



GIPSA *NEWS*

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE EMPLOYEES OF THE GRAIN
INSPECTION, PACKERS AND STOCKYARDS
ADMINISTRATION

MAY 2012

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Welcome GIPSA's New Administrator

Alan Christian, Washington, DC



Mr. Larry Mitchell

Please join me in welcoming our new Administrator, Larry Mitchell. Mr. Mitchell is originally from Texas where he owned and operated a family farm producing wheat, oats, corn, cotton, grain sorghum, hay, horses, and cattle. That experience alone puts him in an excellent position to understand and value the work that we do here in GIPSA. But, in addition to that experience, Mr. Mitchell has spent much of his career working on behalf of farmers and producers. He has held positions with National Farmers Union; was the Chief Executive Officer of the American Corn Growers Association and; most recently was the Associate Director of the Secretary's Office of Advocacy and Outreach where he focused on improving access to USDA programs and improving the viability and profitability of small farms and ranches.

From the initial meetings that I have had with Mr. Mitchell, I can tell you that he is passionate about Secretary Vilsack's and USDA's priority goal of assisting rural communities to create prosperity so they are self-sustaining, repopulating and economically thriving. He also understands GIPSA's role in achieving that goal and while it may take a short while for Mr. Mitchell to become familiar with our regulations, policies and operations, I can assure you he understands the industry we protect and why our mission is important.

While I welcome the opportunity to fully focus on the Packers and Stockyards Program, I want to thank each of you for your support during my tenure as Acting Administrator. It was truly an honor to represent you and work with you to improve our organization, our operations and our program delivery.

I am confident that as we welcome Administrator Mitchell, we are also welcoming new opportunities to build on our strong foundation and continue our efforts to be a model employer and high performing organization that delivers results to increase fairness in the marketing of grain, livestock and poultry.

FGIS Matters...!

Randall Jones, Washington, DC



“Each and every day all of us are judged based on the work that we deliver – the grain certificate.”

In looking back over the past few months and gazing forward, one thing stands out - there is a lot of “listening” taking place both within FGIS and with our stakeholders. In early May we were very fortunate to host **Dr. Joe Leonard**, Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, and his team at the New Orleans Field Office (see article on page 10). We had the opportunity to meet with many official agencies at the annual meeting of the American Association Grain Inspection and Weighing Agencies. We have met with regional industry groups to discuss and respond to their needs and concerns. In June, we will meet Union officials at their Annual meeting and will also travel to our League City Field Office to hold a listening session and gain insight into employee’s concerns and needs. We have had numerous meetings with official service providers related to quality in our initiative to develop a quality assurance strategic plan.

I am extremely pleased with the initial response to the recently announced mentoring program. We have had a large number of staff indicate their desire to be mentees. It is critical for all of us to set personal goals and work hard to attain them. I would encourage all mentees to take this opportunity to lean heavily on the mentors and develop greater business acumen. These are critical skills that will serve our Program well.

This past month we also unveiled a new web page for Official Service Providers that received rave reviews. Kudos to **Stephanie Brown, Tina Dillard, PSP, Lee Capper, Karen Guagliardo**, and others for making this happen. Amazingly in a 30 day period the team was able to design and implement the entire project. If you haven’t checked out this page, please take a couple of minutes and do so today. A link to the page can be found on the FGIS home page. One unique feature is that access to the page is strictly controlled through e-authentication plus it is limited to FGIS and Official Agency staff.

To date, the crop reports from around the country are very encouraging with most areas well ahead of traditional planting dates. Planted corn and soybean acreage are at or near historic levels and current crop conditions are excellent. Let’s hope that the growing season will be favorable and our farmers and producers will be able to reap a big harvest this fall.

The volume of our exports continues to lag substantially behind the 2011 record and also well behind the 5 year average. With only a few months left in fiscal year 2012, it appears that our grain exports will be the lowest that we have seen in 30 years.

Since last October, exports for corn – down 4 percent; sorghum – down 68 percent; soybeans – down 17 percent; and wheat – down 28 percent. If we look at the port areas, New Orleans – down 13 percent, and League City – down 68 percent; Toledo – down 29 percent. The Pacific Northwest (includes the State of Washington and Portland) is our sole shining star as their exports are on par with last year thanks to strong exports in Washington.

As I close, I want to remind everyone of the importance of grading accuracy and the importance of all employees in delivering a quality product – from the representative sample to the accuracy of the quality grade to the accuracy of the results provided by the equipment to the accuracy of the certificate. Each and every day all of us are judged based on the work that we deliver – the grain certificate. We can never lose sight of this and must remain focused on our goal – provide high quality services to our stakeholders – U.S. producers, handlers, buyers and consumers and the buyers and users around the world. Our work touches the lives of millions of people here and abroad every single day. I am confident we will continue to meet this challenge.

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

Names in the News

Personnel

Tandace Scholdberg, Ph.D., has been selected for the position of Chief of the Biotechnology and Analytical Services Branch, Technology and Science Division. Tandace will manage the Commodity Testing and Reference Labs, as well as the Biotechnology Lab.

Retirements

Aarion Johnson, Chemist, retired on April 27, 2012, with 36 years of federal service. Aarion began his career with GIPSA in 1979. During his career with TSD, he has worked on Grain Moisture Methods, Wheat Hardness, Mycotoxin Test Evaluation, Wheat Functionality, Evaluation of Quick Test Methods, and developed HPLC method for determining niacin in corn-soy blends.

Arlan DeBlieck, Marketing Specialist, retired effective April 30, 2012. Arlan started with the Packers and Stockyards Program (P&SP) on December 31, 2000. During his time with P&SP he served two tours of military deployment, one in Iraq and one in Afghanistan. As Arlan leaves our agency he is assuming the position of Deputy Commanding Officer of the Army Reserve 103rd Sustainment Command, Des Moines, Iowa.

James Woodman, Certification Assistant, will retire on June 30, 2012, after dedicating over 39 years to the grain industry. Jim started out in 1973 with the private grain inspection service and joined FGIS on March 13, 1977. Several years, several endeavors, and several faces later, Jim is ready to hang it all up. Retirement for Jim will include some light traveling, rekindling his love of coin and stamp collecting, and getting his hands dirty with some serious gardening. Topping his Bucket-List is: "spending time taking in God's creation on a river bank with a cane fishing pole". The League City Field Office thanks you Jim, for your commitment to integrity of career.

Jim Gardner, Agricultural Commodity Technician, Portland Field Office, is retiring on July 27, 2012, after 35 years and 9 months of total grain inspection service. Jim began his career with the Oregon State Department of Agriculture on October 4, 1976. He later went to work for FGIS on February 28, 1978. Jim's willingness to volunteer as the field office Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) coordinator for the last 20 years has been greatly appreciated. As he departs the company of his colleagues, Jim plans to take pleasure in the classic car and truck world and enjoy spending time with his wife out and about doing various activities.

Let Your Voice Be Heard!

Idelisse Rodriguez,
Washington, DC

Thanks to all who have completed the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS). We have reached a 42 percent response rate!

Please take a moment to complete the FEVS. This is your opportunity to let management know what areas need improvement. You are allowed to fill out the survey during official time and your responses are confidential.

GP needs your help!

50% and above response rate

FEVS Grain Trail

GIPSA reached a 42% response rate. We are so close! Please help me return to the herd by completing the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS). We need to reach 50% and above by June 11, 2012. Stay tuned for updates on my progress!

Call for Interest - International Assignments

John Pitchford, Washington, DC

For several years, the Office of Departmental Initiatives and International Affairs has maintained a database of FGIS employees who are willing, qualified, and able to represent the agency overseas. Since the last time we updated our database, there have been many changes to the FGIS family, with retirements and new hires. To update our records, we invite you to renew, or newly express, your interest in international travel.

Global importers of U.S. grain are essential to the livelihood of FGIS. To maintain and improve our international reputation, employees are periodically asked to go on international assignments to interact face-to-face with our overseas customers, instead of less personal phone calls and email communication we use to conduct our daily business. International assignments provide unique opportunities. FGIS employees represent the Agency, meet and work with our counterparts and customers overseas, and experience new cultures.

The assignments can be quite rigorous. For example, one might be asked to conduct instructional seminars; speak in front of large groups; assist with the development of domestic grain standards and marketing infrastructures; help importers with quality specifications, or monitor the quality of a grain cargo in an overseas port. Assignments may require departing on short notice, working long hours under adverse conditions, and the ability to interact tactfully in tense situations with persons of different cultures. Others may be less rigorous and more familiar to you; for example, conducting a grading seminar. As each assignment arises, we match the skills required to the employee's qualifications.

If you are interested in this type of professional opportunity, we ask that all interested employees (GS-9 to GS-13) complete and submit a Questionnaire and Skills Summary from the *inGIPSA* website (Employee Resources/Job Listings), *even if you have done so before*. Later this year, we hope to conduct a class for those interested in international travel but with limited prior experience. To be considered for this class, please submit these documents by June 30.

If you have any questions, please call me or any member of the staff at 202-720-0226. Thanks!

USDA's 150th Anniversary Celebration

Ty Luckey, Washington, DC

On May 15, 1862, President Abraham Lincoln signed legislation to establish the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and codified a commitment to the health of our people and our land. One hundred and fifty years later, USDA continues to realize that vision of service by applying sound public policy and science to an evolving food and agriculture system. In order to commemorate this historic milestone, USDA held a special recognition event hosted by Mika Brzezinski and Joe Scarborough of MSNBC's Morning Joe on Tuesday, May 15, 2012, at USDA's South Building in downtown Washington, DC.

GIPSA also hosted a 150th Anniversary Watch Party in our conference rooms along with MRP Under Secretary's office and the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) where the USDA 150th ceremony was displayed live on the conference room televisions for employees to view. The party was well received by all employees in attendance and even regarded by Deputy Secretary Kathleen Merrigan and MRP's Under Secretary Ed Avalos as "One of the Best Watch Party's they had attended".

Special thanks are to the following employees who participated in making GIPSA's first Watch Party a major success: **Amanda Tucker** (GIPSA, OA), **Ty Luckey** (GIPSA, PSP), **Linda Alston** (GIPSA, CR) **Dexter Thomas** (GIPSA, MBS), **Andy Greenfield** (GIPSA, FGIS), **Morgan Arvaneh** (GIPSA, PSP) **Regina Ware** (GIPSA, PSP), **Idelisse Rodriguez** (GIPSA, MBS), **Adrienne Burch** (APHIS), **Sheila Winston** (APHIS), and **Linda Carey** (APHIS).



Deputy Secretary, Kathleen Merrigan, and MRP's Under Secretary, Ed Avalos, cutting the cake.

June is Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Pride Month

Linda Alston, Washington, DC

In June of 2000, President Bill Clinton declared June as "Gay, and Lesbian Pride Month". In 2009, 2010, and 2011 President Obama declared June as "Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender (GLBT) Pride Month" for those years. This year's proclamation should be out June 1.

The month of June was chosen to honor the 1969 Stonewall riots in Manhattan. More than forty years ago, patrons and supporters of the Stonewall Inn in New York City resisted police harassment that had become all too common for members of the GLBT community. Out of this resistance, the GLBT rights movement in America was born. During GLBT Pride Month, we commemorate the events of June 1969 and commit to achieving equal justice under law for LGBT Americans.

Celebrations today include pride parades, picnics, parties, workshops, symposia, and concerts. Events for GLBT Pride Month attract millions of participants around the world. Many memorials are held for those members of the community who have been lost to hate crimes or HIV and AIDS.

In 1978, artist Gilbert Baker developed the Rainbow Flag. There was a need, at the time for a gay symbol that could be used each year for the San Francisco Gay and Lesbian Pride Parade. The Hippies and Black civil rights movements gave Baker the idea for a flag with eight stripes. Each color stands for a different aspect of gay and lesbian life: Red for life; Orange for healing; Yellow for the sun; Green for nature; Blue for art; Indigo for harmony; and Violet for spirit. The Hot pink color was dropped because at the time it was not a commercially available color. There are many other symbols that the GLBT community uses to represent their culture. You can see them at <http://www.lambda.org/symbols.htm#Rainbow>.

As with many special emphasis months, the purpose of the GLBT Pride Month is to recognize the impact and contributions that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individuals have had on history locally, nationally, and internationally.



GLBT Pride Month - Did You Know...

...Since 1975, unions have bargaining contracts with non-discrimination protections.

...The Employee Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) would extend fair employment practices under federal law to the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender community.

...Over 60 International Unions and union organizations have endorsed passage of the Employee Non-Discrimination Act.

...Union contracts allow LGBT workers who face discrimination in the workplace to grieve and remedy that discrimination, all in a timely manner.

...Unions have long pushed for domestic partner benefits in their contract negotiations.

...In California, unions donated over \$2 million dollars to defeat Prop. 8.

...10 International Unions, representing over 10 million workers, have endorsed an end to marriage discrimination and yes to marriage equality.

Sources:

[Library of Congress](#)

[National Women's History Project](#)

[United Food & Commercial Workers Union 2012](#)

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 Civil Rights Staff at

202-720-0216



Management and Budget Services

Marianne Plaus, Washington, DC

Over the past several months, Management and Budget Services (MBS) has lost several employees to retirements and buyouts. At the same time, we have gained several employees from other GIPSA units due to restructuring. To update you about who to contact for the multitude of services provided by MBS, I prepared the following summary sheet. Although the list is not exhaustive, I attempted to capture those activities/roles about which you ask the most. I hope you will find the listing to be helpful, and, as always, the MBS management team, **Lisa Fyall**, **Dexter Thomas**, and I, and the entire staff appreciate your feedback regarding how MBS can continue to strengthen its delivery of a multitude of services to our GIPSA colleagues.

Office of the Director

Marianne Plaus, Director/Budget Officer (Marianne.Plaus@usda.gov, 202-690-3460)

- Secretary
- Renovation of Office Space (Wash. DC)
- FMMI Help desk and Security
- NFC Employee Roster Distribution

Susan Martin
202-720-0231
Susan.M.Martin@usda.gov



- Employee Assistance Program Coordinator
- GIPSA Newsletter
- Performance Plans
- Strategic and Human Capital Planning

Idelisse Rodriguez
202-720-5688
Idelisse.Rodriguez@usda.gov



- Training (non-technical) and Required Training
- AgLearn Administration and Policy
- Career Guidance and Training Referrals
- IDPs
- Leadership Development and 360 Assessments
- New Employee Orientations

Caroline Thorpe
202-690-2332
Caroline.C.Thorpe@usda.gov



Budget Services

- B2 Adjustments
- IAS Requisitions - Budget Approval
- Inter-Agency Agreements
- Miscellaneous Orders
- OPM Background Investigations
- FMMI Role Assignment and Security

Tammi Lindsey
202-690-4188
Tammi.Lindsey@usda.gov



- Allocations
- Distributors
- Employee Rosters and Operating Plans
- Greenbook and Working Capital Fund
- Status of Funds
- FMMI Main POC

Ruth Ortiz
202-720-6719
Ruth.Ortiz@usda.gov



- Budget Formulation and Justification

Ron West
202-720-0273
Ronald.C.West@usda.gov



Continued, see Management and Budget Services on page 7.

Management and Budget Services from page 6.

Management Services

Lisa Fyall, Supervisor (Lisa.Fyall@usda.gov, 202-720-7045)

- Awards Program Coordinator
- Personnel Action Processing (SF 52)
- GIPSA Idea Hotline
- Human Resources Management Guidance and Liaison (e.g., Position Descriptions and Job Announcements)

Lisa Fyall
202-720-7045
Lisa.Fyall@usda.gov



- Awards, Retirement, and Length-of-Service Certificate/Pin Processing
- Safety and Health (assists Mark Kemp)

Amber McDonald-Lake
202-720-1741
Amber.L.McDonald@usda.gov



- Grain Advisory Committee
- Issuance Management
- Telework Coordinator
- Transit Subsidies

Terri Henry
202-205-8281
Terri.L.Henry@usda.gov



- IAS Requisitions for PSP and MBS
- Travel Coordinator (GovTrip, TDY, Relocation, and Travel Cards)
- LincPass Coordinator
- PSP Investigator Badges

Rose Alexander
202-690-0881
Rose.D.Alexander@usda.gov



- IT Budget

Patricia Ogunyale
202-720-1742
Patricia.A.Ogunyale@usda.gov



Regulatory Services

R. Dexter Thomas, Supervisor/Lead and Regulatory Analyst (R.Dexter.Thomas@usda.gov, 202-720-6529)

- IT Security

Noah Waters
202-720-8247
Noah.R.Waters@usda.gov

Edward Chi
202-205-8150
Edward.Chi@usda.gov



- COOP and Pandemic Planning
- Employee Wellness Program
- Safety Officer
- Health Surveillance Agreement
- Workers Comp
- Workplace Violence Coordinator

Mark Kemp
202-720-0061
Mark.L.Kemp@usda.gov



- e-Authentication POC
- Paperwork Reduction Coordinator
- Records and Information Collection Management
- Regulations (research, development, drafting)

M.Irene Omade
202-720-8479
M.Irene.Omade@usda.gov



- Freedom of Information Act Coordinator
- Internal and Management Controls
- GAO, OCFO, and OIG Audit Liaison
- Privacy Act Coordinator

Joanne Peterson
202-720-8087
Joanne.C.Peterson@usda.gov



PSP CCWG Change Requests: Not Just for PAS

Kari McPherson, Pierre, SD, and Marilyn Gallagher, Longview, TX

The Packers and Stockyards Program (PSP) Change Control Working Group (CCWG) sees a variety of change requests (CRs). The majority of the CRs submitted to the CCWG deal with issues relating to the Packers and Stockyards Automated System (PAS), such as improving functionality, making it more user friendly and correcting bug fixes. These are the issues that are typically thought of when people submit a CR.

So, what if you have an idea for a CR that is slightly “out of the box”? The CCWG would love to hear about it! Recent CR submissions have shown employees taking an issue that is out of the norm and outlining solutions that go beyond PAS.

CR# 6839606, submitted by Chad Curry, WRO Resident Agent, outlined a problem with timely enforcement due to a backlog of case files. The backlog has created an attitude of indifference among regulated individuals and entities due to the lengthy time before the violator is contacted about the case. Chad’s suggestion was to allow field agents to issue citations for violations that are considered to be minor with uniform fines across the regions. This would likely increase compliance and a positive perception of the Agency. The CCWG liked the idea of more timely enforcement within the industry, but expressed concern about field agents issuing citations and suggested Regional Offices be given the authority to fine entities. This CR was presented to the PSP Management Team (PMT) and it was agreed that this could be another possible tool for PSP to use to gain compliance. PMT decided to create a team to further explore the idea. The team will be lead by Chad Curry and Gale Mason, Deputy Director of the Policy and Litigation Division.

CR# 7002435, submitted by Wayne Basford, ERO Investigative Attorney, dealt with requests for interpretation or guidance from stakeholders in the agency. PSP does not have a formal procedure on how employees should respond to requests from the industry. Wayne suggested creating an Administrative Instruction that established procedures for providing guidance and interpretation on simple and complex requests. The CCWG presented the CR to PMT. PMT understood the issue, but felt the solution provided could possibly make agents feel limited in their freedom to respond to inquiries. PMT disapproved the original CR, but decided to take the proposed issue and address it in an email. PMT wants agents to feel empowered to respond immediately to questions if they feel comfortable doing so. If the agent does not feel comfortable responding, PMT recommended they ask their immediate Supervisor for guidance. Alan Christian, PSP Deputy Administrator, communicated to PSP employees that they are empowered to respond to inquiries in an email on March 23, 2012. This will help PSP to build relationships and have effective outreach with the industry. Within this email, Mr. Christian responded to a few examples where additional guidance would be necessary and that passing inquiries up the supervisory chain is a viable option.

Both CRs submitted approached issues that employees often face in a unique manner. CCWG and PMT both found the proposed issues to be valid and worth addressing. We encourage you to submit CRs that are “outside the box.” You might be surprised at the impact you could have on our Program!

Issuance Report

Terri Henry, Washington, DC

- ◆ FGIS Directive 9180.61, Official Calibrations for the Dickey-john GAC 2100 Moisture Meter, dated May 1, 2012.
- ◆ FGIS Program Notice 12-04, Sample Collection Responsibilities for Verifying the Accuracy of Moisture Meter Calibrations Crop Year 2012.
- ◆ FGIS Program Notice 12-02, Check Testing of Diverter-Type (DT) Samplers: Drop Sample Test Option, dated May 21, 2012.
- ◆ FGIS PN-11-05, Inspection of Flood Damaged Grain, dated 2/28/11. This notice was reposted and is still valid.

FGIS' Important Role Around the Globe

Andrew Greenfield, Washington, DC

Last month, I had the pleasure of accompanying **Jeff L'Heureux** of FGIS' Domestic Inspection Operations Office (DIOO) and **Mavi Chambliss** and **Marc Marullo**, two interns from the New Orleans Field Office, on a trip to two plants producing Corn Soy Blend for a U.S. government food aid program.

The United States Agency for International Development's (USAID) Food for Peace program has provided U.S. grown food and nourishment to billions of hungry people in 150 countries during the past 50 years. FGIS plays an important supporting role by ensuring that the grain and products provided are of high quality and meet nutritional specifications. In collaboration with the Farm Service Agency, FGIS personnel sample and test food aid commodities that are distributed by USAID.

The procedures are straightforward - licensed samplers pull a predetermined number of bags at random from a production line. The bags are weighed to assure that they contain the proper amount. The sampler cuts open the bags and uses a sterile probe to obtain samples of the food product. Samples from the different bags are combined and sent to FGIS' commodity testing laboratory in Kansas City where they are analyzed against certain specifications. Processed products, like Corn Soy Blend, are often made into a highly nutritious porridge. The tests confirm that they have the proper amount of protein, vitamins, and nutrients. After the laboratory confirms the food meets the specifications, FGIS certifies the results and gives the green light for the food aid to be exported to people in need around the world with confidence that it is a healthy product.

The trip was a great learning experience for our interns from New Orleans, who are used to sampling and grading grain in an export marketplace. This allowed them the opportunity to see and perform the functions of a domestic field office providing service at land-locked plants.



After recording the net weight of the bag, Mavi Chambliss uses a sterile probe to sample Corn Soy Blend.



Left to Right - Andrew Greenfield, Mavi Chambliss, Jeff L'Heureux, and Marc Marullo.



Andrew Greenfield uses aseptic sampling procedures to sample Corn Soy Blend for deleterious substances such as Salmonella, Coagulase Positive Staphylococcus, E. Coli, and Bacteria.

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 202-690-2173; 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.



Sorghum Storage Odor Reference Project Update

Jim Whalen, Kansas City, MO

With the approval and distribution of the Sorghum Storage Odor Musty (SOM) Reference samples May 10, 2012, the decades-long debate over the application of this unique subjective factor may finally be put to rest. Sorghum, more than other grain crops, has a natural pungency that expresses transient odors over time as it ages in storage. The debate among professional grain inspectors and the numerous sorghum stakeholders that exist between producer and end-user has historically centered on the point at which “storage odor” in sorghum becomes unacceptable.

Expanding uses for U.S. sorghum and the proliferation of alternative storage mediums such as “ground piles” in recent years prompted the call for a definitive resolution to the sorghum storage odor question. Collaborative projects between GIPSA and the Agricultural Research Service resulted in the identification of key chemicals – geosmin and 1, 2, 4-trimethoxybenzene – that could be combined to replicate musty odors in grain. After several presentations about the progress of the project, the Grain Inspection Advisory Committee formally resolved to recommend that GIPSA’s Sorghum Odor Task Force proceed with developing a sensory reference for storage odor as its goal. To that end:

- ◆ FGIS canvassed a broad array of sorghum stakeholders to collect data to establish a general odor baseline that adequately served the highest percentage of participants.
- ◆ FGIS entered into a cooperative agreement with Kansas State University’s Sensory Analysis Center.
- ◆ FGIS and Official Service Providers from sorghum producing areas began identifying and collecting samples for analysis by the Sensory Analysis Center. The Sensory Analysis Center tested numerous samples to establish a connection between compounds common to “musty” products and GIPSA’s Board of Appeals and Review (BAR) “line” on storage odor musty. The BAR line was verified by Sensory Panels with thousands of hours of training in odor detection and classification, and the suspect compounds were identified by using head space solid phase-microextraction (HS-SPME) and gas chromatography-mass spectrometry (GC-MS).
- ◆ The BAR and Sensory Analysis Center collaborated on the actual development of the standard by testing various combinations and concentrations of the odor producing compounds in pristine one-year old sorghum samples until a sample was produced that adequately represented the minimum intensity, or line, at which inspectors would apply a musty odor designation to a sorghum lot coming out of storage.

In the end, the process yielded a sensory reference for a specific type of odor that has been thoroughly tested with stakeholders and professional inspectors and should enhance consistency throughout the official system.

The cast of characters who contributed to this effort over the years (many retired) is way too long to list, but exemplifies the best of cooperation between industry, academia, and government to solve problems, effect change, and serve a most vital segment of our economy, American agriculture. GIPSA is quite confident that should “son of SOM” come along, we’ll be ready and able.

Dr. Joe Leonard visits NOLA Kevin Smith, Washington, DC

In early May, the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, **Dr. Joe Leonard**, and key members from his staff visited the FGIS New Orleans Field Office to conduct a listening/discussion session and provide civil rights training to employees, managers and union officials.

The Acting Administrator, **Alan Christian**, Deputy Administrator, **Randall Jones**, and Civil Rights Director, **Kevin Smith** attended the session to hear and address employees concerns. An after action team is being established to develop and implement a plan for organizational improvement.



Dr. Joe Leonard, Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights

GIPSA Summer Reading List

Brett Offutt, Washington, DC

Now that summer is just around the corner, many GIPSA employees are looking forward to some rest and relaxation. Whether you're planning to take a long family vacation or spend a few lazy afternoons by the pool or in your favorite chair, losing yourself in a good book is a great way to pass the time. I've put together a short list of books to consider if you're looking for an alternative to the mindless fiction commonly found on the best seller lists (not that there is anything wrong with mindless fiction). My book suggestions include The Jungle, the work by Upton Sinclair that led to increased federal regulation of the meatpacking industry; Macmillan: The American Grain Family, the story of a fascinating family and owners of Cargill, the largest privately held company in the world; and Plucked and Burned, a fictional narration of the plight of the contract poultry grower. Enjoy your summer and happy reading!

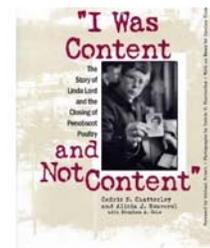
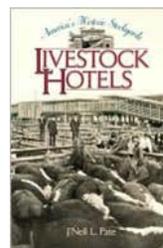
The Jungle, Upton Sinclair. The Jungle was written in 1906 and tells the story of a Lithuanian immigrant living in Chicago in the stockyards district and working in the meat packing industry. The book is famous for exposing unsanitary and horrid conditions in the packing plants which led to passage of the Meat Inspection Act and the Pure Food and Drug Act of 1906. It also addresses other social issues of that period, including worker rights, racism, corruption, and poverty.

Macmillan: The American Grain Family, W. Duncan Macmillan. An illustrate biography of the MacMillan family and their business, Cargill, Inc. The author is the great-grandson of Cargill founder William Wallace Cargill and a retired director of the company.

Plucked and Burned, Sylvia Tomlinson. Written from a poultry grower's perspective, this work tells of the hard work and difficult relationships between the poultry integrator and the contract poultry grower. The author's fictionalized account of life in the poultry business is based on many hours of extensive research and interviews with growers.

America's Historic Stockyards: Livestock Hotel. J'Nell Pate. Author J'Nell Pate provides the reader with a comprehensive look at the rise and decline of America's stockyards, from the early days of livestock trading to the early days of the 21st Century, which saw nearly all of the great terminal stockyards close their gates forever. Included is a mini-biography of each of the major stockyards, organized by region of the country.

I was Content and Not Content: The Story of Linda Lord and the Closing of Penobscot Poultry, Alicia J. Rouverol and Stephen A. Cole. In this firsthand account of a poultry plant closure, Linda Lord tells of her experience as the last poultry-processing plant in Maine closed its doors in 1988, costing over 400 people their jobs, including her own. The story of the Penobscot closing sheds light on the link between business and community and the far reaching effect a plant closing such as this one can have.



Leadership Training Update

September 10-21, 2012, GIPSA is offering two separate one week-long sessions on leadership training with estimated openings for about 40 participants, which includes supervisors and employees. Stay-tuned for a formal announcement and further details about how to apply. The current proposed location is Kansas City at GIPSA's National Grain Center.

GIPSA-FGIS Mentoring Program Update!

Caroline Thorpe, Washington, DC, and Mary Alonzo, Kansas City, MO

The number of mentee applicants exceeded expectations and GIPSA had over 65 applications for both mentors and mentees. GIPSA-FGIS is enthusiastically embracing this developmental activity! Thank you to all who applied. During June individual mentees will be paired with mentors.

Mentoring: How to make it work for you!

Whether you participate in the GIPSA-FGIS Mentoring Program, or mentor on an informal basis* there are certain skills that ensure success in either environment.

Mentoring can be for many different purposes. You may already be involved in mentoring whenever you search out an expert in an area to get advice on skills you want to develop such as interpersonal skills, diversity, customer service, educational support, and many other areas.

To be successful, **mentors** need to be:

- Advisors/Listeners
- Encouragers
- Informative
- Trustworthy
- Able to provide feedback
- Inspiring

To be successful, **mentees** must:

- Drive the relationship
- Take initiative in their own development
- Plan for mentoring sessions
- Be willing to share information with the mentor
- Be a continuous learner
- Be willing to accept feedback

If you are participating in mentoring or as either a mentor or mentee, consider your development in these areas. Thanks again to all who have applied for participation in the FGIS-Mentoring Program.

*A formal mentoring program is run by an organization where mentors and mentees are often officially assigned or recognized. This offers an opportunity for employees to use work time to develop themselves while contributing to the overall success of the organization. In GIPSA's case the purpose is Knowledge Transfer or the sharing of information from more senior employees to less senior employees on what effectively helps GIPSA-FGIS run and help in the mentee's development. However, if you do not participate in the formal mentoring program, informal mentoring is also a viable option. Informal mentoring is done on an individual basis where a mentee or mentor seek each other out to informally share information.



Best of Show

Congratulations to **Angela Emrich**, her art piece titled "Beauty at Work" won Best of Show - Conservation in the 150th USDA Anniversary's Art and Agriculture contest! More than 100 entries were made from employees from 19 states, with 70 percent of the display from field offices. The contest was a great way to commemorate the 150th Anniversary of USDA, while allowing employees to share their talent.

Visit the Cultural Transformation webpage to see all entries (e-authentication required):

<http://culturaltransformation.usda.gov/>

*"Beauty at Work" by Angela Emrich
Best of Show—Conservation*

Why an IDP?

Caroline Thorpe, Washington, DC

This article is based on information generated from the USDA Departmental Directive 4040-410 which requires all employees to submit an IDP form.

Why do an IDP? IDPs can be an effective tool as part of long term career planning, for employees, and leadership. Completing IDPs can enhance employee engagement, effectiveness and skills. They are an important part of succession planning to help all employees develop skills may be needed in the future and address competency skill gaps.

What is an IDP?

An IDP is:

- (1) A clear statement of an employee's career goals.
- (2) A map for attaining goals that specifies immediate and long-range developmental need.
- (3) An individually-tailored action plan to develop specific competencies (knowledge and skills) needed to improve performance in the employee's present position or to prepare for new responsibilities.
- (4) A written plan for scheduling and managing an employee's development.
- (5) A tool for a supervisor to estimate resources needed for employee development training.
- (6) An agreement between the employee and supervisor based on funds available to meet the employee's and the organization's goals.
- (7) A tool for an organization to develop its workforce to meet future needs.

An IDP is not:

- (1) A corrective action tool for poor performance.
- (2) An unofficial reward system.
- (3) A contract.

A major difficulty supervisors and employees encounter in matching needs with activities is that of selecting the optimum developmental activity, which provides maximum learning within the boundaries of the organization's: a. Mission; b. Budget; c. Workload; d. Travel; e. Staffing; and f. Time constraints.

Multiple Developmental Approaches: Variety of developmental approaches and strategies can be considered. We often think of training only in terms of formal training

courses. Actually there are four basic types of developmental experiences to consider in planning the IDP:

a. **On-the-Job-Training.** Structured on-the-job-training is the most frequently used method of individualized learning. In this situation, the employee is counseled and coached while actually performing official duties. It usually involves individual instruction by the A-10 supervisor or a designated staff member because of his/her experience in the task or procedure to be learned. This approach can be used to teach employees new procedures, tasks and technology.

b. **Formal Classroom Training.** This training may take place away from your work site. Depending on the objectives, specific program and instructor's approach, this experience can be very valuable. It may be the only alternative you have to acquire specific or specialized technical or managerial competency.

c. **Self-Development.** When an employee aspires to a new career and his/her developmental needs cannot be directly related to present or anticipated work assignments, or resources are not available, the employee may undertake self-development activities:

- (1) Taking evening or weekend courses at local schools.
- (2) Watching educational or training videotapes.
- (3) Using correspondence and other self-study courses.
- (4) Reading books and other publications or journals.
- (5) Using PC tutorials or computer assisted training programs.

Remember, what employees want in terms of development and what the supervisor can authorize may be different. The supervisor by law can only authorize certain types of activities on the job. To meet all goals, it may be necessary for the employee to gain some competencies on their own time. Funding should be discussed between the employee and the supervisor.

d. **Developmental Activities.** One of the best ways to train for added responsibilities or higher job opportunities is through developmental activities. With the support and assistance of the supervisor, the employee's present job can be restructured or arrangements made to have the employee temporarily transferred to an-

Why an IDP?, from page 13.

other area to learn firsthand the necessary technical and managerial competencies required for effective performance in that job. Examples of developmental activities include the following list:

- (1) **Shadowing:** Providing the opportunity to observe a well qualified, journeyman level employee perform a particular skill. Immediately after the shadowing period, the employee needs to have the opportunity to perform the same skill and be given feedback on that performance.
- (2) **Detail/Rotational Assignments:** Short-term assignment particularly appropriate for important skills that make up a small portion of an individual's job, but can lead to full-time work in that field.
- (3) **Task Force Assignments:** This is particularly effective if the employee has an opportunity to work with well qualified people who will provide feedback to the learner on his/her performance and participation in the group.

e. Development of Job Aides. A job aid requires that the employee develop a product that will assist in the performance of the job, while, at the same time, serving as a vehicle for learning job-related information. Three types of job aids include: cross-program assignments; special work A-11 projects; and coaching lower level employees.

By discussing options with your supervisor hopefully an employee can take their next step toward career

ACROSS

- 1 President who extended the week long celebration to one month
- 7 Where the Cherry Blossoms came from
- 9 Landmark legislation passed to prohibit discrimination
- 10 Title VII created this to implement the law
- 11 Famous Chinese martial arts expert

DOWN

- 1 GIPSA Informal Complaints Manager
- 2 Appeared in the "Rush Hour" movies
- 3 Animal celebrated this Chinese new year
- 4 Japan is composed of many of these
- 5 Immigrants of this descent helped to construct the Transcontinental Railroad in 1869
- 6 President who proclaimed the first 10 days of May as Asian-Pacific American Heritage Week
- 8 Your agency

Crossword Puzzle Answers

GIPSA's EEOAC/SEPMs would like to thank everyone who participated in last month's Asian Pacific American Heritage Crossword Puzzle contest. We would like to congratulate our winners: **Julie Nelis**, FGIS Departmental Initiatives & International Affairs, as well as **Regina Willis** and **Wayne Basford** of the Packers & Stockyards Program's Eastern Regional Office in Atlanta, GA.

Julie, Regina, and Wayne each completed the crossword puzzle with all correct answers

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
(800) 222-0364
(888) 262-7848 (TTY)
<http://www.FOH4You.com>
Confidential toll-free number 24 hours a day/7 days a week

To all fathers in our
GIPSA Family:

**Happy Father's
Day!**
6/17/2012



Confused About What to Eat?

Amber McDonald-Lake, Washington, DC

Nutrition is certainly one of the 'hot' topics today. We're constantly bombarded by articles and headlines recommending trendy new diets or the latest food fad. No wonder we're all a little confused about what a 'healthy diet' really means!

Making Healthy Choices

Here are some action steps to help you get started – and keep you heading in the right direction.

Assess your eating habits

- ◆ Write down everything you eat for a week. Be honest – no cheating!
- ◆ Measure your servings to see how much you're really eating in a day – the size of your portions will probably surprise you.
- ◆ Now, compare your diet with the daily recommendations of the plan of your choice.



Take time to eat regularly

- ◆ Your body needs energy all day long. Try to schedule time for breakfast, lunch and dinner.
- ◆ Too busy to sit down for three square meals a day? Then plan for six-mini meals – make up small, healthy servings that you can snack on during short breaks in your workday.

Don't run on empty

- ◆ Would you drive your car with an empty gas tank? Of course not! Well, after a long night's sleep, your body's fuel tank is empty too – so make sure you find time for breakfast.
- ◆ Nutritionally speaking, breakfast is the most important meal of the day - it revs your metabolism and helps you perform better all day.
- ◆ Are your mornings too chaotic to fit in breakfast? Plan ahead – hard boil some eggs the night before for an easy, ready-to-go breakfast.

Learn to be label savvy

- ◆ Most packaged food has nutrition information on the label – knowing how to read a label helps you compare the nutritional value of similar products.
- ◆ Ingredients are listed in order, based on the amount used by weight – the first ingredient on the list makes up the largest percentage of the packaged food.
- ◆ Claims like 'low in fat' or 'high fiber' are defined and regulated by the government – but don't simply rely on these claims – read the whole label to get the detailed nutritional story. *Source: www.health.com*

Remember – small changes make a BIG difference to your health

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 June 25, 2012

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