



GIPSA News

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

June 2001

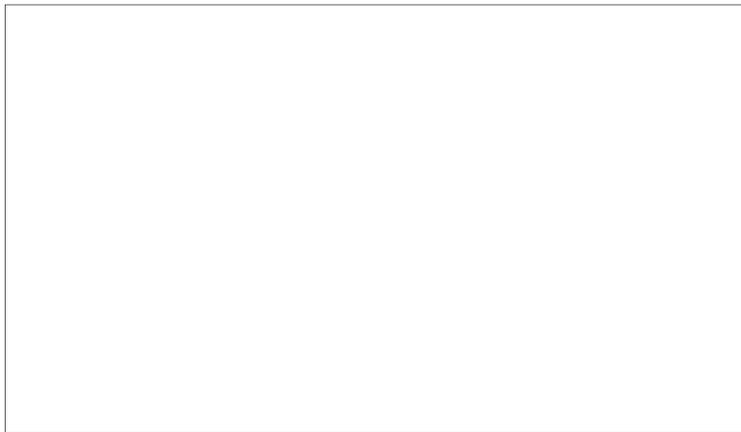
2001 Honor Award Recipients

On June 4, 2001, **Secretary Ann Veneman** presented the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Honor Awards to individuals, teams, and group leaders for their exceptional achievements. The awards recognize outstanding contributions to agriculture, to consumers of agricultural products, and to the ability of USDA to serve rural America. They are the most significant awards that the Department gives. GIPSA congratulates the Agency's 2001 Honor Award recipients, members of the Clerical/Support Staff of the New Orleans Field Office: **Glenda Lasseigne, Yohanna Lorio, Carla Cambre, Rose Fremin, Erin Dubroc, Amelia Gautreau, Joanna LaBlanc, Angela Marine, Joanne Matherne, and Angela Roper.**

This team provides exceptional administrative support that increases the efficiency of the New Orleans Field Office and improves customer service—critically important accomplishments in an office that each year

helps move 64 million metric tons, or approximately 75 percent of all grains exported from the United States.

The Clerical/Support Staff make customer success and satisfaction a priority. Working closely with applicants, the Staff provides timely and accurate official certificates for cus-



*GIPSA's 2001 Honor Award Recipients:
members of the New Orleans clerical/support staff.*

tomers in New Orleans, and provides certification and administrative support to other offices. Their efforts save applicants time and money by providing original documents locally.

The Staff exemplifies teamwork. Their exceptional strides to coordinate leave use, and their unique ability to work as a unit, minimizes adverse

impacts on their co-workers and ensures no interruption in clerical and support services. Their efforts allowed the office to cut by one the number of clerical staff needed—saving GIPSA a minimum of \$30,000 per year. Further, their collaboration has resulted in a significant decline in document errors. Working as a team, Clerical/Support staff has increased the efficiency and effectiveness of the New Orleans Field Office.

The Staff has earned respect agencywide. They are frequently sought out to pilot and provide feedback on new programs, such as Cu-Sum, Documents Online, and the Intermarket Tracking

System. In addition, their expert counsel on program and procedural matters is routinely sought by many within the Agency.

Congratulations to the **Clerical/Support Staff of the New Orleans Field Office!** They are most deserving of this special recognition.

Names in the News

PERSONNEL

Diane Blunt, formerly with the Office of International Affairs, transferred to Field Management Division's Policies and Procedures Branch.

Bob Petersen became Officer-in-Charge of the Moscow Suboffice on May 6, 2001.

John Sharpe became chief of the Data and Information Analysis Branch, Field Management Division, on May 6, 2001.

The Compliance Division's Review Branch thanks the following field-based people who assisted Branch team coordinators with conducting official agency reviews during the third quarter of fiscal year

2001. **Lynette Scalise**, agricultural commodity technician, Moscow Suboffice, helped evaluate the Montana and Oregon Departments of Agriculture, located in the Moscow circuit. **Cleve Ellis**, agricultural commodity grader (ACG), Portland Field Office, helped evaluate Hastings Grain Inspection, Inc., located in the Wichita Field Office circuit. **Don Akers**, quality assurance specialist, Corpus Christi Suboffice, **Jimmy Cadle**, ACG, Jonesboro Suboffice, and **Gary Zella**, ACG, Stuttgart Field Office, helped evaluate North Dakota Grain Inspection Service, Inc.'s, operations in North Dakota and Illinois, located in the Grand Forks and Kansas City Field Office circuits. **Mary Vick**, ACG, Kansas City Field Office, helped evaluate the Missouri Department of Agriculture, located in the Kansas City and Stuttgart Field Office circuits. Thanks go to these folks for helping the Review Branch succeed in the review mission.

unusual problems associated with the automated weighing system.

Rhondalyn Edwards, ACG-9, New Orleans, received a time-off award for providing exceptional and efficient service to our external customers.

Henry Fallon, ACG-9, New Orleans, received a spot award for going above the level expected to ensure that we continue to provide good quality services.

Janine Goodson, **Carey Cook**, **Ronald Bicsak**, **Bill Burden**, **Valerie Collins**, and **Lynn Polston**, Technical Services Division, received spot awards for cleaning and arranging the supplies/equipment in the loading dock area in record time.

Joe Hearns, League City, received a spot award for Outstanding performance in the Rice Quality Assurance Program in the League City Field Office by providing guidance and training, coordinating rice surveys, and mentoring technicians in preparation for successfully passing their proficiency exams.

Vernett Knight, **Walter Briley**, and **James Magee**, ACG-9s, New Orleans, received spot awards for constantly taking the extra steps to assist fellow employees in performing their assigned duties.

Melvin McLaurin, ACG-9, New Orleans, received a spot award for maintaining a smooth flow of GIPSA services at the Cargill and ADM Elevators in Area 3.

Continued, see Names on page 3.

In This Issue

Names in the News	2
Minot Pays Civil Penalty	3
Travel Bits & Pieces	3
Issuances	3
StarLink Test Kit Verified	4
Lab Grain Test Scales	4
Idea Hotline Update	5
Working in Hot Weather	6
Software Piracy	7
For Your Health	7
Celebrate a Language	8
New Ethics Regulation	8
Eldercare Locator	8

AWARDS

Jim Adams, auditor, and **Larry Buchanan**, Branch Chief, Washington, DC, received spot awards for their extra effort in keeping the Financial Branch on target with its caseload and assignments during a shortage of staff.

Don Akers, QAS, Corpus Christi, earned a spot award for serving as a team leader during the North Dakota official agency compliance review.

Glenn Diket, League City, received a spot award for outstanding effort in correcting and preventing

Names, from page 2.

Mary Miller, auditor, Denver; and **Sue Ann Claudon** and **Philip Warren**, resident agents, Ft. Worth, received spot awards for their dedication and initiative in conducting the Supreme Beef Packers, Inc., Dallas, Texas, rapid response investigation. This resulted in the establishment of a trust for unpaid livestock sellers, which culminated in full payment in the amount of \$844,500 for all livestock sellers.

James Morcaldi, auditor, Denver, received an extra effort award for his exceptional dedication and initiative in conducting Supreme Beef Packers, Inc., rapid response investigation.

Elkin Parker, resident agent, Indianapolis, received a spot award for identifying and suggesting a method of capturing travel expenses and hours worked on investigations by modification of the existing Time Distribution and Work Measurement Reports.

Nathaniel Puryear, ACG-5, New Orleans, received a time-off award for being enthusiastic and courteous to your customers and fellow employees.

Linda Remonet, ACT-6, New Orleans, received a time-off award for being a quality employee and displaying excellent work habits.

Philip Sapienza, ACT-6, New Orleans, received a spot award for being competent and diligent in the performance of his assigned duties.

Brenda Scott, Arthur Williams, Wanda Pittman, Roy Landry, Sr., and Terry LeBouef, ACTs, New Orleans, received time-off awards for providing quality GIPSA services at Cargill and ADM Elevators.

Ernestine Taplin, ACT-6, New Orleans, received a spot award for performing assigned duties in an efficient and exemplary manner with customer service as her main priority.

Minot Pays \$1,500 Civil Penalty

Tom Hearon, Washington, DC

Minot Farmers Elevator, Inc., Drake, ND, agreed to pay a \$1,500 civil monetary penalty to settle an enforcement action brought by GIPSA. The firm was charged with deceptive loading and grain handling which caused the issuance of a false official grain inspection certificate. This is a violation of the United States Grain Standards Act (USGSA).

The complaint filed against Minot Farmers Elevator was the result of an investigation conducted by GIPSA under the authority of the USGSA.

The USGSA provides for the establishment of U.S. grain standards, and for the official inspection and weighing of grain shipped in domestic and international commerce.

Travel Bits & Pieces

Peggy Smith, Washington, DC

Direct Payment to Bank of America. If you would like to have your travel voucher reimbursement check sent by direct deposit to the Bank of America to pay your travel credit card, please call the 800 number on the back of the card to have Bank of America set up an Electronic Funds Transfer account for you. You will also need to get the bank routing number. When completing Section B of your travel voucher, check Block 21 (Travel EFT Account), then enter the bank routing number and the account number Bank of America set up for you in Block 35.

Issuances

Charlie Turner, Washington, DC

- ❑ PN01-02, Sample Collection Responsibilities for Verifying The Accuracy of Moisture Meter Calibrations, Crop Year 2001, Dated 5/1/01.
- ❑ PN01-03, Certifying Wheat Protein on Moisture Basis other than 12.0 Percent, dated 5/1/01.
- ❑ PN01-04, Fees for FGIS Rice Inspection Services, dated 5/1/01.
- ❑ PN01-5, Fees For FGIS Commodity Inspection Services - Pluses, Hops, Miscellaneous Processed and Graded Commodities - And The Commodity Testing Laboratory, dated 5/1/01.
- ❑ 9180.61, Official Calibrations for The Dickey-john GAC 2100 Moisture Meter, dated 5/1/01

GIPSA Verifies StarLink Test Kit

GIPSA has found that the Strategic Diagnostics, Inc. GMO Bt9 Maize Kit meets the manufacturer's claims of the identifying one StarLink corn kernel in 10,000 corn kernels.

GIPSA's verification of tests is performed on grain only, not processed foods. GIPSA verified the test detects the presence of StarLink; the quantitative claims by the manufacturer were not verified.

GIPSA began offering official StarLink testing on November 15, 2000, after the grain markets expressed the need for government backed testing and to ensure that corn export markets that have specific restrictions on the import of corn containing StarLink are fulfilled. StarLink is a variety of corn developed by Aventis Crop Science that incorporates biotechnical modification to control insect damage. StarLink is approved for animal feed and industrial use only and is no longer available as seed for production.

GIPSA's evaluation of rapid test kits helps grain markets make more informed decisions about the grain being bought and sold.

For more information on StarLink testing services, see GIPSA's web site at <http://www.usda.gov/gipsa/biotech/starlink/starlink.htm>. For information on test kit performance evaluation and laboratory accreditation services, visit <http://www.usda.gov/gipsa/biotech/evalaccredit.htm>.

Laboratory Grain Test Scales

Paul Hadyka, Washington, DC

As most managers know, the price of grain test scales is one of the largest expenses in outfitting a laboratory. Did you know that the price of some scales is only half of what is paid for others depending on division size? Scale division size (d) is the smallest subdivision (increment) that is shown on the scale display. Scales with smaller values of d usually cost more.

A scale that typically might be 4,000 grams x 0.1 grams per division can be purchased in the \$500 range; however, a scale that is 400 grams x 0.01 grams per division can cost near \$1,000. A dual range scale (if you can find one) will be even more.

The Policies and Procedures Branch has been working with two official agencies to evaluate the differences in division size and how they can affect grading. Our goal is to cut costs—but not accuracy. What scale resolution is good enough to use on small portion sizes?

Preliminary field tests are very encouraging. Scales with the larger (0.1 g) division sizes have been giving the same (average) results as the other scales. When picking from 125-, 250-, or 1,000-gram portions, we have seen the final percentages vary by only +/- 0.1 % on individual samples. This was an expected variation due to scale rounding errors.

When picking smaller portion sizes like 60 or 15 grams, the scales produce results that are too variable for use in the official system. But we haven't given up yet. Perhaps scales with expanded resolution can reduce errors to an acceptable level. Please be patient, we'll be sure to keep you up-to-date with any policy changes as they occur.

**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





GIPSA Idea Hotline Update

Norma Phelps, Washington, DC



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

<i>Suggestor</i>	<i>Suggestion</i>
David Lowe, Kansas City, MO	Eliminate the Percentage Range for Plump Barley Upgrade All QAS's to a GS-12 Eliminate Barley Factors On a Representative Portion of Dockage-Free/Thin-Free Eliminate Rye Factors on a Representative Portion of Dockage-Free/Thin-Free
Bryice Wilke, Des Moines, IA	Approve the Purchase of Telephone Cards for Official Travel Include Competition Documentation to be Scanned in the Image Folder
Ahmad Gorabi, Des Moines, IA	Reimburse Employees for Deductible When Using Own Insurance for Physicals Reward Employees for Submitting Ideas/Suggestions That Are Adopted
Niles Reed, New Orleans, LA	Make the GIPSA Newsletter Available on the Web Implement a Compensatory Work Schedule to Reduce Overtime

May's tee-shirt winner: **Bryice Wilke!**

GIPSA Hotline Ideas Accepted and Approved for Implementation During May 2001

This list does not necessarily indicate that the idea was implemented as suggested or that it is currently in place (it could be in the development/implementation stage). To avoid the chance of misinterpretation, please call the Hotline if you have any concerns or questions regarding the following list of ideas.

-  Provide Ability to Apply for 15,000 Metric Ton Exemption Online on GIPSA Website
-  Revise Time Distribution and Work Measurement Report to Track Financial Costs
-  Publish Cu-Sum on the GIPSA HomePage

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.**

Working in Hot Weather

Mack Manis, Washington, DC

Hot weather can pose serious health risks. Your body builds up heat when you work and you sweat to get rid of the extra heat. But sometimes — for example, if you are probing a string of hopper cars on a hot summer day— your body may not cool off fast enough. Too much heat can make you feel tired, hurt your job performance, and increase your chance of injury. It can also lead to:

- ☹ **Dehydration.** When your body loses water, you can't cool off fast enough. You feel thirsty and weak.
- ☹ **Cramps.** You can get muscle cramps from the heat even after you leave work.
- ☹ **Heat exhaustion.** You feel tired, nauseous, have a headache, and dizziness. Your skin is damp and looks muddy or flushed. You may faint.
- ☹ **Heat stroke.** You may have hot dry skin and a high temperature, or you may feel confused. You may have convulsions or become unconscious. **Heat stroke can kill you unless you get emergency medical help.**

Your risk of heat stress depends on many things. These include your physical condition, the weather (temperature, humidity), how much clothing you have on, what you are doing, if you are near a fan or if there is a breeze, or if you are in the sun.

Early symptoms, such as feeling hot, uncomfortable and listless, usu-

ally pose no threat, unless they persist. However, because the milder ones usually precede the serious signs of heat stress (listed below), it is important that you get medical attention if you experience any of the following: dizziness, rapid heartbeat, diarrhea, nausea, cramps, throbbing headache, dry skin (no sweating), chest pain, great weakness, mental changes, breathing problems, and vomiting.

NOTE: These symptoms can also signal other major problems, such as heart failure. Again, if you experience any of them, call a doctor immediately.

When working outside on hot days, try doing the following:

- ◆ Drink a lot of cool water all day— before you feel thirsty. Every 15 minutes, you may need a cup of water (5 to 7 ounces).
- ◆ Keep taking rest breaks. Rest in a cool, shady spot. Use fans.
- ◆ Wear light-colored, cotton clothing.
- ◆ Do the most strenuous work in the coolest time of the day.
- ◆ When doing physically-demanding work on a hot day, take turns with other workers to conserve your strength.
- ◆ Curtail physical activity during extremely hot weather. Activity adds to heart strain.
- ◆ Avoid hot foods and heavy meals. They add heat to your body.
- ◆ Watch salt intake. Don't take salt tablets without your doctor's permission.

- ◆ Avoid alcohol.

If you are detailed or transfer from an office in a “cool” region to one in a warmer area (e.g., from Duluth to New Orleans), you need time for your body to get used to the heat. Be extra careful the first 2 weeks on the job.

If you work in protective clothing such as a life vest, you need more rest breaks.

If you think someone is having a heat stroke, call emergency services (or 911) and move the person to the shade, wipe his/her skin with cool water, and loosen his/her clothes. Use a piece of cardboard or other material to fan your co-worker.

Take hot weather seriously, pay attention to the danger signs and get medical attention at the first sign of trouble.

Employee Assistance Program

The EAP is ready and waiting to provide you with confidential assistance...

Washington, DC personnel,
call... 301-570-3900
or 1-800-222-0364

Field personnel, call...
1-800-222-0364

Software Piracy

Carol Remmers, Washington, DC

Software piracy isn't a new topic. The problem has been around for years. Software piracy is the theft of computer programs through unauthorized duplication, distribution, or use of computer software. This includes making more copies of software than the license allows, or installing software licensed for one computer onto multiple computers or a server. Unauthorized software copying is an act of copyright infringement and is subject to civil and criminal penalties. It is illegal, regardless of whether you use pirated software yourself, give it away, or sell it.

Most computer programs from commercial sources are copyrighted. That means the software is legally protected and there are restrictions on the reproduction and use of that product. When GIPSA (or anyone else) purchases a copy of a software package, all that is actually bought is the right to use that product under stated restrictions. The restrictions in that license are whatever the copyright holder wants them to be. You don't have a unilateral right to decide how to use software. Restrictions on software use vary from product to product, and it is up to you to check it and make certain that you comply. If you violate those restrictions, you commit a Federal crime.

The real cost and value of software lies not in the CD-ROM or diskette that contains the program, but in the lines of code it holds—the millions of instructions that tell a computer what to do. Restrictions on use of copyrighted software are put there by the software developer to gain compensation for the effort of developing it. Software developers invest considerable time, effort, and frustration in their products. If they are successful, their software will be useful and well liked by many computer users. Those users should be willing to pay for that usefulness.

So what's the harm in making a few extra copies? If those extra copies are used on GIPSA computers, the harm could be great. The software industry in general takes piracy very seriously. Like other copyright infringements, software piracy is a crime and penalties are serious—\$100,000 *per illegal copy*. The damage to our professional image would be significant, too. You couldn't be more wrong if you think you are saving your unit money by buying one copy of a software product and then loading it on many systems, in violation of the usage restrictions of that software.

In the larger picture, software piracy hurts everyone. Copying cheats the publisher and everyone who uses the software. It makes software more costly and denies the publisher the sales it needs—and earned—to improve software and finance new projects.

If you need a particular piece of software, procure it through proper channels. Carefully review software license agreements and make certain that you comply with them completely.

If you have illegal copies of computer software, get rid of them. Adopt the attitude that you won't tolerate software theft by anyone, including coworkers or subordinates, regardless of their reason(s).

If you have further questions, contact your IT Manager or your ISSPM.

For Your Health

Mavis Rogers, Washington, DC

When your voice turns hoarse, it is doubtful that you have swallowed a frog. But, something has caused your voice to sound like that of the small, green amphibian.

The most common cause of hoarseness is laryngitis, or the temporary swelling of the voice box. This often happens if you have a cold or allergies. Laryngitis also can occur if you overuse your voice, such as by yelling at a sports event. Professionals, who use their voices a lot, such as singers or teachers, may develop laryngitis more often. If you have laryngitis, your hoarseness should go away in 2-3 weeks. Until it does, you should avoid using your voice too much.

The following self-care measures also can help relieve symptoms and possibly prevent another bout of laryngitis: avoid straining your voice by yelling or singing at a loud volume; regularly rest your vocal cords by taking breaks from talking; drink lots of water to keep your throat moist; and avoid smoke, alcohol, and industrial chemicals, which can irritate your voice.

Hoarseness also may be caused by other health problems, including: vocal nodules, or growths, on the larynx; throat cancer; gastroesophageal reflux, which is caused by stomach acid irritating the throat; and some medications, including some antihistamines and antidepressants.

If your hoarseness lasts longer than a few weeks or is accompanied by other serious symptoms, call your doctor. You also should see your doctor if your voice disappears or severely changes and does not improve after 2 to 3 days.

Diversity: Let's Celebrate a Language

Ahmad Gorabi, Des Moines

Persian is one of the world's oldest languages, a standard and well-recognized tongue as early as the 6th century B.C. It is one of the Iranian languages which form a branch of the Indo-European family. To native speakers Persian is known as Farsi. Old Persian was the language of the great Persian Empire which at one time extended from the Mediterranean to the Indus River in India.

The language was written in Cuneiform, the wedge-shaped characters used throughout much of the ancient world. In the 2nd century B.C., the Persians created their own alphabet, known as Pahlavi, which remained in use until the Islamic conquest of the 7th century. Since that time, Persian has been written in the Arabic script with a number of additional characters to accommodate special sounds.

Modern Persian is spoken by over 40 million people in Iran and another 5 million in Afghanistan. In Iran, it is generally referred to as Farsi, in Afghanistan as Dari. A variety of Persian called Tajik is spoken in the Tajikistan, but there it is written in the Cyrillic alphabet. English words of Persian origin include shawl, pajama, taffeta, khaki, kiosk, divan, lilac, jasmine, julep, jackal, caravan, bazaar, checkmate, dervish, and satrap.

New Ethics Regulation Issued

Mark Leking, AMS/GIPSA Employee Relations Branch

On May 3, 2001, the Department's Office of Ethics released Ethics Issuance Number 00-1, "Participation In Non-Federal Organizations".

This regulation recognizes that many USDA employees participate in a variety of non-Federal organizations. These include for-profit and non-profit corporations, partnerships, as well as civic, professional, educational, and scientific organizations. Many of these outside organizations have little or no direct involvement with USDA or the Federal government. In fact, the regulation mentions that in many cases, the government benefits from the participation of its employees in these outside organizations, and may encourage and assist employees in such cases.

However, conflict-of-interest laws and ethics regulations must be applied when there exists some connection between the organization, and either the employee's official duties, or USDA or the Federal government in general.

If you are currently participating in an outside organization, or if you expect to, it would be wise to acquaint yourself with this regulation. You may review it on www.usda.gov/ethics under "Rules of the Road." In addition to the regulation itself, further down on the "Rules of the Road" list you will also find the site "Guidance on Conflicts of Interest - Regarding participation in outside organizations in an official capacity." This site further explains this topic, and provides a handy checklist, to assist you in determining the acceptability of such participation.

Of course, it is always advisable to discuss in advance with your supervisor any activities on your part which may involve ethics or conflict of interest considerations. In addition, questions may also be raised with the AMS/GIPSA Employee Relations Branch, which has responsibility for administering the ethics program in our mission area. We may be reached on 202-720-5721, and our fax number is 202-720-3039.

Eldercare Locator

As a public service, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services offers free information on aging services. Call the toll-free number -- **800-677-1116** -- for information on aging services anywhere in the country.

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

Dana Stewart
USDA, GIPSA, Stop 3601
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-3601
Phone (202) 720-5091
FAX (202) 205-9237
dstewart@gipsadc.usda.gov

by July 25, 2001!

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