



GIPSA News

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

May 2005

Remembering the Victims of the Oklahoma City Bombing

Brett Offutt, Washington, DC

April 19, 2005, marked the 10-year anniversary of the terrorist bombing at the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City. On the morning of April 19, 1995, Timothy McVeigh parked a rented Ryder truck with explosives in front of the Federal complex and, at 9:02 a.m., a massive explosion sheared the entire north side of the building, killing 168 people. Until the attacks on September 11, 2001, the Oklahoma City Bombing held the distinction of being the worst terrorist attack on U.S. soil. The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) lost seven valued employees in the Oklahoma City bombing. APHIS remembered these employees in a ceremony at its Riverdale, Maryland, offices on April 19.

A standing-room only crowd filled the newly dedicated Oklahoma City Memorial Conference Center in Riverdale as **Dr. Ron DeHaven**, APHIS administrator, welcomed attendees, introduced guests, and spoke briefly about each of the APHIS employees lost in the 1995 bombing: **Olen Bloomer, Jim Boles, Peggy Clark, Dick Cummins, Adele**

Higginbottom, Carole Khalil, and Rheta Lbong. Secretary of Agriculture **Mike Johanns** and Under Secretary **Bill Hawks** each spoke of the service and sacrifice made by the APHIS employees in Oklahoma City.

Dr. Brian Espe, former APHIS area veterinarian in charge for Oklahoma, spoke through a videotaped message recorded the day before the ceremony. **Dr. Espe** was in the Murrah building at the time of the bombing and was rescued by Oklahoma City Firefighter **Mark Mollman**. **Mr. Mollman** made the trip to Riverdale to attend the APHIS ceremony. **Mr. Mollman** spoke about his experience on that day and the strong friendship he developed in the years following with **Dr. Espe**. **Dr. DeHaven** showed a videotape of news coverage from April 19, 1995, showing **Mr. Mollman** helping **Dr. Espe** down a fire truck ladder to safety.

Dr. Lonnie King, former APHIS administrator, was on hand and shared his memories of April 19, 1995. **Dr. King** spoke about learning of **Dr. Espe's** rescue through the Oklahoma City news footage that was

broadcast nationally. He spoke of the dedication and sacrifice made by the seven employees lost that day and the impact that the tragedy had on all of APHIS.

GIPSA was represented at the ceremony by: **JoAnn Waterfield, John Giler, Bill Crutchfield, Brett Offutt, Gary McBryde, Bill Ashley, Jim Adams, Gale Mason, and Peggy Smith.**

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Names in the News

PERSONNEL

Patricia (Pat) Jackson was selected as the new program leader for the Moisture Group, Technical Services Division. The Moisture Group is responsible for checktesting GAC 2100 meters used in official inspection, reviewing the performance of moisture calibrations for over 60 grain types, and overseeing the development of new grain moisture meter calibrations.

Denise Ruggles, Cedar Rapids, was selected for the program analyst position in the Field Management Division, Office of the Director. **Denise** will be the FGIS-wide contact for resolving problems with FFIS and BRIO programs. Additionally, she will help analyze program financial data for the Division.

AWARDS

Jaime Adams, economist, Washington, DC, received a time-off award for her dedication to the Office of the Deputy Administrator by serving as the secretary to the Deputy during the absence of a secretary, while performing her regular duties.

Rose Alexander, program analyst, Washington, DC, received a time-off award for managing the controlled correspondence and inputting the T&As during the absence of a secretary in the Office of the Deputy Administrator, P&SP.

Dewey Blatchford, industrial specialist, Des Moines, received a spot award for going above and beyond his duties by serving as an excellent mentor for a new resident agent.

Agnes Flinn, administrative assistant, Des Moines, received a spot award for developing a system to ensure prompt payment of all communication and FedEx invoices.

George Pulwicz, auditor, Des Moines, received a spot award for his excellent effort, dedication, and professional attitude in his preparation and revisions to three investigative reports in the last 4 months that revealed significant financial violations.

Luis Sosa, auditor, Des Moines, received a spot award for excellent dedication and professional work product in preparation of the Financial Unit's response to the ESS Staff's request for additional information on numerous Packer Annual Reports.

CONDOLENCES

Jacquelyn "Jackie" Nugent, passed away on April 12, 2005, in Marietta, Georgia. When **Jackie** retired on May 23, 1997, she was an agricultural marketing specialist in the Standards and Procedures Branch (now known as the Policies and Procedures Branch), Field Management Division. All of **Jackie's** 20 years of Federal government service was with FGIS. She was a devoted mother of six children, and will be greatly missed by family and friends.

Official Agency and State E-mail Addresses

*Virginia Roseberry,
Washington, DC*

In 2002, GIPSA suspended the hard-copy publication and distribution of directives, handbooks, and notices. Today, a notice is sent via e-mail announcing issuance of a new directive and its URL on the GIPSA website. Users can then view, download, or print a copy from GIPSA's website. Hard-copy distribution of the monthly GIPSA newsletter has also ceased in favor of e-mail distribution.

The Compliance Division's Review Branch maintains a list of e-mail addresses for one contact individual per official agency or state. Other GIPSA offices use our lists to disseminate various information, including directives, notifications, and the newsletter.

If you are not receiving these important e-mails from GIPSA, or if you would like to change your contact individual's e-mail address, please get in touch with Virginia Roseberry, e-mail: virginia.v.roseberry@usda.gov.

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

Issuances

Terri Henry, Washington, D.C.

New Issuances

- ❑ FGIS Directive 9180.48, “Stowage Examination Services,” dated March 14, 2005 (Distribution: A, C, E).
- ❑ FGIS Directive 9180.34, “Phytosanitary Inspection of Export Grain Shipped from Interior Locations,” dated March 24, 2005 (Distribution: A, C, E).
- ❑ FGIS Program Notice PN-05-03, “NIRT Wheat Protein Calibration,” dated March 24, 2005 (Distribution A, C, E).
- ❑ FGIS Program Notice PN-05-04, “Hard White Wheat Classification,” dated April 11, 2005 (Distribution A, C, E).
- ❑ Documentation of Official Weight Services Handbook, Change No. 25, dated March 28, 2005 (Distribution A, C, E, G, N).
- ❑ Aflatoxin Handbook, Change No. 11, dated April 18, 2005 (Distribution A, C, E).
- ❑ Near-Infrared Transmittance Testing Handbook, Change No. 4, dated May 1, 2005 (Distribution A, C, E).

Cancellations

- ❑ Moisture Handbook-Motomco, dated September 15, 1986.
- ❑ Motomco Moisture Meter Conversion Charts, dated April 1, 1964, to January 1, 1998.
- ❑ FGIS Directive 9180.48, “Stowage Examination Services, dated May 1, 1997.
- ❑ FGIS Program Notice PN-98-19, dated September 1, 1998.
- ❑ FGIS Policy Bulletin Board memo #169, dated December 23, 1997.

Please call Terri Henry at (202) 205-8281, fax to (202) 690-2755, or e-mail to Terri.L.Henry@usda.gov if you have concerns or suggestions.

Regulatory Info

Tess Butler, Washington, DC

Federal Register Publications

- ❑ Deposting of Stockyards – Published April 8, 2005
- ❑ Designation for the South Texas Area – Published April 11, 2005

Travel Bits & Pieces

Peggy Smith, Washington, DC

eTravel Update. GIPSA’s implementation date for eTravel has been pushed back until October 1, 2005. Please continue to use FedTraveler.com or call Duluth Travel at 888-813-9895 to make your travel reservations.

*Asian American
and Pacific Islander
Heritage Month*

May 2005

*Bridging the Gap
Between our
Differences*

Grain Testing and Inspection Equipment Builds East Africa's Trade Capacity

Byron Reilly, Washington, DC

GIPSA, in collaboration with the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS), set up grain inspection equipment labs and trained staff for the Bureaus of Standards in Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania. The donation of FGIS surplus equipment and staff training are mutually beneficial activities that are a direct outcome of the USDA-USAID and East Africa "Transportation Management and Harmonization of Standards to Foster Agricultural Trade" project implemented by FAS in 2000-2004.

Brian McKee, Field Management Division, was the first GIPSA representative to work with FAS on this project. Then, in 2002, **Joe McNeil**, Compliance Division, continued the work on standardizing the inspection methods of the three countries. **Joe** was instrumental in obtaining sampling and grain inspection equipment from the Baltimore field office after it closed, and excess equipment from the League City and Toledo field offices and sending it to those countries.

In 2004, **Roy Shepherd**, New Orleans, continued GIPSA's involvement by setting up the lab equipment and providing hands-on grain grading training to 18 government and private sector representatives. In addition, USDA ensured the equipment was properly calibrated and each bureau's technicians were trained in operating equipment. Using the equipment enabled the three bureaus of standards to develop standard testing methodologies and measure grain quality consistently.

This activity demonstrated USDA's support of the region's efforts toward harmonization of agricultural standards. Establishing grain quality standards and a uniform inspection system in East Africa will facilitate the marketing of grain, and promote fair and competitive regional trade practices for the overall benefit of consumers in the three countries. By supporting the development and harmonization of grain standards, and reliable and fast inspection services in Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania, USDA is laying the groundwork for future trade partnerships between U.S. agribusinesses and East Africa.

The Kenya Bureau of Standards indicated to the USDA/FAS Program Officer that the country really needed the grain inspection equipment, which included a dockage tester, sampling probes, and moisture meters. The Bureau's staff is using the equipment to test and grade wheat and corn imports, sample bulk grains at the port, and make quick moisture determinations while consignments are still at the port.

Marcella Miyumo, Head of Testing Department at Coast Region, Kenya Bureau of Standards, said, "We are indeed grateful to USDA... for the continued support. The equipment is very useful especially here at the coast region where we receive a lot of cereals (grains) through Kilindini Port."

Uganda's Bureau of Standards informed USDA/FAS that the equipment is being used to check exports and imports and tender evaluation

samples brought to the Bureau's new lab facilities. The training was very useful for staff members and equipment was very much needed by the Bureau. The technical assistance provided through this activity has enhanced/created the local capacity for conducting grain testing and inspection within the country.

Many thanks to **Roy, Joe, and Brian** for making this project a success!

FGIS Verifies Two Test Kits

FGIS recently verified two test kits under GIPSA's Rapid Test Performance Evaluation Program.

The Agency verified that the Strategic Diagnostics, Inc. TraitTM Bt9 Corn Grain Test Kit Qualitative Lateral Flow Strip Kit, Part #7000012, detects the presence of one kernel of Cry9C corn in 800 kernels in 5 minutes (test strip development time). The second test verified is the Strategic Diagnostics, Inc. TraitTM RUR Bulk Soybean 5-Minute Qualitative Lateral Flow Strip Kit, Part #7000014, which detects the presence of one kernel of CP4EPSPS soybeans in 1,000 kernels in 5 minutes (test strip development time).

FGIS' evaluation of these tests will help the U.S. grain market make more informed decisions about the grain being bought and sold.

Hard White Wheat Classification Policy

American wheat producers are working diligently to market Hard White wheat as a premium product to buyers in the competitive global marketplace. To help producers meet market needs for this developing class, GIPSA will amend the wheat standards and modify policies for the classification of Hard White wheat. With more than one-half million acres harvested in 2004 and an increase expected in 2005, these changes will facilitate the marketing of Hard White wheat.

On May 1, 2006, GIPSA will amend the U.S. wheat standards “to change the definition of contrasting classes in Hard Red Winter wheat and Hard Red Spring wheat such that Hard White wheat is not a contrasting class but is considered as wheat of other classes. GIPSA also is amending the grain standards by adding the sample size used to determine sample grade factors, because the standards should transmit this information. These actions are necessary to ensure market-relevant standards and grades and facilitate the marketing of grain.”

GIPSA published a Final Rule in the February 18, 2005, *Federal Register* amending the wheat standards effective approximately 15 months (the equivalent of 2 harvests) after the Final Rule publication to allow the market to prepare for the change.

Effective May 1, 2006, Hard White wheat will not be counted as a contrasting class (CCL) in either Hard Red Winter wheat or Hard Red Spring wheat. All Hard White wheat will be counted as wheat of other classes (WOCL) when found in predominantly

Hard Red Winter wheat or Hard Red Spring wheat. The grade requirement for WOCL, will remain unchanged at 5 percent (maximum) for U.S. #2 wheat.

The standards and grade requirements for CCL and WOCL in predominantly Hard White wheat will not change either. Hard Red Winter wheat and/or Hard Red Spring wheat have always been, and will continue to be, counted as both CCL and WOCL

United States Standards for Wheat	
Changing	Remaining the Same
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Hard Red Winter and Hard Red Spring wheat standards to count Hard White wheat as WOCL, not CCL. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Hard White Wheat standards •Grade requirement for WOCL (5% maximum) for U.S. #2 wheat. •Standards and grade requirements for CCL and WOCL for predominantly Hard White wheat •Standards for Soft White wheat

when found in predominantly Hard White wheat. The grade requirements for CCL and WOCL applicable to Hard White wheat will remain at 2 percent maximum and 5 percent maximum respectively for U.S. #2 wheat. Finally, the wheat standards will not change with respect to Soft White wheat, which is CCL and WOCL in Hard Red Wheat.

GIPSA currently is revising the classification policy for Hard White Wheat. In 2001, GIPSA established a classification policy for Hard White wheat under which only light colored kernels of Hard White wheat were considered as CCL and WOCL when found in Hard Red Winter wheat or Hard Red Spring wheat. The policy facilitated trade, especially in growing years when growing conditions made Hard White wheat darker than normally expected. On May 1, 2006, the effective date of the standards change, GIPSA will implement a new policy for classifying Hard White Wheat:

All Hard White wheat varieties are considered Hard White wheat regardless of color and regardless of whether they are in a predominantly Hard White wheat sample or a predominantly hard red wheat sample, and, all Hard White wheat kernels will be counted as wheat of other classes in Hard Red Winter wheat and Hard Red Spring wheat.

GIPSA analyzed the effect of revising the policy and found that 41 percent of the samples marketed as Hard Red Winter wheat would have WOCL values greater

than 5.0 percent. Any number of occurrences could contribute to the discovery of a small amount of a grain other than that being marketed in the cargo, including inadvertent commingling of grains due to binning and handling equipment, or growing conditions such as volunteer plants in production fields. The classification policy in place since 2001 allowed the combination of darker Hard White wheat kernels in hard red wheat without an adverse effect on the determination of other classes.

GIPSA is releasing the new Hard White wheat classification policy 15 months in advance of the effective date to allow the market adequate time to manage inventories and modify business practices as necessary.

GIPSA’s new Hard White wheat classification policy appears in program notice, PN-05-04, which can be viewed on the GIPSA website at: <http://www.usda.gov/gipsa/reference-library/bulletins/pn05-04.pdf>.

Terry Taylor Deployed to Afghanistan

Arlan M DeBlieck, Des Moines

Terry Taylor, administrative officer, Des Moines, was recently mobilized for a 1-year tour of duty with the Field Support Battalion, U.S. Army Material Command, Forward, Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan.

Chief Warrant Officer – 2 (CWO-2) **Taylor** left Fort Bliss, Texas, on March 21, 2005, bound for Afghanistan. There she will provide personnel administrative support to U.S. soldiers in the Bagram area. She had brief layovers in Bangor, Maine, and Hahn, Germany, before proceeding onward to Kuwait and then to Afghanistan. U.S. soldiers are currently required to spend 365 days “in-country.” For **Terry** and her team, their clock started when they were processed in at Doha, Kuwait.

Terry is part of an 18-soldier team assigned by the Army Material Command, Rock Island, Illinois, that provides a variety of logistical support functions to U.S. soldiers in Kuwait, Iraq, and Afghanistan. After her team was processed, they broke down into three six-member teams, and began the final leg of their journey to destinations in Iraq, Kuwait, and Afghanistan. **Terry** and her Afghan team moved to Ali Al Salem Airbase, Kuwait, where they boarded a C-130 Transport plane for Qatar and onward to Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan.

Terry writes that Bagram is beautiful. The weather is a lot like Colorado’s with mild temperatures during the day and cool evenings. Eventually, Bagram’s weather will change to hot and windy conditions.

Bagram has had a lot of rain this year which is causing old Soviet land



*Chief Warrant Officer – 2 (CWO-2)
Terry Taylor*

mines to shift and move. U.S. military officials estimate there were 9 million mines left behind by the former Soviet Union military when it withdrew from Afghanistan in February 1988. Part of daily life at Bagram Airbase is the daily demolition of captured and recovered mines and munitions. **Terry** admits the blasts take some getting used to.

There is a lot of progress occurring

for the Afghan people since the defeat of the Taliban. **Terry**, however, is living the austere life of a U.S. soldier deployed in a combat zone. She writes that the simple things make you happy. She is billeted in a very dusty building constructed by the former Soviet Union during its occupation back in the 1980s. She is grateful for the hooks on her wall locker and her bed of plywood with a mattress on top.

This is not **Terry**’s first experience with military deployments. Her husband, **Major John P. Taylor**, deployed with the 3D Corps Support Command, Weisbaden, Germany, in January 2003, for Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Terry is not the only P&SP employee to be deployed. Lieutenant Colonel **Arlan DeBlieck**, marketing specialist, Des Moines, and Colonel **Steve Warrilow**, resident agent, Atlanta, also were deployed for a year each in 2003 for Operation Iraqi Freedom.

**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

For Your Health

Mavis Rogers, Washington, DC

Five Foods You Should Eat Every Day. The wider the variety of the foods you eat, the better chance you have to get all the nutrients needed for good health. But there are some foods with such a strong link to disease prevention and a wealth of nutrients that it makes sense to eat them every day.

- **Oranges** (or orange juice) are a great source of folic acid, fiber, antioxidants beta-carotene and vitamin C, anti-cancer compounds flavonoids and carotenoids. Drink fresh orange juice, eat fresh oranges for snacks, make fruit salad with oranges, toss peeled orange sections into a spinach salad.
- **Dark Leafy Greens** are full of anti-cancer compounds, vitamins and minerals. They contain folic acid to help prevent neural-tube birth defects, antioxidants beta-carotene and vitamin C, fiber, and anti-cancer compounds beta-carotene and lutein. Try spinach, collard greens, kale, turnip greens. Eat them raw or lightly cooked. Use in salads and stir-fry.
- **Bran Cereal** (or other rich source of wheat bran) prevents constipation. It is a potent anti-cancer agent. It prevents polyps, may fight breast cancer by diminishing estrogen supplies. Mix in with your other cereals, make bran muffins, sprinkle on salads, mix into casseroles, even eat out of hand with a mix of raisins and nuts.
- **Yogurt** (lowfat, with live cultures) supplies calcium to prevent osteoporosis, boosts immune function, fights bacteria,

has anti-cancer properties, may prevent yeast infections. Make fruit and yogurt smoothies, top vanilla yogurt with fresh fruit and granola, use on baked potatoes instead of sour cream.

- **Soy** contains phyto-estrogens that may help relieve hot flashes and fight osteoporosis in postmenopausal women, anti-cancer activity may be antagonistic to breast cancer, and is a source of high quality protein. Eat as tofu, tempeh, soymilk, or boiled soybeans. Add tofu to stir-fry, grill tempeh instead of burgers, use soybeans instead of pintos for refried beans. Add chilled cooked soybeans to salads, make bean soup with soybeans, use soymilk instead of cow's milk on cereal.

Designation Photos

These pictures represent the presentation of 3-year designation renewals for **North Dakota Grain Inspection Service, Inc.** and **Northern Plains Grain Inspection Service, Inc.**. The full story on these designations appeared in the April 2005 issue of *GIPSA News*.



Tom Wrenn presenting a plaque and congratulating Mike Adams, President of North Dakota Grain Inspection Service, Inc., Fargo, North Dakota that his agency has been designated for 3 more years.

Tom Wrenn presenting a plaque and congratulating Ryan Kuhl, Paul Bethke, and Terry Pladson, Owners of Northern Plains Grain Inspection Service, Inc., Grand Forks, North Dakota that their agency has been designated for three more years. The older gentleman is Sam Kuhl (80 +) who managed the North Dakota Mill and Elevator in Grand Forks for many years and is Ryan's grandfather.



Source: Sue Gilbert, M.S., Nutritionist

Livestock Marketing Information Center – Not Just for P&SP

Larry Haller, Washington, DC

The Livestock Marketing Information Center (LMIC) is a unique cooperative effort among State university extension specialists, USDA economists, industry cooperators, and Center staff to provide data and analysis of the Nation's livestock markets. Currently, 24 state Extension services participate in the LMIC. Each of these Extension services is part of its State's Land Grant University and appoints a member to the Center. USDA members include GIPSA, the Cooperative State Research Education and Extension Service, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Economic Research Service, and National Agricultural Statistics Service. There are also seven participating associate institutions of the LMIC.

The LMIC, located in Denver, has provided economic analysis and projections about issues and conditions concerning the livestock industry since 1955. Center staff continuously update forecasts, projections, and support materials related to market situation and outlook. The LMIC is also one of the few places that compile daily and weekly mandatory price reporting data from the Agricultural Marketing Service into spreadsheets that can be used to do historical analyses and statistical summaries. In addition to posting information on their website, the LMIC staff are very responsive to member requests. On many occasions, LMIC has provided extensive data to GIPSA that we have used to prepare responses to Congress, the Secretary, or other short-turnaround projects.

The LMIC conducts an annual outlook conference and participates in several regional and national agricultural economics conferences and meetings. Some GIPSA employees recently attended LMIC's outlook conference. I have been GIPSA's representative on LMIC's Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and attended TAC meetings since 1996. The TAC meets annually to set priorities for the LMIC's staff and to determine the overall emphasis of the Center's data collection and analysis efforts.

LMIC members are increasingly interested in obtaining more detailed information on grain marketing. At its 2004 meeting, the TAC directed the Center's staff to develop a plan that explores the potential of expanding the Center's commodity focus to include grain markets. In the past year, the Center has expanded its information on corn and soybean prices and production levels, including spreadsheets tracking regional prices of soybeans, wheat, corn, sorghum, and barley and quantities of feedstuffs exported. As a participant in the TAC, GIPSA has a unique opportunity to help the LMIC expand and develop its grain information database in ways that will directly benefit the Agency.

Our Journey to the Apex Museum

*James Cannon,
Atlanta, Georgia*

On February 22, 2005, Atlanta regional office employees took a journey back in time by visiting the Apex Museum. It took us back to the early days of Atlanta, and we rediscovered its past joys and pains from the eyes of Black America. Just when we thought we had seen it all, it took us on a voyage on the slave boats from Africa. What a great reminder of the times of yesterday, but a better reminder of how great it is to be an American.

As the Apex Museum proclaims, it is truly an experience. Words cannot accurately describe all that we saw, but I will try by including the comments from two employees who shared the experience.

Michael Meadows, agriculture marketing specialist, said, "I thought the exhibit by W.E. DuBois was very interesting. The tour guide was very knowledgeable of both Du Bois's life and the award winning exhibit he entered at the turn of the century World's Fair in France. DuBois sought to disprove many of the myths of the time regarding African-Americans, i.e., that African-Americans were unintelligent and incapable of acquiring a higher education. DuBois dispelled the myths of the day through his exhaustive research which was exhibited by numerous scientific charts, graphs, and periodicals. DuBois's exhibit proved, given the opportunity in life, African-Americans can excel just like anybody else."

*Continued, see Apex
on page 10.*

Reflections on the EPP Program

Nelson Buck, Washington, DC

I recently completed an intensive 1-year leadership training program called the Executive Potential Program (EPP). Every year, GIPSA offers one or two employees at grades 13, 14, or 15 the opportunity to participate. The requirements included attending 4 weeks of residential training spaced throughout the year, reading a shelf full of books, interviewing five senior executives, and shadowing a senior executive for 3 days. I also worked on a team project with six other people, studied an organization that the EPP staff had identified as having good leadership practices, and worked on two 60-day developmental assignments outside GIPSA.

As I am naturally a technically-oriented person, rather than a “natural” leader. I needed something intensive like the EPP if I was ever to be effective in a leadership role. I had already learned some valuable material from two previous leadership classes that lasted 1 to 2 weeks. However, I also needed exposure to the management environment, time to practice what I learned, and access to resources that could help me find answers to questions. I wanted to develop leadership skills because I recognized that I needed them, both at work and away from work. We depend on other people all the time to tell us what kind of things we need, provide needed resources, do supporting work on projects, and put the results of our work to use.

Coming from a technical background, I found books on leadership hard to read, concepts presented making little sense, and classroom exercises sometimes stressful. However, as the program progressed and I learned things, it did get easier. Everything I did as part of the program taught me something that I could use later in the program. Now I can honestly say I like working in leadership roles.

One thing that surprised me was that the leaders I met, although very busy, were generally eager to talk with me about their experiences, give me advice, and find out my opinions. Getting to talk with and work with people in actual leadership positions was one of the most valuable parts of the EPP. I found out what issues they were actually dealing with and how they handled them. I also learned some practical things that were not covered in the assigned reading.

The developmental assignments were very valuable. It was a unique experience to line up work with executives outside the agency by finding out what they needed, deciding if it matched my developmental needs, and offering to work for 2 months at no charge to them. Then I got to put what I was learning into practice and to see how hard certain things were to do and how well they worked. I would never have gotten this chance in my normal course of work.

Going through the EPP is a lot of work, but very rewarding. It also provides an excellent chance to get to know some great people and learn valuable skills. I want to thank the Agency for giving me this opportunity; **John Giler**, **Rosemary Mayne**, and **Steve Tanner** for their help and support; and my colleagues in the **Policies and Procedures Branch** for their patience with my absences from work. I strongly recommend that anyone who wants to learn practical leadership skills apply for this program and take it if given the chance.

GIPSA Idea Hotline Update

*Norma Phelps,
Washington, DC*

Here is the idea received on the GIPSA Idea Hotline during April 2005. If you have questions about any ideas or the Hotline, please call me at 202-720-1017.

Suggestor/ Suggestion

David Skallerud, Cedar Rapids/
Provide Defibrillators for Each
GIPSA Office

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.

Memorial Day

Monday, May 30, 2005

In 1866, the United States was recovering from the long and bloody Civil War. Wounded and surviving soldiers were coming home, some with missing limbs. Henry Welles, a drugstore owner in Waterloo, New York, suggested that all the shops in town close for one day to honor the soldiers who were killed in the Civil War and were buried in the Waterloo cemetery. On the morning of May 5, townspeople placed flowers, wreaths, and crosses on the graves of the Northern soldiers in the cemetery. At about the same time, Retired Major General Jonathan Logan planned another ceremony, one for soldiers who survived the war. He led the veterans through town to the cemetery to decorate their comrades' graves with flags. The townspeople called it Decoration Day. In Retired Major General Logan's proclamation of Memorial Day, he declared:

"The 30th of May, 1868, is designated for the purpose of strewing with flowers, or otherwise decorating the graves of comrades who died in defense of their country and during the late rebellion, and whose bodies now lie in almost every city, village and hamlet churchyard in the land. In this observance no form of ceremony is prescribed, but posts and comrades will in their own way arrange such fitting services and testimonials of respect as circumstances may permit."

The two ceremonies were joined in 1868, and northern states commemorated the day on May 30. The southern states commemorated their war dead on different days, but in much the same ways. In 1882, the name was changed to Memorial Day and soldiers who had died in previous wars were honored as well. In the northern United States, it was designated a public holiday. In 1971, along with other holidays, President Richard Nixon declared Memorial Day a Federal holiday on the last Monday in May.

Cities all around the United States hold their own ceremonies on the last Monday in May to pay respect to the men and women who have died in wars or in the service of their country.

At Arlington National Cemetery, in the early hours of the Friday morning before Memorial Day, soldiers of the Third U.S. infantry walk along the rows of headstones. Each soldier stops at a headstone, reaches to a bundle of flags he is carrying, pulls one out and pushes it into the ground. Most consider it a privilege to place flags on the more than 200,000 graves of soldiers who served in the wars or who died in them. "They have done their job," said one soldier, "and now it's my turn to do mine."

Apex, from page 8

Robin Gecan, administrative assistant, agreed that "Mr. DuBois was one of the greatest American sociologists and political activists in 1900. His Georgia Negro exhibit at the World's Fair in Paris during the 1900 was informative and educational. His exhibit displayed over 50 charts, graphs, and approximately 200 photographs and portraits of the lives and struggles of the people in Georgia. Also, the museum showed a replica of the Yates & Milton Drug Store. Established in 1923 by Clayton R. Yates and Lorimer D. Milton, the store was one of Atlanta's first Black-owned businesses. We also saw "The Journey," an exhibit featuring artifacts of slavery and documents on slaves that were sold during the 1800s."

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

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FAX (202) 690-2333
dana.b.stewart@usda.gov

by May 25, 2005!

OFFICE OF THE ADMINISTRATOR
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