



GIPSA News

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

June 2005

Reauthorization Update

Dave Shipman, Washington, DC

In the April 2005 edition of *GIPSA News*, I shared with you information about centralization of monitoring and FGIS' reauthorization. On May 24 and 25, the House and Senate Agriculture Committees held hearings on the legislative reauthorization of the U.S. Grain Standards Act.

As expected, the grain industry, represented by the National Grain and Feed Association and the North American Export Grain Association, as well as producer groups, testified in favor of amending the Act to allow FGIS to authorize private entities to provide export inspections under direct FGIS supervision, instead of the current Federal workforce. The industry and producer groups' witnesses focused on the potential cost savings of such a change, while recognizing the need to maintain the integrity of the official system and final certificate.

Excerpts of my Congressional testimony appear below.

Nearly 29 years ago, Congress created the Federal Grain Inspection Service (FGIS) to maintain the quality of American grain exports and the integrity of the U.S. grain inspection

and weighing system. A 1975 Congressional report stated: "It is essential that our customers have faith in the integrity of our inspection and weighing system, and that they get the grade, quality, and quantity of grain for which they contract and pay."

For the past 29 years, the employees of FGIS, now GIPSA, have dedicated themselves to building a national inspection and weighing system based on quality service and integrity. During this same period, the structure and practices of the grain industry have dramatically changed as exporters developed closer relationships with overseas buyers to deliver the quality and quantity of grain that best meets their end-use needs. In brief, the market environment of the 1970s no longer exists and our trading partners have confidence in the quality and quantity of grain shipped by exporters and represented by the official inspection and weighing certificates.

Perhaps one of the best indicators of the changes that have occurred in the industry can be reflected in the number of complaints received from international buyers. In 1985, GIPSA received 74 complaints from international buyers that accounted for 2.2 percent of America's total export grain volume. By 1995, the number of complaints dropped to 30, or 1.0 percent of exports; and, last year, GIPSA received only 4 complaints on 0.1

percent of the total volume of grain exported from the United States.

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Names in the News

PERSONNEL

Jaime Adams is the new confidential assistant to the deputy administrator, P&SP.

Gary McBryde is the new director of the PS&P Economic and Statistics Staff. As director of ESS, **Gary** is a critical member of the program's senior management team and the lead manager on the Live-stock and Meat Marketing Study.

Tess Butler was selected for the regulatory analyst position in the Safety and Issuance Management Branch (FGIS-Compliance Division). **Tess** will administer the Agency's regulatory management program, and help GIPSA staff prepare proposed and final regulations and other Federal Register publications.

Peggy Smith has been selected as the supervisory management analyst. **Peggy** will continue to lead Program Services, ensuring excellent service to all of GIPSA.

FAREWELL

Roy Bruner retired on April 29, 2005. We wish **Roy** and his wife **Rosemary** all the best as they begin this new adventure.

Greg Jan, Toledo, retired after 4 years with the Navy and 29 years with FGIS. **Greg** will be relocating to Tucson, Arizona.

CONDOLENCES

Harvey Jerauld, 78, died April 11, 2005. **Mr. Jerauld** was an inspector for the Kansas State Grain Inspection Department for many years. The last several years he worked as the Chief Inspector in Hutchinson, Kansas.

AWARDS

Bill Bates, Field Management Division, Washington, DC, received a spot award for contacting FGIS and official agency personnel to gather information concerning NIRT instruments, Artificial Neural Network (ANN) calibration purchases, and instrument standardization in preparation for the switch to the ANN wheat protein calibration. Personal contacts with field personnel helped ensure a smooth transition to the ANN.

Paul Hadyka, Field Management Division, Washington, D.C., received a spot award for preparing detailed data spreadsheets that illustrated the differences between wheat protein results when samples were tested using two different (Partial Least Squares and ANN) calibrations. These reports provided FGIS management with valuable information for monitoring the net effect of the calibration change and helped secure a smooth transition to the ANN.

Mavis Rogers, safety and health specialist, received a time-off award for her outstanding work in organizing and coordinating the 2005 FGIS National Safety Committee meeting.

EEO Advisory Committee Meets

Dawn Cowan, Washington, DC

The GIPSA EEO Advisory Committee (EEOAC) and Special Emphasis Program Managers (SEPMs) held a very productive meeting at the P&SP Atlanta Regional Office during the week of April 25, 2005. The EEOAC supports GIPSA's strategic planning regarding diversity initiatives in employment, training, retention, and promotion. The EEOAC provides advice and assistance to the administrator on issues relating to EEO and civil rights that impact GIPSA. The SEPMs advise management, through the EEO Advisory Committee, about unique concerns, problems, barriers to equal employment opportunity for recognized special emphasis groups, and recommend solutions for addressing these barriers. SEPMs also coordinate observance programs, activities, and training; and educate managers, supervisors, and employees on special emphasis programs.

The EEOAC and SEPMs discussed various issues and areas of concern affecting GIPSA employees, including training, performance appraisals, vacant positions/merit promotions, recruitment/diversity/retention, awards/recognition, human capital, and support for EEO and Civil Rights.

The EEOAC AND SEPMs met with and presented their issues, concerns, and recommendations to **JoAnn Waterfield**, deputy administrator, P&SP, and **David Shipman**, acting GIPSA administrator. EEOAC and SEPMs appreciated the candor, insight, and thoughtfulness of **Ms. Waterfield** and **Mr. Shipman** during the presentations and ensuing discussions.

Outreach Activities in Asia

Chuck Britton

This past April, I completed a 4-month assignment with the FGIS Office of International Affairs as a Collateral Duty Officer (CDO) in southeast Asia. While on assignment, I visited 9 countries as part of a number of different outreach activities. I was stationed out of the American Embassy in Kuala Lumpur Malaysia. I was the fourth FGIS CDO to work in this region since 2002. This position is helping expand FGIS outreach efforts to our customers in the region.

The outreach activities included working with USDA Cooperators, including U.S. Wheat Associates, the American Soybean Association, and the U.S. Grains Council. I worked with Foreign Agricultural Service offices in the different countries. These offices provided valuable help in organizing activities and projects, as well as securing travel clearances and arrangements, accommodations, and any other assistance needed.

The schedule involved fact-finding projects related to quality and quantity concerns and issues, methods of inspection and sampling, witnessing U.S. cargo discharging at different port locations, attending seminars and workshops for receivers of grain, and giving presentations on FGIS programs. I took the opportunity to promote and clarify the role and responsibilities of FGIS, including optional services we provide. I emphasized FGIS' role as an impartial third party.

It's important to understand that competing countries such as Canada, Australia, and some others have standardized measuring systems for grain. Receivers in Asia have high respect for FGIS standards of grain measurement. I heard from every location visited that end-use testing, including mycotoxin, protein and oil, and falling number testing, is a very important component in purchasing decisions. Further end-use testing by FGIS in the future will be a priority.

Receivers in Asia focus on food safety and quality of imported grain. The one conclusion I came to is that some countries are highly sophisticated in measuring grain and byproducts, and some are in the learning stage. Japan has state-of-the-art testing equipment, including heavy metal, pesticide residue, and even DNA testing, along with mechanical sampling systems at receiving elevators. In Vietnam, there is no grain inspection department at all! In the People's Republic of China (PRC), the Ministry of Agriculture delegates authority to entry-exit Inspection and Quarantine Bureaus at over 40 locations in strategic port locations called China Inspection and Quarantine, or CIQ. We have opened lines of communication with CIQ at a number of port locations where they are actually applying our methods of inspection and grading by following the FGIS Inspection handbook (even on grain from other countries!). We have an ongoing dialogue going with CIQ to provide further grain quality measurement and sampling information and assistance. China imported over \$5 billion of U.S. grain in 2004, and is on pace to buy much more in 2005.

Grain being shipped by containers has been steadily increasing to many receivers in the Asia region. Fact finding information indicates that container shipments offer smaller private producers the opportunity to ship better quality and reach "niche" markets. As long as the freight rates remain lower than bulk cargo, container grain shipments should continue to increase in the future.

Importing receivers of U.S. grain in Asia continue to be very quality conscious, and have high standards for food safety and end-use quality. It's important that all involved in America's national inspection system never lose focus on who our customers are, and that receivers and purchasers of U.S. grain in foreign countries are counting on us to facilitate the quality and quantity that they expect and deserve.

Cyber Security Awareness Training 2005

The legislatively mandated Computer Security Awareness training is on AgLearn. Each GIPSA employee must complete the course by June 30, 2005, and give a copy of the completion certificate to his/her collateral duty training officer (P&SP administrative officers) by that date. The course name is "Security Literacy and Basics FY 2005" and the course ID is "USDA-Cybersecurity-05."

For authentication questions, contact the IT Helpdesk. For AgLearn questions, contact the GIPSA Training Staff.

SMRPs: Not Just Little Blue People!

Brett Offutt, Washington, DC

On April 28, my two sons participated in the 2005 “Take Your Daughters and Sons to Work” event at USDA in Washington, DC. When asked later what most impressed him, my oldest son, **Tyler**, said, “the SMRPs” (pronounced *smurps*). **Tyler** and **Mason** were in my office during a meeting in which SMRPs were mentioned a number of times. I explained that SMRPs are not the same as Smurfs, those little characters, three apples high, with blue skin dressed in white trousers and caps who live very far from here in a village full of mushroom-shaped houses. SMRPs, for P&SP purposes, are Senior Management Review Panel (SMRP) meetings.

Tyler’s observation made me wonder what others not so familiar with P&SP Headquarters procedures think when they hear about SMRPs. How often do the little blue characters come to mind? Let me shed some light on this important aspect of life at P&SP.

SMRPs are meetings held by SMPs (pronounced *Smips*), or the Senior Management Panel. SMP includes **JoAnn Waterfield**, P&SP deputy administrator; **Bill Crutchfield**, director of the Office of Field Operations; **Gary McBryde**, director of Economic and Statistical Support; and me, director of the Office of Policy/Litigation Support. A SMRP meeting includes each of the SMPS and other P&SP employees brought together to discuss a particular issue. Most often a SMRP meets to review an investigation work plan, to review the results of a SMRP-approved investigation, or to discuss an important policy issue.

The SMPs meet on a regular basis, often many times during the week. SMRP meetings are usually scheduled in advance, except in the case of urgent matters, to discuss, review, and make decisions on important issues.

How does a particular issue or investigation come before SMRP? One or more SMPs sponsor each issue or investigation for SMRP consideration. This means that the sponsoring SMP has reviewed the issues and agrees that a senior management decision is warranted. Any P&SP employee with an issue he or she believes needs action by senior management can request a SMRP. The proper format for requesting a SMRP is by preparing a decision memo that describes the issue, provides background and options, and puts forth a recommendation. The decision memo must be forwarded through the employee’s chain of command to the appropriate SMP to be sponsored. The SMPs consider the policy issues, review past agency history on the issue, determine whether the expected resource used is appropriate, and make a decision on the issue.

After the SMPs sign off on a final decision memo, that memo and a memo memorializing the decision making process, along with supporting documents such as an approved investigation work plan, are maintained in agency records for future reference.

Oh, I can hear those Smurfs now, “What would Papa Smurf say?”

Travel Bits & Pieces

Peggy Smith, Washington, DC

Transaction Fees. This is just a reminder that Duluth Travel began charging transaction fees on May 22, 2005. Travelers will receive an e-mail notification when travel fees are charged. When an employee completes their travel voucher, a copy of the e-mail notification indicating the fee amount should be attached to the voucher.

Non-Refundable Tickets. The use of non-refundable fares presents serious risks as well as potential cost savings. Although there are risks, some supervisors approve the use of non-refundable tickets as part of their mission efforts. Each time a non-refundable ticket is being considered for purchase, a waiver must be completed.

Are EEO/CR issues or concerns affecting your employment with GIPSA? Do you have questions? Need help?

Call the EEO Advisory Committee at...

1-800-639-5167

Civil Rights Hotline

Regulatory Info

Tess Butler, Washington, DC

Federal Register Publications

- Export Inspection and Weighing Waiver for High Quality Specialty Grains Transported in Containers – Published April 28, 2005
- Designation for the California Area – Published May 3, 2005

Issuances

Terri Henry, Washington, D.C.

New Issuances

- FGIS Directive 3330.1, “Radio Communications Management, Operations, and Maintenance,” dated May 6, 2005 (Distribution: FGIS)
- FGIS Directive 9180.61, “Official Calibrations for the Dickey-John GAC 2100 Moisture Meter,” dated May 1, 2005 (Distribution: A, C, E, F, G, U, V)
- FGIS Program Notice PN-05-05, “Sample Collection Responsibilities for Verifying the Accuracy of Moisture Meter Calibrations Crop Year 2005,” dated May 15, 2005 (Distribution: A)
- FGIS Policy Bulletin Board Memo # 205, “GAC 2100b and Test Weight Per Bushel,” dated May 2, 2005

Cancellations

- FGIS Directive 3330.1, “Radio Communications Management, Operations, and Maintenance,” dated November 21, 1995
- FGIS Directive 9180.61, “Official Calibrations for the Dickey-John GAC 2100 Moisture Meter,” dated September 1, 2004
- FGIS Program Notice PN-04-12, “Sample Collection Responsibilities for Verifying the Accuracy of Moisture Meter Calibrations Crop Year 2004,” dated May 1, 2004

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.

GIPSA Idea Hotline Update

*Norma Phelps,
Washington, DC*

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

Suggestor/Suggestion

Bart DiGiovanni, Atlanta / Have a DirectLinktoP&SPandFGISForms on the GIPSA Home Page

Keep those ideas coming in! Send your ideas to the GIPSA Idea Hotline via e-mail: gipsa-ideas@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.**

P&SP Competition Task Force

Tom Duggan, Denver, Gary McBryde, Washington DC, and Kevin Smith, Atlanta

The Competition Task Force (CTF) was organized to respond to market issues that evolved from the BSE announcement on December 23, 2003. The CTF evolved from a primary focus on cattle market issues relating to BSE to addressing a variety of competition issues and monitoring programs that encompass all species covered by the Packers and Stockyards Act (P&S Act). The CTF is prepared to respond to any significant industry event that impacts the nation's livestock and poultry markets.

The CTF is a national task force comprised of economists from all three regional offices as well as headquarters. **Tom Duggan**, Denver, is responsible for the CTF's day-to-day management. The group's strategic direction and oversight are provided by the Senior Management Review Panel (SMRP), which is chaired by P&SP deputy administrator **JoAnn Waterfield**.

Fed Cattle Price Monitoring Program. In January 2004, the CTF developed a work plan to detect price irregularities in regional fed cattle markets.

Investigations are triggered by a statistical model that tests for regional price irregularities in five regional fed cattle markets: Colorado, Iowa/Minnesota, Kansas, Nebraska, and Texas/Oklahoma. The statistical model relies on Mandatory Price Reporting data to test for price irregularities in these regional markets relative to overall fed cattle prices. The model identifies price outliers, which represent significant price differences between the actual price in

a region and the regional price predicted by the model. These price outliers are then investigated to determine whether or not they represent a potential violation of the P&S Act, or were caused by external factors such as weather or timing of market trade. If the results of a preliminary price outlier investigation indicate a potential violation of the Act, a workplan is developed to conduct a formal investigation into whether the price difference was caused by an undue or unreasonable preference or disadvantage in violation of Section 202 (b) of the P&S Act.

The summaries of the investigations, the recommendations, and the decisions are accessible to all GIPSA employees at: J:\Psp Specific\Fed Cattle Price Monitoring Investigations\Investigation Reports. In addition to conducting price outlier investigations, the CTF implemented a national program to expand proactive monitoring to the Nation's cow and bull markets, is in the approval process for a hog price monitoring program, and is developing a poultry monitoring program.

Cow and Bull Market Investigation Program. In December 2004, the CTF implemented the SMRP-approved Cow and Bull Market Investigation Program. The purpose of this proactive program is to monitor the Nation's cow and bull markets for anticompetitive behavior in violation of the P&S Act. This program is distinctly different from the Fed Cattle Price Monitoring Program. The Program calls for the CTF to investigate the fifteen packers that slaughter more

than 100,000 cows and bulls annually. These packers slaughtered more than 80 percent of the federally inspected cows and bulls in 2003 and made most of their purchases at livestock auctions. By investigating these cow and bull packers and aggregating and analyzing information that P&SP Auditors, Marketing Specialists, and Resident Agents currently collect during other types of investigations at livestock auctions, the CTF will be able to: 1) monitor the cow and bull markets for violations of the P&S Act, and 2) define the Nation's cow and bull markets. If evidence of a specific violation is detected through the program, a detailed work plan will be developed for SMRP approval before further investigation is done.

Hog Price Monitoring Program. In early 2005, members of the CTF developed a work plan to detect price irregularities in three regional hog markets: Iowa/Minnesota, the Eastern Cornbelt, and the Western Cornbelt, excluding Iowa/Minnesota. Within the regions, prices are examined for both live and carcass transactions. If an unusual price pattern is detected, then an investigation would determine if there were violations of the P&S Act. The Hog Price Monitoring Program, like the Fed Cattle Monitoring Program, is based on economic conditions that tend to make prices in different markets move together. For example, the price of gasoline in Denver and Des Moines are different, but they tend to rise and fall more or less together due to the

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Competition, from page 6.

broad forces of supply and demand. After a pending final P&SP SMRP review and approval, the Hog Price Monitoring Program will be implemented.

Poultry Monitoring Program. The CTF's mandate from the SMRP encompasses all species covered by the P&S Act. Given this mandate, members of the CTF are currently in the early stages of developing a Poultry Monitoring Program. Given the very different nature of the poultry industry, the Poultry Monitoring Program is expected to differ from the other monitoring programs. In the poultry industry, the integrator always owns the birds being grown by the poultry grower and therefore never buys the birds from the grower. The grower produces the birds under a grow-out contract that lays out each side's responsibilities and the manner in which the grower's compensation will be determined. The Poultry Monitoring Program will likely focus on collecting and analyzing the grow-out contracts offered to poultry growers rather than reported prices. The CTF is looking to use this information to trigger investigations of potential violations of the P&S Act. Once the program is developed, it will be presented to the SMRP for program approval.

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

Fast Receives FEC Employee of the Year Award

Deborah Shipman, Washington, D.C.

Adam Fast, auditor, Des Moines, recently received one of the Federal Government's highest prestigious awards, the Federal Executive Council of Central Iowa's Employee of the Year Award for being an outstanding government employee.

During the 2004 calendar year, **Adam** conducted or participated in more than 20 investigations of major livestock markets, dealer operations, and packers that resulted in significant recoveries to livestock producers in an 11 state area. In one investigation, **Adam's** work was instrumental in determining that a packer had underpaid livestock producers, and his work resulted in the return of over \$160,000 to them. He also has been instrumental in helping the Des Moines regional office implement more efficient and effective enforcement programs.

In June 2000, **Adam** began his career as an auditor with P&SP, Financial Unit (FU) in Des Moines. He continues to work in the regional office, ensuring that livestock sellers receive prompt and accurate payments for their goods. He also conducts annual audits of livestock businesses' (registrants and packers) financial statements and other business reports to ensure compliance with the financial and payment protection provision of the Act.

Adam is a graduate of Buena Vista University, located in Storm Lake, Iowa, with a bachelors degree in accounting. He later pursued additional education to become a certified public accountant and an effective investigator.

Adam Fast is an extraordinary employee. During 2004, his dedication as an investigator resulted in significant monetary recoveries to the livestock industry.

New Official Agency in Texas

Jan Hart, Washington, DC

Global Grain Inspection, Inc., Fort Worth, Texas, was designated as a new official agency on May 1, 2005. Global will provide official domestic grain inspection service to most of southeastern Texas. Key officials of Global and its parent corporation, BSi Inspectorate Services, Inc., attended a designation ceremony in Washington, DC. Global brings the number of private official agencies to 45; and the total number of official agencies, including the 12 States, to 57.



Global Designation Presentation Ceremony: (left to right): acting administrator Dave Shipman, BSi vice president B.R. Davenport, Global corporate secretary Rena King, and BSi corporate secretary H.F. Cristadoro.

USDA Native American Workshop

*John D. Edmond, Jr.,
Washington, DC*

On May 2, 2005, more than 800 guests of all ages attended the USDA 2005 Native American Outreach Workshop. The event was a networking opportunity for residents in the Eastern Oklahoma, Northern Arkansas, and Southern Missouri, and an opportunity to learn more about USDA programs and culture.

Invited guests represented the State of Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, universities, students, teachers, parents, farmers, ranchers, and representatives from the Cherokee and United Keetoowah Band tribal council. **Rhonda Williams**, resident agent, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, and I represented GIPSA.

Fourteen USDA agencies (Agriculture Research Service; Agricultural Marketing Service; Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service; Farm Service Agency; Food and Nutrition Service; Food Safety and Inspection Services; Foreign Agricultural Service; Forest Service; GIPSA; National Agricultural Statistics Service; Natural Resources Conservation Service; Office of Outreach; Risk Management Agency; and Rural Development) were on hand to talk about USDA job opportunities for summer interns, marketing specialists, engineers, homeland security specialists, scientists, attorneys, analysts, and risk management specialists.

This event was such a huge success that the tribal councils, school district counselors, and principals have asked USDA to hold a Native American Outreach Workshop annually.

Designations

Jan Hart, Washington, DC

GIPSA is granting designations to four official agencies to provide official grain inspection services at domestic locations. Under the authority of the U.S. Grain Standards Act, the Georgia Department of Agriculture, Mid-Iowa Grain Inspection, Inc. and the Montana Department of Agriculture are being granted full 3-year designation renewals. Schneider Inspection Service, Inc., is being granted a 1-year period so that GIPSA may evaluate corrections they have made.

In FY 2004, Georgia provided 2,303 official inspections; Mid-Iowa 3,693 and 211,771 official commercial inspections; Montana 14,794; and Schneider 12,214.

Georgia. Thomas Irvin is Georgia's commissioner of agriculture, and Wayne Guerke is the division director of plant industry, and Michael Cooper is chief inspector. Georgia employs 3 licensed inspectors, 15 technicians, and 11 samplers, many of whom are cross-utilized with other State programs. Georgia has one full-time specified service point in Tifton, in south central Georgia, with the headquarters in Atlanta.

Mid-Iowa. Michael Polaski is president, and Jeffery Polaski, is the official agency manager. Mid-Iowa employs 23 licensed inspectors, 12 technicians, and 5 samplers. Mid-Iowa operates in the central portion of Iowa. The headquarters and full-time specified service point is in Cedar Rapids, and there is another full-time service specified service point and a weighing facility in Clayton, Iowa. There are also four applicant-specific specified service points where Mid-Iowa provides official commercial truck inspections: two in Decatur, Iowa; one in Clinton, Iowa; and one in Peoria, Illinois.

Montana. Nancy Peterson is the director, and Joel Clairmont is the administrator for the Montana Department of Agriculture. The acting bureau chief is G. Lee Boyer. Montana employs 5 licensed inspectors, 3 technicians, and 5 samplers. Montana serves the entire State with a full-time specified service point in Great Falls, Montana, and headquarters in Helena.

Schneider. Mark Beaupre is the owner and official agency manager. Schneider employs 3 licensed inspectors, 3 technicians, and 2 samplers. Schneider operates in northwestern Indiana and three counties in southwestern Michigan. The headquarters and full-time specified service point is in Lake Village, Indiana, and there are five applicant-specific specified service points: Lapaz, Parr, Pleasant Ridge, and Winamac, Indiana; and White Pigeon, Michigan.

As an impartial entity, GIPSA maintains over 1,400 different quality assessment terms and methods to test post harvested crops for physical condition, impurities, contaminants, and intrinsic attributes. We work closely with all segments of the grain and oilseed industry to ensure these terms and methods meet the changing needs of the marketplace.

In addition to establishing the standards by which the quality of grains and oilseeds can be measured and communicated efficiently, we manage a network of Federal, State, and private laboratories that provide impartial, user fee funded official inspection and weighing services. Last year, this network of laboratories provided over 2.6 million inspections. I cannot over-emphasize the commitment and hard work of the 523 federal employees and over 2,000 other individuals employed by the 12 States and 46 private agencies authorized by GIPSA to provide inspection and weighing services. Collectively, they provide high quality service to American agriculture 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

The success of the U.S. grain inspection and weighing system didn't just happen. It required the collaborative effort of the Federal, State, and private inspection personnel, and the full participation and cooperation of the grain industry... It required the introduction of new technology to sample, weigh, and measure the quality of grain – again accomplished through a collaborative effort with the inspection agencies and industry. It required continuous improvements in quality control and assurance systems to ensure all measurements and inspectors were aligned with the national reference methods. And it required reaching out to our many trading partners around the world to ensure they understood and had confidence in our system.

On September 30, 2005, authority to collect user fees, maintain a stakeholder advisory committee, and several other provisions under the U.S. Grain Standards Act expire and require reauthorization for us to continue grain inspection and weighing operations. Without these authorities, we would be unable to collect the necessary revenue to operate resulting in a shutdown of our operations and disruption to the grain markets, especially the export market. We believe it is in the best interest of American agriculture that Congress extend and reauthorize these provisions of the Act for a 10-year period, from 2005-2015.

...Our key customers and stakeholders support change – not in our mission or role in the market – but in how we deliver services. ... The introduction of private entities with federal oversight into the export market is feasible provided it is accomplished in a manner that does not compromise the fundamental integrity of the existing system.

The U.S. grain inspection system has gained worldwide recognition for its accuracy and reliability. Maintaining and strengthening this recognition in the future – regardless of how and by whom official services are delivered to our customers — is essential for the economic health of American agriculture – from producers to exporters.

The Senate is expected to introduce a bill reauthorizing the Act sometime after Memorial Day, and move it forward through the summer.

National Anthem Project Launched

“The Star-Spangled Banner” has a special place in the hearts and minds of Americans. It remains a symbol of national pride, unity, and resolve that inspires Americans to make whatever personal sacrifices are necessary to preserve and promote democracy and freedom around the world.

Many Americans are unaware of the legacy of our national anthem. Two-thirds of adults do not know the song's words or the history behind its creation. Less than 35 percent of U.S. teens can name the author of the song, and only one in three children can sing the national anthem by heart.

The “National Anthem Project.” aims to raise awareness of the national anthem among approximately 150 million Americans by teaching the meaning and history behind the words of the song, as well as its place in popular culture and relevance to current events. It culminates in June 2006 with a record setting performance of the national anthem on the National Mall in Washington, DC.

For more information contact:

Wendi Barra

MENC: The National Association
for Music Education
(800) 336-3768

wendib@menc.org

www.thenationalanthemproject.org

For Your Health

Mavis Rogers, Washington, DC

Air bags provide life-saving benefits for the vast majority of users, but there are times when air bag deployment can have adverse effects. In situations where occupants are sitting too close to the air bag when it deploys or are not wearing seat belts, the occupant can suffer serious injury.

Front air bags do not eliminate the need for seat belts and are not designed to offer protection in rollovers and rear or side impacts. In fact, maximum air bag effectiveness depends upon seat belts, which help keep you in place should a collision occur.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Association says that you can significantly reduce the risk of injury from an air bag by observing the following basic safety rules:

- Buckle your seatbelt. (As of July 2004, 49 states have mandatory seat belt laws.)
- Keep about 10 inches or more between your breastbone and the air bag.
- Never place a rear-facing infant seat in front of an air bag, even a reduced-power air bag, unless the air bag switch is in the OFF position.
- Place children 12 years and under in the back seat and make sure they are properly restrained, either in a seat belt or a child safety seat appropriate for their size and weight.

Courtesy the U.S. National Highway Traffic Safety Association.

2006 Executive Leadership Program

The Center for Leadership and Management of the Graduate School, USDA, offers a 12-month program for full-time, permanent GS 11-13 Federal employees who have demonstrated significant leadership potential with minimal supervisory experience. The ELP can prepare high-potential employees for a career in federal leadership or management.

Through classroom instruction, individual and team assignments, executive interviews, and developmental and shadowing assignments, participants develop and strengthen their leadership skills. Participants are absent from their current positions 5 months over a 12-month period. Additional time is needed to complete some activities and to meet other requirements. To graduate, participants are required to complete all program components and assignments during the 12-month time period.

Nominating Procedures: Participants are selected through a competitive process. Carefully consider and discuss the time requirements with your supervisor before submitting the complete application package. To apply, submit all of the following to the GIPSA Training Staff:

1. The application form (available at <http://www.grad.usda.gov>).
2. **A Federal resume** that gives your home address, and is *signed and dated*. Include an objective summary, experience, accomplishments, education and awards in the resume. (A Federal Resume must include all components specific to a Federal Resume format.)
3. A statement from your first-line supervisor assessing your potential for leadership or managerial responsibilities and your motivation to complete all program requirements and fully participate in all components of the ELP.
4. A signed approval statement from your manager.
5. The Mobility Clause Agreement and Continued Service Agreement, which are available from the GIPSA Training Office.

Submit the complete application package to **Mary McCoy**, USDA GIPSA Training Staff, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Stop 3649, Washington, DC 20250-3649 by June 15, 2004, and verify its receipt.

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 3614
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-3614
Phone (202) 720-5091
FAX (202) 690-2333
dana.b.stewart@usda.gov

by June 25, 2005!

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