



# GIPSA News

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

June 2007

## FGISonline

Dave Shipman, Washington, DC

Two years ago, we took a long, hard look at what we do and how we do it. First, we identified our business processes – inspection, weighing, certification, equipment testing, export registration, delegations and designations, registration... the list goes on. Then, we looked at how we do them – the software we use to help us carry out the function, how we capture and make sense of data, and how we issue outputs, like certificates. All of this was our “enterprise architecture,” or EA, project, a rigorous process with the goal of seeing how we could better marry our business function and information technology to help us do our jobs better.

We came out of the “EA” process with a laundry list of business functions and a clearer idea of how we could apply information technology, or applications, to help us do our work. So began our GIPSA Application Modernization, or GAM, project. We set out to build the information technology and management tools that we need to do our jobs better.

The GAM project has matured into **FGISonline**, a portfolio of online business applications that will change

the way we do our jobs and bring official inspection and weighing to our and our customers’ desktops.

While a sweeping project of this scope sometimes makes it hard to see our progress, our efforts are definitely yielding results. We have applications online, with more to come. Some applications are behind the scenes “foundation systems” that are not seen by our customers or most GIPSA employees. Some applications will be used only by FGIS employees, and at that, perhaps only a specific group who work with a specific business process. Some applications will touch nearly all of us, as well as our customers and partners in the official inspection system. We’ll use the applications to do our jobs more effectively, and we, our official partners, and our customers will benefit from vastly improved access to our products and information.

Here’s a status report on our **FGISonline** applications...

### Behind the Scenes

A number of behind-the-scenes, or “foundation,” applications are quietly up and running. These programs

support other applications or internal work processes.

- **Organization and Personnel Application** maintains personnel and organizational data in support of other **FGISonline** applications. While this application isn’t used by all personnel at this point, it will be configured to generate directories and related information for us. This application will also include ACG inspector numbers and interfaces with the certification program and future quality assurance system.

- **Agricultural Product Standards (APS)** is a library of products, commodities, classes, and subclasses for both FGIS and P&SP. APS contains information on the factors, grades, and grade limits for products under FGIS’ authority. This application is a support system for the current Inspection Data Warehouse and Certificate programs and for a variety of future applications.

*Continued, see **FGISonline** on page 5.*

# Names in the News

## PERSONNEL

**Duane Putnam** has been selected as the new Senior Compliance Officer (Administrative) with the Compliance Division's Regulatory Branch.

**Ted Respet** was selected for the position of Senior Compliance Officer (Investigations), located in Duluth, Minnesota with the Compliance Division's Regulatory Branch.

**PaQuita Thompson** began serving as the data entry clerk for Industry Analysis Division (IAD) on May 14, 2007. **PaQuita** is a summer intern with the APHIS Jumpstart Program. She will be entering all IAD's annual data reports.

## LEAVE DONATIONS

**Ana Trujillo**, certification assistant, League City, has been accepted into the Leave Transfer Program. **Ana** has acute renal disease that has led to dialysis. She has exhausted all of her leave and would appreciate any leave donations. If you're interested in donating leave to **Ana**, please send a completed AD-1043 to: USDA APHIS MRPBS HRD; Attn: LCT; Butler Square 5th Floor; 100 North 6th Street; Minneapolis, MN 55403;

or fax to 612-370-2361. Form AD-1043 can be found on the web at: <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/forms/adforms.html>

## RETIREMENTS

**Anne Bullard**, ACG in the New Orleans Field Office retired on May 3, 2007, with 32 years of Federal service.

*Continued, see Names on page 3.*

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## John Sharpe Named TSD Director

John Sharpe has been named director of the Technical Services Division (TSD) in Kansas City, Missouri. TSD is GIPSA's central research and development laboratory.

Sharpe brings to the position a great deal of agricultural experience, valuable skills, and expertise gained during his diverse and accomplished professional career. Before joining USDA in 1982, Sharpe managed a corporate sugar cane farm and worked with the Georgia Department of Agriculture. While with USDA, he worked for the Agricultural Marketing Service, the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (now the Farm Service Agency), and GIPSA's Federal Grain Inspection Service. From 2001 until 2004, Sharpe was chief of GIPSA's Data and Information Analysis Branch, where he re-engineered the agency's national quality control program, and developed a new process verification program designed to meet the evolving needs of agriculture. He served as director of GIPSA's Compliance Division from 2004 until being named director of TSD.

Sharpe is a graduate of the University of Florida where he earned a degree in Food and Resource Economics and Animal Science. He also is a 2004 graduate of the USDA Senior Executive Service Candidate Program. He grew up on a cattle ranch in Chairs, Florida, and is still involved in the family ranching activities.

Sharpe replaces Steve Tanner, who left GIPSA in February 2007.

Names, from page 2.

**Steve Dow**, legal specialist, Eastern Regional Office, retired on March 31, 2007. He now lives near Lake City, Florida, where he is enjoying the life of a gentleman farmer and rancher.

**Jens Knutson**, agricultural economist, Industry Analysis Division, retired on May 1, 2007, with 6 years of service to GIPSA.



*Farewell to the Eastern Regional Office's Steve Dow and Nancy Morris, two long time GIPSA employees.*

**Nancy Morris**, marketing specialist, Eastern Regional Office, retired on April 27, 2007, and still resides in the Atlanta area. **Nancy** recently completed a tour of the Grand Canyon and will be heading to South America soon.

*Continued, see More Names on page 7.*

## Sharon Setzer, a P&SP Treasure, Retires

**Sharon Setzer**, then known as **Sharon Peterson**, began working for the U.S. government one week after her high school graduation. She grew up on a remote wheat farm in northeastern Colorado, 17 miles from the nearest town. She attended a one-room schoolhouse for her first 3 years of education, and credits the experience with a lifelong love of learning. A high school teacher accompanied her to the big city of Denver so she could sit for the civil service exam. **Sharon** was interviewed and hired by the General Accounting Office before she graduated from Julesburg High School in 1968. She moved into an apartment with her older sister in Denver and began a 39-year civil service career.



*Sharon Setzer*

In 1970, **Sharon** transferred to P&SP's Denver Area Office as a GS-4 Clerk-Stenographer. Interestingly, **Sharon** reported for duty on the same day as **Ken Palmer** and **Will Timbe**, long-time P&SP employees. A week later, **Harold Davis** left the Denver office for his new position as Area Supervisor in Lawndale, California. **Sharon** worked in Denver for her entire P&SP career. The office was located in the Exchange Building at the former Denver Union Stockyards until the agency's reorganization moved it to its present Aurora location in 1999.

When **Sharon** was a new P&SP employee in 1970, the Denver Area Office was under the leadership of **Melvin Holmquist**, Area Supervisor. Over the years, **Sharon** reported to **Paul Moroni**, **Jim Stroud**, **Bill Lochhead**, **Milt Hansen**, **Keith Kienow**, and **John Barthel**, as each took their turn at Denver's helm. **Sharon** was promoted throughout her P&SP career to her current position as Administrative Officer for P&SP's Western Regional Office.

**Sharon** and her husband **Roy Setzer** are enjoying their 27<sup>th</sup> year of marital bliss. **Roy** beat her to retirement by one year; retiring from Denver Public Schools as Skinner Middle School's business and computers teacher. **Sharon** and **Roy** plan to spend their time (and retirement money) remodeling their home in Golden, Colorado, tackling the kitchen first. **Sharon** says that her first priority after her July 3, 2007, retirement is to throw away her alarm clock. After that, some travel, catch up on her reading, and join **Roy** on nature hikes in the Rocky Mountain foothills. Many of us who have worked with **Sharon** throughout her many years of service feel that we are losing a real treasure, but we also can't think of anyone who deserves retirement more!

## Regulatory Info

*Tess Butler, Washington, DC*

### Federal Register Publications

- "Request for Public Comment on the United States Standards for Soybeans," published May 1, 2007
- "Clear Title; Technical Changes," published May 8, 2007
- "Official Fees and Tolerances for Barley Protein Testing," published May 16, 2007
- "Request for Extension and Revision of a Currently Approved Information Collection (2), published May 24, 2007

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## Issuances

*Terri Henry, Washington, D.C.*

- P&SP Policy Memorandum 9710-07-010, "Visiting Market Agencies Selling on Commission on Sale Days," dated April 27, 2007
- FGIS Program Notice 07-05, "Model XT-7 Dockage Tester Approval," dated May 9, 2007
- FGIS Program Notice 07-06, "Sample Collection Responsibilities for Verifying the Accuracy of Moisture Meter Calibrations Crop Year 2007," dated May 15, 2007
- FGIS Program Directive 9180.61, "Official Calibrations for the Dickey-john GAC 2100 Moisture Meter," dated August 1, 2007
- P&SP Policy Memorandum 9730-07-011, "Retention of Financial Instruments," dated May 14, 2007
- FGIS Program Directive 9070.6, "Reporting Violations of the U.S. Grain Standards Act and the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946," dated May 11, 2007

## Travel Bits & Pieces

*Peggy Smith, Washington, DC*

This is my last column for the GIPSA Newsletter and even though I won't get to see the e-Travel procedures come to fruition, I wanted to give you an update.

As I mentioned several issues ago, the e-Travel contract was awarded to Northrop Grumman. The Office of Inspector General is the USDA pilot agency and is scheduled to go live on June 4, 2007. This is a delayed start date, but USDA feels that it can keep its other agencies on their targeted "go live" dates. GIPSA is still scheduled for implementation in July 2008. Gov Trip will replace FedTraveler and employees will access Gov Trip through the e-Authentication process. Gov Trip will not use or store social security numbers in its database. Online booking, travel authorizations and travel vouchers will be done through Gov Trip. You will also be able to view the charges on your travel charge card through Gov Trip. Gov Trip will not be used for local travel or relocations. USDA is working to establish uniform procedures for processing local travel. At this time, relocation travel will still be done via the Online Travel System for authorizations and through paper travel vouchers, although this procedure is subject to change once e-Travel is fully implemented.

**Updating Your Credit Card Information in Your FedTraveler Profile.** This continues to be a problem and can result in a higher transaction fee if Duluth Travel has to update your credit card information for you. This also can result in a delay in issuing your ticket. Here are instructions for updating your profile.

After logging into FedTraveler.com, click on your **name**. This hyperlink will navigate to your online profile. Click on "**Credit Card Information**". At the bottom of the page, click the credit card you wish to update. This number will populate in the "**User Credit Card Information**" section. Make the necessary updates to your credit card information including the expiration date. Select the areas where the credit card will be used, e.g., flight, rail, lodging, vehicle. Click "**Submit**" to accept the changes. Click on "**Save Profile**" and **enter your PIN**.

If you have been locked out of the system or have forgotten your password, a call to the FedTraveler Help Desk (1-866-876-8020) is required to obtain your answers to the security questions which are needed to refresh your pin.

I hope the "Travel Bits & Pieces" column has been helpful to you over the years. Thanks for your support and cooperation. I wish you all the best, both professionally and personally!

· **Customer Information Management (CIM)** manages the customer information for **FGISonline**. Customers of the official inspection system who want to use any **FGISonline** applications need a customer number. CIM provides that number and provides various options for receiving data. CIM also offers customers with options for managing access to inspection information within a particular company.

· **Other Support Applications.** Several applications are used to support development and maintenance of **FGISonline** programs, including: the Issue Tracking System to document and track issues related to any of the applications; Code Variable Maintenance to manage values in all the GAM applications; and the GAM Authorization System to control access and maintain security for each application.

### Up and Running on a Desktop Near You

· **Delegations, Designations and Export Registration** is being used by current and potential official service providers to complete online applications for service area designations/delegations, and by grain firms to apply for export registration via the Internet.

· The **Certificates** application is being used by select FGIS field offices to generate official inspection certificates for our customers. More field offices are using this application each day, and all official service providers will be generating the newly designed certificates within a year or so. FGIS and official service providers enter inspection and weighing results into the Certificates program, which produces electronic or paper certificates, and feeds data into our new....

· **Inspection Data Warehouse** is a national database of official inspection and weighing service records. As information comes from our Certificate program into the Warehouse, our customers can look at results of their official services and forward them to their customers, and get real time electronic inspection and weighing records and reports. Just think, if a unit train is at the Mexican border and the Mexican customs officials question the authenticity of the official certificate, which happens more than we would like, the exporter can give the customs official the certificate number, identity of the train, and date of inspection; the customs official can go to a GIPSA web site and verify the authenticity of the certificate and prevent unnecessary trade delays.

*More information on **FGISonline** is on our public web site. Click on **FGISonline** in the "In the News" Section on the index page. To take a look at the **FGISonline** applications, you'll need to be "e-authorized." Go to the GIPSA Common Business System Menu Page at <https://gchs.gipsa.usda.gov>. Select the application you want to use. When you attempt to log in the first time, an application access request screen will appear. After you complete this on-line form, the request will be automatically sent to the application administrator for evaluation. The application administrator determines the appropriate access rights for each user. For subsequent visits, you can click on the "Login" link and enter your user ID and password on the USDA login screen.*

### Coming Soon

A number of applications are in the pipeline and will be coming online within the next 12-18 months:

· **Inspection Testing and Weighing** will replace Cu-Sum plus capture testing and weighing results for warehouse lots, single lots, supervision samples, unit trains, containers and others for grain, rice, pulses, graded commodities, and processed commodities.

· **Equipment Capability Testing** will be an internet-based application that service providers can use to record (1) information on equipment used for the testing of grain quality, (2) the location of such equipment, for the purposes of notifying, submitting, and capturing results of tests conducted to validate the equipment's capability to accurately test grain quality. In brief, it will be an online equipment checktesting system.

*Continued, see More  
**FGISonline** on page 6.*

- The **Licensing** application will bring the licensing process online. Licensees and potential licensees will use the paperless application to apply for a license, take required exams, and receive a license via the Internet. The system will also track practical exam samples and interface with certification for licensee numbers.
- The **Quality Assurance/Quality Control** program will provide FGIS with immediate statistical information to measure the performance of the official grain inspection and weighing system, and quickly correct any performance issues.

When all FGISonline applications are up and running, all of our business process information will be integrated. Private providers will send information that automatically will be used for quality control activities, licensing, and user fee assessment. We'll check on the performance of a piece of equipment over time using equipment checktesting data that will allow us to compare it to similar equipment. Single key entry of data and immediately accessible performance data will be the norm. For example, an auditor auditing a private provider will have access on his or her personal laptop to the inspector's performance, equipment performance, workload, and past audit findings. Export inspectors entering results into CuSum will use edit checks that reduce errors and data will flow directly to our certification, billing, and quality control applications. Customers will have immediate and direct access to their results, and be able to forward them on to their customers or others to complete sales transactions or clear customs. The databases we maintain will interface with other government computer systems to improve our enforcement of statutory requirements. For example, our export registration program will eventually interface with the Commerce Department to verify that those exporting grain from the United States are registered with FGIS and are obtaining required inspection and weighing services.

It will be another 12 to 18 months before all the new applications are deployed, but collectively they will improve our customer service and improve the efficiency of our oversight of the performance of the official system.

## Free SkillSoft Access for All

As of May 21, 2007, all full-time USDA employees have access to over 2500 SkillSoft courses on AgLearn via an enterprise license. Employees will now have access to training 24 hours a day, wherever an Internet connection is available.

The courses are grouped into four collections:

1. Business Skills, such as project management, leadership, and communication,
2. IT Professional, such as internet/network technologies, web design, and software development,
3. IT End User Skills, such as MS Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook, Project, and Access, and
4. Legal Compliance/Federal Government, such as Harassment Issues, HIPPA Privacy Rules and Diversity in the Workplace.

### Employee Assistance Program

Call for confidential help.

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

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



*Peggy Smith receives best wishes on her retirement from Management Support Staff director Albert Conerly.*

**Peggy Smith**, Management Support Staff, retired on June 1, 2007, after 30 years of Federal government service. **Peggy** is joining her husband, **John**, in retirement. **Peggy** has been a great asset to the Agency. Her experience, expertise, professional manner, and warm customer service will be truly missed.

**Stephen Warrilow**, Tennessee resident agent, Eastern Regional Office, retired on May 25, 2007. **Steve** lives in Dresden, Tennessee, and will spend his retirement time with his family and on the lake.

## CONDOLENCES

**Clifford Watson**, 77, passed away on March 24, 2007. From 1967 until his retirement in 1991, he worked for USDA as acting director of the U.S. Grain Marketing Research Center, and later as director of FGIS's Technical Center in Kansas City. **Cliff** is survived by his wife of 53 years, **Mary Ann**.

## AWARDS

**Rhondalyn Edwards** and **Darrell Washington**, New Orleans, received a spot award for their quick action in notifying elevator personnel that an employee of the Gemini Rig had fallen into the river.

**Stephen Michel**, agricultural commodity grader, New Orleans, received a time-off award for exemplary service to our customers by developing a protein/oil spreadsheet.

**Cheryl Taylor**, League City, received a spot award for informing League City management of hazardous conditions with a gangway, which information provided saved injury to FGIS personnel.

**Tieu Pham** and **Deborah Edwards**, League City, received spot awards for providing excellent and professional service to League City customers and employees during a time when there was severe reduction in administrative staff.

**Tom Wrenn**, Grand Forks, received an extra effort award for his exceptional leadership in managing the Grand Forks Field Office, thus contributing greatly to the increased effectiveness and efficiency of GIPS's mission and the field office.

## 40-YEAR SERVICE AWARD

Claudia McGrady, Washington, DC

## 35-YEAR SERVICE AWARDS

Donald Akers, San Antonio, TX  
Horace Robinson, New Orleans, LA

## 30-YEAR SERVICE AWARD

Peggy Smith, Washington, DC  
Frank Culotta, New Orleans, LA  
Dave Grady, League City, TX  
Mack Hall, New Orleans, LA

## 25-YEAR SERVICE AWARD

Bruce Griffith, Washington, DC  
Ronald Beukema, Washington, DC

## 20-YEAR SERVICE AWARDS

Ronald Bicsak, Kansas City, MO  
Cindy Bertoli, Syracuse, NY  
Emad Ibrahim, League City, TX  
Harold Jackson, New Orleans, LA  
Pamela Lake, Atlanta, GA  
George Lewis, New Orleans, LA  
Thomas Livings, New Orleans, LA  
Amanda Roussell, New Orleans, LA  
Terry Ryno, Springfield, MO  
Alvin Sumler Jr., New Orleans, LA  
Ronald Taylor, League City, TX  
Hannelore Vollmar, Toledo, OH

## 15-YEAR SERVICE AWARDS

Joanne Nielsen, Kansas City, MO  
Branard England, Washington, DC

## 10-YEAR SERVICE AWARD

Barbara Jolly, New Orleans, LA

# Notebook Security-The Basics

*Carol Remmers, Washington, DC*

*“Notebook security can be broken down into three phases: physical security, access control/authentication and tracking/recovery.....But the biggest challenge may be changing users’ attitudes and habits.” Here are a few practical tips to protect your notebook PC.*

## Tips for the Office

- ▶ Leaving notebook PCs unattended and in the open leads to most office thefts.
- ▶ Log off and secure your notebook while you’re away from your workstation.
- ▶ Store notebook out of sight.
- ▶ Fasten your notebook to your desk with a locking device like the one shown here.



## Tips for Travelers

- ▶ Camouflage your notebook. Don’t use a standard, easily identifiable carrying case.
- ▶ Remove organization logos on bags or tags. Don’t let your notebook case “advertise” what kind of information may be inside.
- ▶ Attach an ID label or Return to Owner notice to the bottom of your notebook.

## Arrivals and Departures

- ▶ Stay in touch with your notebook: If you have to rest the case on the floor, lean it against your leg.
- ▶ Keep your notebook with you in check-in lines, at newsstands, coffee shops, rest rooms, and waiting areas.
- ▶ Beware of scams at the security check-in: your notebook may be stolen from the x-ray conveyor belt.

## On Planes, Trains, Buses

- ▶ Don’t stow your notebook in the overhead, put it under the seat in front of you.
- ▶ Be aware of other passengers “shoulder surfing” data on your screen.

## On the Road

- ▶ With rented cars, cabs, shuttles, and parking lots and garages be alert to risks of theft or loss.
- ▶ Secure and conceal your notebook in the trunk, if you must leave it in a parked car.

## Hotel

- ▶ Keep your notebook on your shoulder when checking in or out, in the lobby or lounge, or while waiting at the curb.
- ▶ Store your notebook in the hotel safe or your room safe.
- ▶ If you must leave your notebook in your room, conceal it in a clothes drawer or other inconspicuous place.

- ▶ Don’t let your computer “crash.” Be sure your notebook is in no danger of falling or dropping.

- ▶ Log into the GIPSA network everyday to get updates to the operating system and virus software.

- ▶ Never lend your notebook to unauthorized users. Keep your government notebook for government use.

- ▶ Prepare for the worst case scenario. Plan what to do if your notebook were to disappear. Carry a list of make, model, serial number, computer name and emergency phone numbers.

## ***Now Department Policy!***

- ▶ All SBU data must be stored on a network drive.
- ▶ Protect network access with **STRONG PASSWORDS!**
- ▶ If you must store SBU on notebook-USE Encryption!

Contact GIPSA Cyber Security if you have any questions.

## Soybean Standards Review

On May 7, 2007, GIPSA published an Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPR) seeking public comment on any changes needed to the U.S. Standards for Soybeans to ensure they are effective and responsive to current market needs. The ANPR is part of GIPSA's comprehensive review of the soybean standards. Comments are due to GIPSA by July 2, 2007.

# Frequent Compliance Review Findings

## *Compliance Division Review Branch*

At the January 2007 American Association of Grain Inspection and Weighing Agencies (AAGIWA) meeting, the Compliance Division presented an analysis of items found during compliance reviews. Reviews are conducted every 3 years to determine if the official agency (OA) is meeting the criteria for designation as established in the U.S. Grain Standards Act. Reviews are also conducted of GIPSA field offices that perform original inspection and weighing.

AAGIWA and the Field Management Division asked that this information be shared periodically to help OAs and field offices improve their operations. From FY 2004 through FY 2006, 34 of the 62 reviews conducted found major noncompliances, which are findings of failure to comply with requirements in major program areas, usually caused by lack of oversight. We found 75 major

noncompliances, with the number of major noncompliances increasing each year while the average number of major noncompliances per review decreased from 2.5 to 1.9. Most major noncompliances involved diverter type (D/T) sampling systems, inspection procedures, Quality Assurance/Quality Control (QA/QC) programs, inspection equipment, and financial activities. The most frequent review findings during this 3-year period were:

■ **D/T Systems** – Two most frequent issues with D/Ts were that the OAs did not have written lock-out/tag-out procedures and security, including not properly sealing and/or not recording seal numbers. Almost half of the reviews found **both** of these issues. The condition of the D/Ts (most notably, dust seals and pelican gaps that were out of tolerance) was the third most common finding.

■ **Inspection Procedures** – The most frequent inspection procedures found lacking were sampling, infestation checks, and leaving samples unattended. Reviews also found aflatoxin samples not of the proper size, samples not mixed, improper testing procedures, and aflatoxin file samples not properly stored. Protein procedures noted were: not running the reference checks, running checks at improper temperatures, not maintaining or missing logbooks, and not sending monitoring samples to the Technical Services Division.

■ **Equipment** – Almost every review found moisture calibrations were not updated. Grains that change almost every crop year were most

frequently missed, including: corn, rice, sorghum, soybeans, oats, and Durum, Hard Red Spring, and Hard Red Winter wheat. Moisture results are affected if calibrations are not updated. The increase in the number of auxiliary service points and shuttle train onsite laboratories requires increased oversight of this area.

Other equipment issues included worn equipment not in proper working order, and test weight apparatuses without valid checktest stickers and without the last volume test for the test weight kettle recorded. Reviews also found recording scale readings in the wrong precision, and use of improper weight for scale shift tests. At the auxiliary service points, we found unsecured equipment, including moisture meters that were not sealed.

Most major equipment related noncompliances were due to multiple problems found in a single review.

■ **QA/QC Program** – The most common major noncompliance item was not following the provisions of the anchor agreement with the supervising field office, and the agency quality assurance specialist not maintaining a supervision program for the other licensed inspectors.

■ **Financial Activities** – The most frequent major noncompliance found was incorrect billing (either over- or under-charging), and not billing according to the agency fee schedule.

We hope that this information is helpful to official agencies and field offices.

**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 is the idea 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.

### *Suggestor/Suggestion*

Miguel A. Ceballos, League City, TX / Develop Enhanced Features for the CuSum Program

Keep those ideas coming in! Send your ideas to the GIPSA Idea Hotline via e-mail: [gipsa-ideas@usda.gov](mailto:gipsa-ideas@usda.gov); FAX to 202-720-1015; or telephone 800-455-3447 or 202-720-1013. **For more information on the hotline visit <http://ingipsa.usda.gov:8010/ideahotline/hotline.htm>. 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.**

## New ACG-7s Attend Training at TSD

*Rosemary Mayne, Washington, DC*

The Technical Services Division (TSD) in Kansas City, hosted the headquarters training component of the second ACG-7 training program on May 8-9, 2007. Attendees were **Glenn Diket** and **Cheryl Taylor**, League City; and **Brian Adam**, **Clarence Brown**, **Rodney Bell**, **Alan Disch**, **Ramon Luevano**, and ACG-9 **Donnie Damm**, Wichita. The TSD session was part of a comprehensive program designed to provide the new ACG-7s with the history, big picture, and technical and non-technical skills they need to be successful in their new role as graders. The program began in New Orleans in January 2007. The complete training program includes grading proficiency exams.

**John Sharpe**, director, TSD, opened the session with an overview of the history of and regulations under the United States Grain Standards Act (USGSA) as well as prohibited grain handling practices and reporting of violations. He also explained the relationship among laws, regulations, and procedures. He concluded with an overview of the different types of official service providers and how much work they do on our behalf.

**Pat McCluskey**, Market and Program Analysis Staff, discussed the purpose of the U.S. standards for grain and graded commodities. He talked about their function; the history of U.S. standards; how GIPSA establishes official standards for grains and commodities under the USGSA and the Agricultural Marketing Act; the public rulemaking process; and staff responsible for this work.

**Bob Lijewski**, chief, Policy and Procedures Branch, provided an overview of the Policies and Procedures Branch's role in ensuring the uniform inspection, weighing, and certification of grain and commodities. He explained the purpose and development processes of handbooks, directives, and other documents.

**Ed Durgin**, Office of International Affairs, addressed international trade facilitation programs and outreach activities, including the Collateral Duty Officer program in Asia. He also shared his perspectives on current and changing customer demands for quality and end-use information.

**Sharon Lathrop**, TSD, took the group on a tour of the facility. Participants saw the various offices and labs, and gained a better appreciation for the scope of work TSD carries out.

Customer Service was the topic of my presentation. I focused on how to make both internal and external customers happy, highlighting service, attitude, consistency and teamwork.

**Larry Freese** discussed the role of statistics in grain inspection. The presentation helped students understand variability and where it occurs in grain inspection. He noted that while variability among sample results is inevitable, the distribution of the variability is somewhat predictable and expected ranges of sample results can be predicted. He discussed statistical tools and processes, including how to choose a sample size for a particular application.

The ACG-7 participants were competitively selected to take part in this apprentice program. The program is designed to prepare the employees to better compete for future GS-9 positions as they become available.

## Burk Graduates from EPP

*Rosemary Mayne, Washington, DC*

The Executive Potential Program's 2007 class graduated on May 11, 2007. **Alan Christian**, deputy administrator, P&SP, and I attended the ceremony to watch **Brian Burk**, senior auditor, Denver, receive his plaque. **Brian** successfully completed the 12-month program, which included residential training, two 60-day developmental detail assignments, reading, benchmarking, shadowing, and interviewing.

In describing his experience in the program, Brian wrote: "...I have attended several leadership training courses offered by Office of Personnel and Management and others and have always felt that something was missing because they only provided classroom training. There was no leadership developmental plan, developmental details, shadow assignment, or interviews. I feel these additional requirements provided me with once-in-a-lifetime experiences and valuable exposure to key senior executives. I feel that I learned the most about leadership excellence from these hands-on developmental assignments. I also value the relationship that I developed with my EPP teammates."

I am very pleased with the program and feel that I have experienced and learned a great deal about being a leader and gained invaluable insights that I will rely upon throughout my career. I especially like the completeness of the training. I feel very privileged to have been selected by my agency to participate in the EPP and will always look fondly upon and cherish my EPP learning experiences."

To successfully complete the program required Brian to juggle his job duties and the program requirements. Also during the program, Brian added another ball to his juggling: he became the father of twins. Kudos!



*Rosemary Mayne, GIPSA training officer, joins Brian Burk, Western Regional Office, and P&SP Deputy Administrator Alan Christian at Brian's USDA Grad School, 2007 Executive Potential Program Graduation in Hunt Valley, Maryland, on May 11, 2007.*

## For Your Health

*Mavis Rogers, Washington, DC*

Gardening tends the body and the spirit. Studies show that heavy yard work reduces heart disease risk as much as structured exercise programs. Even leisurely gardening can provide exercise for the soul by helping to relieve daily stress. You can multiply the health benefits of gardening by cultivating and eating your own vegetables.

○ Carrots promote healthy eyes. They are also rich in beta-carotene, an antioxidant that may protect against cancer and heart disease. For container gardening, choose short varieties of carrots. And, use pots that are at least 12 inches deep.

○ Red Peppers are colorful, tasty, and one of the best natural sources of vitamin C. This vital nutrient may help prevent cancer, heart disease, and cataracts. In containers, provide at least  $\frac{3}{4}$  cubic foot of soil per plant.

○ Spinach is a green, leafy vegetable high in folate, a B vitamin that may prevent cervical cancer and heart disease. Pregnant women who get plenty of folate also protect their unborn children against birth defects. Spinach prefers cool weather. So, plant seeds in the late summer for a fall harvest.

○ Tomatoes are high in lycopene, a compound that may protect against cancers of the prostate, stomach, and lung. For container gardening, try dwarf varieties that only need 1 cubic foot of soil. Or, grow cherry tomatoes in a hanging basket.

*Courtesy George Washington University Vital Signs*

**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, 2007!**

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