, International since its 2001 creation.

The Committee was formally created in November 2001 when Packers and Stockyards Programs, the Agricultural Marketing Service, weights and measures inspectors, Department of Commerce (DOC), several meat packers, and evaluation device manufacturers voted to create a committee to "develop standards for carcass evaluation systems for livestock." P&SP has held leadership positions in all ASTM committees related to livestock, meat or poultry evaluation devices.

This committee was created in response to compliance investigations done by the Des Moines Trade Practice Unit, which identified a need to determine standards and user requirements to ensure accurate use of carcass evaluating equipment. After P&SP consulted with the DOC, National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) and The National Conference of Weights & Measures,

NIST requested that ASTM develop carcass evaluation equipment standards.

While developing these standards, the committee changed its name from carcass evaluating equipment to livestock, meat and poultry evaluating systems to reflect the different types of evaluating equipment being used in the livestock, meat and poultry industries.

GIPSA's **Cary Ainsworth**, Atlanta; **John Edmond**, Washington, DC; **Margaret Mills**, Denver; **Enrique Ospina**, Atlanta; **Stacey Schofield**, Denver; **James Vanderwielen**, Des Moines; **JoAnn Waterfield**, Washington, DC; **Bryce Wilke**, Des Moines; and **Sheldon Wishna**, Technical Center, Kansas

City, were instrumental in the passage of the four ASTM standards. Many hours of work, negotiation, and compromise were spent during the 3 years it took to pass these standards.

Deputy Administrator **JoAnn Waterfield** told the committee that she appreciated the work that has been done. The standards will ensure that producers get full value for their livestock and that the packers pay for only the product that they want.

Packers are looking toward new technology to be even more accurate in their assessment of the carcasses. The committee is ready to look at any new technologies in the future to incorporate into the standards.

**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**



## Beam Me Aboard

*Leah Tahiry, Washington, DC*

P&SP's three regional offices in Atlanta, Denver, and Des Moines now enjoy the high-tech world of teleconferencing in slim state-of-the-art consoles and speakers. This recently installed teleconferencing system joins three regional offices and headquarters onto a single screen with high resolution pictures and sound. You can both see and hear all of the participants. While geographically separated, you actually feel like you are in the same room when using the new teleconferencing system. This

*P&SP is using teleconferencing technology to bring everyone to the table - wherever they are!.*



makes communication direct and immediate. FGIS has a similar connection with the Technical Services Division in Kansas City, and other field locations.

Teleconferencing is a great tool for bringing GIPSA employees together, wherever they work.

---

## Travel Bits & Pieces

*Peggy Smith, Washington, DC*

---

## Designation Presentation



*Donna Reifschneider visiting with officials from Detroit Grain Inspection Service, Inc., and Michigan Grain Inspection Services, Inc., at the FGIS Toledo Field Office. Ms. Reifschneider presented them with a certificate of designation for a full 3 year period. Pictured, left to right, are: Norman Marchetti, Detroit's President and Official Agency Manager; Donna Reifschneider, Meg Keller, Michigan's Secretary/Treasurer, and Jeff Keller, Michigan's President and Official Agency Manager; and Dave Mundwiler, Manager, Toledo Field Office.*

**Lodging Taxes.** Just a reminder that the lodging taxes must be separated from the lodging expense and claimed under the Miscellaneous Expenses section of the travel voucher.

**Per Diem Rates and Federal Travel Regulations.** The website [www.policyworks.gov](http://www.policyworks.gov) no longer exists. To check the per diem rates and/or Federal Travel Regulations, go to [www.gsa.gov](http://www.gsa.gov). For per diem rates, scroll down to the middle of the bottom of the page and click on "Travel," then mid-way down on the right side of the page under "E-Tools," click on "Per Diem Rates." For the Federal Travel Regulations, click on "Federal Travel Regulations (FTR Overview)" under "Reference," then click on the left side of the page on "FTR Library."

# Secretary Selects New Advisory Committee Members and Alternates

Secretary **Ann Veneman** appointed six members and five alternate members to serve 3-year terms on GIPSA's Grain Inspection Advisory Committee.

"I am pleased that these individuals have agreed to serve on the Grain Inspection Advisory Committee," said **Veneman**. "They bring a great deal of knowledge and experience to this board."

The new members are: **Paul A. Coppin**, general manager, Reynolds United Co-op, Reynolds, ND; **Warren J. Duffy, Jr.**, vice president, Archer Daniels Midland, Ma, LA.; **Patricia B. Dumoulin**, farmer/retired college professor, Hampshire, IL; **Arvid L. Hawk**, grain handling coordinator, Cargill, Inc., Wayzata, MN.; **J.L. Meibergen, II**, president/CEO, Johnston Enterprises, Inc.; Enid, OK; and **Ernest Potter**, CPA/manager, May, Cocagne & King, P.C., CPAs; Gilman, IL.

The new alternate members are: **Brent Christopherson**, products manager, SODA Feed Ingredients LLC, Dversville, IA; **Thomas L. Fousek**, grain merchant/manager, Bartlett Grain, L.P.; Kansas City, MO; **Gregory L. Guenther**, owner/farmer, Belleville, IL; **Larry Kitchen**, program administrator, State of Missouri, Missouri Department of Agriculture; Jefferson City, MO; and **Stan**

## Idea Hotline Update

*Norma Phelps, Washington, DC*

Here are the ideas received on the GIPSA Idea Hotline during April 2004. If you have questions about any ideas or the Hotline, please call me at 202-720-1017.

### Idea Received During April 2004

Mark Ruth, Kansas City, MO

Create a Virtual Tour DVD/  
CD for the Technical  
Services Division

### Idea Accepted and Approved for Implementation during April 2004

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.

👉 Create a Virtual Tour DVD/CD for the Technical Services Division

Keep those ideas coming in! Send your ideas to the GIPSA Idea Hotline via e-mail: [gipsa-ideas@gipsadc.usda.gov](mailto:gipsa-ideas@gipsadc.usda.gov); FAX to 202720-1015; 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.**

**R. Stark**, CEO/general manager, Cooperative Agricultural Services, Inc.; Oakley, KS.

The Grain Inspection Advisory Committee is comprised of 15 members and 15 alternate members appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture who represent all facets of the grain industry. The Committee meets twice annually to advise USDA on the establishment of programs and services under the U.S. Grain Standards Act.

# For Your Health

Mavis Rogers, Washington, DC

**What are Allergies?** Allergies are an overreaction of the immune system. People who have allergies have a hyper-alert immune system that overreacts to a substance in the environment called an allergen. Exposure to what is normally a harmless substance, such as pollen, causes the immune system to react as if the substance is harmful. Allergies are a very common problem.

**What Happens During an Allergic Reaction?** When a person with a hyper-alert immune system is exposed to an allergen, a series of events takes place:

1. The body starts to produce a specific type of antibody, called IgE, to fight the allergen.
2. The antibodies attach to a form of blood cell called a mast cell. Mast cells are plentiful in the airways, and in the GI tract where allergens tend to enter the body.
3. The mast cells explode releasing a variety of chemicals including histamine, which cause most of the symptoms of an allergy, including itchiness or runny nose.

If the allergen is in the air, the allergic reaction will occur in the eyes, nose, and lungs. If the allergen is ingested, the allergic reaction will occur in the mouth, stomach, and intestines. Sometimes enough chemicals are released from the mast cells to cause unconsciousness. This severe type of reaction is called anaphylaxis and can be life-threatening.

**What Are the Symptoms of Allergies?** Allergy symptoms can be categorized as mild, moderate, or severe (anaphylactic).

- Mild reactions include those symptoms that affect a specific area of the body such as a rash or hives, itchy, watery eyes, and some congestion. Mild reactions do not spread to other parts of the body.
- Moderate reactions include symptoms that spread to other parts of the body. These may include itchiness or difficulty breathing.
- A severe reaction, called anaphylaxis, is a rare, life-threatening emergency in which the body's response to the allergen is sudden and affects the whole body. It may begin with the sudden onset of itching of the eyes or face and

within minutes progress to more serious symptoms, including varying degrees of swellings that can make breathing and swallowing difficult, abdominal pain, cramps, vomiting, and diarrhea. Mental confusion or dizziness may also be symptoms, since anaphylaxis causes a quick drop in blood pressure.

**Does Everyone Have Allergies?** No. Most allergies are passed on to children by their parents. People inherit a tendency to be allergic, although not to any specific allergen. When one parent is allergic, their child has a 50% chance of having allergies. That risk jumps to 75% if both parents have allergies.

**Allergy Treatments.** There is no cure for allergies, but several types of medicines available both over the counter and prescription help ease annoying symptoms like congestion and running nose. These include antihistamines and decongestants. Allergy shots which gradually increase your ability to tolerate allergens are also available.

*Courtesy: The Cleveland Clinic.*

## 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

**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, 2004!**

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

---