



GIPSA News

The newsletter of the employees of the Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration

May 2011

FGIS Matters....!

Randall Jones, Washington DC



Randall Jones

As we move into the second half of the fiscal year, staff around the country continue to work at a frantic pace providing services to our stakeholders that support American agriculture. Compared to last year, total inspections are 9% ahead and 15% higher than the five year average. Wheat exports continue to be the strong force behind the increase, up more than 6.4 million metric tons over last year which is a whopping 50% increase. Corn inspections have slowed somewhat but remain similar to last year and lag the five year average by 3.7 mmt. Soybean exports continue well above historic levels and comparable to last year's record pace.

New Orleans continues to see the largest increase in volume, up nearly 5 mmt or 13 percent above last year at this time. As compared to last year, FOSS, League City, Olympia, New Orleans, and Toledo continue to handle large increases in wheat, up 0.3 million metric tons (113 percent), 3.4 mmt (87 percent), 1.3 mmt (52 percent), 1.0 mmt (47 percent), and 0.6 mmt (85 percent) respectively. Cedar Rapids' volume has increased 0.3 mmt (13 percent) over last year, exclusively due to increased corn and soybean inspections.

On April 21, Bob Lijewski, Karen Guagliardo, Ron Metz, and I met in Des Moines with representatives from Official Agencies and discussed various topics of interest including changes to the oversight of official agencies, Quality Management Program, FGISonline and unit train inspection procedures. The meeting was a great forum to exchange ideas and an opportunity to provide guidance on many of the daily operational issues. In the near future, we look forward to holding more regional meetings to support the Official Agencies.

In Manhattan, Kansas, Bob Lijewski, Dave Lowe, and I also met with the Kansas Grain and Feed Association. Dave Lowe brought samples of a sorghum "cocktail", a sample of grain sorghum with a concentrated blend of chemicals resembling those of "storage musty" odor. Attendees had the opportunity to smell the samples and gain a better understanding of the official odor line. This sample survey is part of a project FGIS is working on in conjunction with the Kansas State University Sensory Analysis Center and the industry to address sorghum odor issues.

*Continued, See **FGIS** on page 3*

Names in the News

RETIREMENT

Ernestine Taplin, an ACT in the New Orleans Field Office retired on April 30, 2011 after 23 ½ years of service with GIPSA. She began her career in the Lutcher Field Office on 09/27/1987 as a temporary full-time ACT-4. She became permanent when selected as an on-call ACT-5 and progressed to ACT-6. **Ernestine** plans on enjoying her retirement after she fully recuperates from surgery by keeping busy shopping, traveling and eventually doing volunteer work.

Ernestine would like to thank everyone for their acts of kindness during her recuperation period. It really meant a lot to her. **Ernestine** enjoyed working with everyone during her time with GIPSA. She also enjoyed working with American agriculture.

Employee Assistance Program

Call for confidential help.

1-800-222-0364

AWARDS

Bettina L. Bledsoe, Aurora, CO, received a time-off award for dedication and work as a Combined Federal Campaign keyworker this year.

Eleanor Obard, Aurora, CO, received a time-off award for dedication and work as a Combined Federal Campaign keyworker this year.

Julie M. Shamblin, Aurora, CO, received a time-off award for dedication and perseverance in gathering documentation and obtaining affidavits for an investigative file.

Nancy M. Speer, Aurora, CO, received a time-off award for dedication and perseverance in gathering documentation and obtaining affidavits for an investigative file.

Issuances

*Terri Henry,
Washington, DC*

- MRP Directive 4300.2, “Reasonable Accommodations Program”, dated March 31, 2011

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

FGIS, from page 1.

A particular highlight of the month was an all-employee meeting at the National Grain Center. I was pleased to have had the opportunity to talk to our employees in Kansas City and tour the new facilities. We can be very proud of the new building as those who have diligently worked over the past few years have done a terrific job and the new facility is a reflection of their hard work.

May looks to be a very busy month beginning with the American Association of Grain Inspection and Weighing Agencies (AAGIWA) Annual Meeting. After that I will travel to League City where we plan to have an all employees meeting. Andy Greenfield, Field Management Division, and Dave Grady, Field Office Manager, are working to put this together. While in League City we plan to meet with ADM officials from New Orleans, Galveston and Corpus Christi regarding service delivery issues. And later in May, Tom O'Connor, Director, Quality Assurance and Compliance Division, Bob Lijewski, Director, Field Management Division and I will meet with the Union leadership from around the country. There are a number of issues that will be discussed primarily involving the delivery of services at our export labs.

Until next month, keep up the good work and stay safe!



Update from last month: As detailed in last month's FGIS Matters, we had a very successful set of meetings in New Orleans at the end of March. Pictured above are interns of the FGIS Intern Program and other FGIS staff at the training session.

(From left to right, Back Row/Standing: Randall Jones, Darryl Perryman, Marc Marullo, Vernet Knight Jr., Lavon Jenkins, Jorge Gutierrez, Alvin Kelly, Melissa Sheperd, Julian Biley, Brandon Harness, Ronald Bundy, Melody Butler, Jorge Vazquez, Mavi Chambliss; Front Row (Seating): Sarah Skrivanek, Brittany Brown, George Dumun, Abraham Washington, Kendra Kline

2011 Commodity Classic

Eric Jabs, Kansas City, MO

On March 3-5, 2011, Eric Jabs, Policies, Procedures, and Market Analysis Branch, staffed the FGIS booth at the 2011 Commodity Classic in Tampa, FL. Several attendees were interested in FGIS grading mats, visual reference image posters, official inspection locations, the grain inspection resource media, and of course the free merchandise. I had the distinct honor of meeting Secretary Thomas J. Vilsack when he conducted an interview in the FGIS booth with Rural Farm Development (RFD)-TV. The full interview will be made available to FGIS via DVD and is forthcoming.



FGIS' Eric Jabs and USDA Secretary Vilsack at the Commodity Classic in Tampa, FL (above and right).





Period photograph of Chicago Stockyards

The Packers and Stockyards Act of 1921 (P&S Act)

S. Brett Offutt

[The Packers and Stockyards Act celebrates its 90th anniversary later this summer. In recognition of this milestone, we plan have a series of newsletter articles to highlight the history of the Act and its enforcement by the Packers and Stockyards Program, including key court cases that either upheld or changed how the Act is enforced. The articles will be based on S. Brett Offutt's comprehensive history, "The Packers and Stockyards Act of 1921: A History of Administration and Enforcement," and the first installment focuses on the enactment and early history. –Mike Schmidt]

The Packers and Stockyards Act (P&S Act) was enacted in 1921 following the release in 1918 of the Report of the Federal Trade Commission on the Meat Packing Industry. For years prior to enactment of the P&S Act, the largest meatpacking companies had been suspected of conspiring to control the purchases of livestock, the preparation of meat and meat products and their distribution in this country and abroad. In 1917, President Wilson directed the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) to investigate the facts relating to the meatpacking industry. The FTC concluded that the "Big Five" (Swift, Armour, Cudahy, Wilson and Morris) controlled the market in which they bought their supplies and the market in which they sold their products. The report pointed out that the monopolistic position of the "Big Five" was based primarily upon their ownership or control of stockyards and essential facilities for the distribution of perishable foods and that control of the stockyards carried with it dominance over commission firms, dealers, cattle-loan banks, trade publications, etc. The FTC reported packers were manipulating markets, restricting flow of foods, controlling the price of dressed meat, defrauding producers and consumers of food and crushing competition. The FTC, in fact, recommended governmental ownership of the stockyards and their related facilities.

Congress chose a less drastic alternative and after some controversy enacted the P&S Act a year after the Big Five packers and others entered into a consent decree under the Sherman Act. The Act was originally designed to regulate the "Big Five." As you know, the Act's scope has expanded well beyond just the largest of packers. Today, the Act regulates the activity of packers, livestock dealers, market agencies, live poultry dealers and swine contractors.

*Continued, see **P&S Act** on page 6.*

P&S Act, *continued from page 5.*

H.R. 6320, “The Packers and Stockyards Act,” was passed by Congress on August 15, 1921, and became effective September 15, 1921. The Act’s purpose at the time it was passed was to “regulate interstate and foreign commerce in live stock, live-stock produce, dairy products, poultry, poultry products, and eggs, and for other purposes.” It prohibited packers from engaging in unfair and deceptive practices, giving undue preferences to persons or localities, apportioning supply among packers in restraint of commerce, manipulating prices, creating a monopoly or conspiring to aid in unlawful acts.

The Act also made stockyards quasi-public utilities and required yard officers, agents and employees to register with the government. Stockyards were forbidden from dealing in the livestock they handled, and were required to maintain accurate weights and measures and pay shippers promptly. However, not all stockyards were under the jurisdiction of the Act. Only those with pen space larger than 20,000 square feet were regulated.

In the years since 1921, the P&S Act has been updated several times to keep pace with a changing and dynamic industry.

GIPSA Idea Hotline

The GIPSA Idea Hotline is open for business. Please send your suggestions or ideas to GIPSA-Ideas@usda.gov; fax them to 202-720-1015; or telephone them to 1-800-455-3447 or 202-720-7045. It is best to send them via fax or email to reduce the possibility of transcription errors; however, ideas will be accepted regardless of the method of transmission.



Reminder— Press inquiries

If a reporter contacts you with a question or for information, please take down their contact information and question and share it with Mike Schmidt (john.m.schmidt@usda.gov or 202-720-5091). He will coordinate GIPSA’s response with the Office of Communications. Thanks.

For Your Health

Mavis Rogers, Washington, DC

Emotional Wellness. At one time or another, most of us will encounter circumstances that seem insurmountable: job loss, relationship break-up, economic struggles, loss of a loved one, physical trauma - the list goes on. They are defining moments in life that can either knock us down or make us stronger. While we cannot always control our circumstances (life's curve balls are usually out of our control) we can control our responses. Resiliency, or how well you bounce back, is a skill that can be learned or refined. Here is how you can get started:

Have Reasonable Expectations. The road of life is paved with a few potholes, dead ends and wrong turns. If you accept that at some point you will hit bumpy territory, then you are better prepared to negotiate it. But, if you expect to live a life without setbacks, then the first bump you hit is perceived as a failure. Those who are best able to recover from adversity accept that it is part of living a full life.

Change Your Question. Most people focus on how they ended up in their challenging situation. Obsessing about the details of your circumstances will keep you stuck in the same place, unable to move forward. Resiliency means shifting the focus from what happened to what to do next. The best question you can ask yourself is: What can I do for myself right now that will move me forward? Then, you can apply what you learned to future situations.

What Is Within Your Control? Another thought pattern that delays rebounding from negative events is focusing on things you cannot control. Doing so will make you feel incapable, helpless, victimized and stressed. Instead, focus only on what you can control. Sometimes the only thing you have control over is how you choose to respond – and that is big.

Growth Opportunity. While positive events reinforce what we are doing right in life, our biggest life lesson tend to come in the wake of negative events. Do bad things need to happen in order for us to learn? Of course not, but negative events seem to have a lasting impact that cause us to alter our lives in more significant ways. What can you learn from your setback? How can you use it to improve your life (or the lives of others) in the future?

Assess Your Strengths. No matter what happens in life, there are certain things you will always own: character strengths. Each of us has certain traits that make us unique. They cannot be taken away (although sometimes we choose to give them away). Take a personal inventory of what makes you special. Think of personality traits that have been consistent throughout your life and have helped you in previous situations. Are you naturally curious? Are you compassionate? Are you humorous or creative? Highlighting and engaging your strengths give you energy to rebound.

Courtesy: FOH Employee Assistance Program

GIPSA News is the employee newsletter of the USDA Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration. Send your news, ideas, suggestions, comments, questions, or thoughts for the next issue to:

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by April 25, 2011!

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