



GIPSA News

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

June 2008

GIPSA National Grain Center

John Giler, Washington, DC

Recently, I had the pleasure of joining a number of FGIS folks at a groundbreaking ceremony for our new National Grain Center in Kansas City, Missouri. This marks the beginning of a new and exciting chapter for FGIS.

The ground we're breaking is the realization of more than 5 years of planning. In 2003, FGIS began planning for and incrementally implementing a consolidating and centralization of quality control activities for the official system. At the same time, we analyzed our recruiting successes and challenges, and found that it is extremely difficult to recruit and retain folks in the expensive, congested Washington, DC, area. We determined that advances in information technology would allow us to place more "headquarters" employees in the Kansas City area.

The centralization of our oversight functions, in conjunction with increased placement of headquarters folks in Kansas City, meant we were going to need more space to house everyone. We needed a larger facility in Kansas City to collocate GIPSA employees currently located at the Technical Center, the Beacon facility



John Sharpe, Tom O'Connor, John Giler, and NGC project manager Bill Burden breaking ground for FGIS' National Grain Center in Kansas City.

in Kansas City, and the Wichita Field Office. We also needed more space to provide enhanced training and outreach to our staff, service providers, and customers; and to house incremental increases in personnel and equipment.

And so, we are breaking ground on our National Grain Center. The new facility will house approximately 110 employees in approximately 47,050 square feet. When complete, the Center will be home to the Technical Services Division, including the new Grading Services Laboratory; Field

Management Division's (FMD) Field Operations and Support Staff and Quality Assurance and Control Staff; as well as staff members from the Policies and Procedures Branch, the Market and Program Analysis Staff, Compliance Division, and Information Technology Staff. It will be located on the site of our current Technical Center, and will be comprised of a renovated Technical Center building and an addition.

The consolidation of oversight functions and FGIS personnel into a single facility in Kansas City will enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of critical technical programs and operational support; improve communication and coordination among organizational units; and provide a more attractive location to recruit and retain new staff. The new National Grain Center also will maximize the use of available space, optimize energy efficiencies, and collocate common functions to improve work efficiencies.

We expect the new addition to the National Grain Center will be ready for occupancy in spring 2009 and renovations will be complete in 2010.

Names in the News

PERSONNEL

Danielle Carter, participant in the Student Temporary Employment Program, has returned to the Field Management Division for the summer. She will provide assistance on the Knowledge Retention Program.

Manuel Gonzalez, HACU summer intern, has joined the Management Support Staff for the summer. **Manuel** is a junior at City College of New York and is studying Business Administration and Management. He is a Dean's List student and campus leader who participates in several campus and national organizations, such as Chi Alpha Epsilon National Honors Society of Academic Excellence, National Society of Leader-

ship and Success Sigma Alpha Pi, SEEK Student Society, New York State Black and Puerto Rican Legislative Caucus, New York State Model Senate, and National Urban League. **Manuel** will participate in several projects, including the HSPD-12 implementation and the Records Management Program. He is interested in becoming familiar with the Federal government, applying his leadership and academic skills, and learning about our organizational culture and the services we provide.

Pinkie Harrod, Management Support Staff, will leave GIPSA on June 6. She accepted a position outside of the Agency.

Jennifer Hill, participant in the 1890 National Scholars Program, has joined the Office of International Affairs for the summer. She worked with the Market and Program Analysis Staff last summer. **Jennifer** is a native of Chicago, and now a student at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University.

Cara McCarthy, legal specialist, joined the Policy and Litigation Division (PLD). **Cara** earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Interdisciplinary Studies in Social Science – Environmental Policy from Michigan State University. After serving 2 years in the AmeriCorps and working for a few years, **Cara** returned to school and earned a Legal Assistant Certificate. She subsequently worked as a paralegal in two



law offices before returning to school to earn her Juris Doctor degree from Wayne State University Law School. While in law school, **Cara** clerked for the State of Michigan Office of the Attorney General. She spent the summer of 2007 in Washington, D.C. as a Legislative Fellow in the office of U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow where she worked on the 2007 Farm Bill. **Cara** is currently an L.L.M. candidate in the Graduate Program in Agricultural Law at the University of Arkansas, School of Law.

Julia Menka, American Indian/Alaska Native Intern program, returns to the Compliance Division, Washington, DC, this summer. **Julia** is an excellent student who currently attends Arizona State University, Tempe, Arizona, where she is majoring in Fine Arts, with a minor in American Indian Studies. She is a member of the Lumbee Tribe, the largest tribe in North Carolina and east of the Mississippi River, and the ninth largest in the nation. The Lumbee take their name from the Lumbee River which winds its way through Robeson County.

RETIREMENTS

Inez Mosley, physical science technician, Technical Services Division, retired on April 30, 2008, after more than 21 years of service at FGIS.

Continued, see Names on page 3.

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AWARDS

George Banks, New Orleans, received a spot award for contributing to the mission of the Compliance Division and GIPSA by stepping up and taking leadership during a compliance review.

Terry Baron, Western Regional Office (WRO), received a spot award for extra effort with the increased workload related to the new SOPs and work distribution.

Wade Berteau, New Orleans, received an extra effort award for providing outstanding support to the Agricultural Products Standards application under the FGISonline initiative.

Kathy Boyd, WRO, received a spot award for her extra effort in training a new marketing inspector, which involved traveling to many livestock facilities and explaining terminology used. This effort contributed greatly toward the mission of the WRO and P&SP.

Carol Carter, WRO, received a spot award for her extra effort with the increased workload related to the new SOPs and work distribution.

Bob Crook, Compliance Division, received a spot award for contributing to the mission of the Compliance Division and GIPSA by volunteering to immediately assume the duties of another Compliance Division employee.

James Elswick, WRO, received a spot award for his extra effort in going above and beyond the call of duty and sustaining a superior performance level.

Cecilia Hill, WRO, received a

spot award for her extra effort with the increased workload related to the new SOPs and work distribution.

Jason Lopez, WRO, received a spot award for his extra effort in training a new marketing inspector, which involved traveling to many livestock facilities and explaining terminology used. This effort contributed greatly toward the mission of the WRO and P&SP.

Phillip Warren, WRO, received a spot award for his extra effort in providing BIDS database information to the resident agents' Blackberries in the region, enabling the RAs to have instant registration and bond information, and door-to-door navigation to markets, which provided significant improvement in functioning effectively while in the field.

(The following are the FY 2008 Length-of-Service Awards to date.)

40-YEAR SERVICE AWARD

John Good, Washington, D.C.

35-YEAR SERVICE AWARDS

William Braker, Toledo, OH
Wilburn Bennett, Lake Charles, LA
Lynn Bolte, Portland, OR
Lynn Cain, League City, TX
Wanny Carter, New Orleans, LA
Michael Eustrom, Kansas City, MO
Joe Hearn, League City, TX
Robb Hermanson, Superior, WI
Jeffrey Joseph, League City, TX
Donald Kendall, Kansas City, MO
Glenda Lasseigne, New Orleans, LA

Deborah Shipman, Washington, DC
Kenneth Weaver, Kansas City, MO

30-YEAR SERVICE AWARDS

James Adams, Washington, DC
William Bates, Washington, DC
Dean Brown, League City, TX
Miguel Ceballos, League City, TX
John Charmley, Jr., Portland, OR
Stuart Conser, Portland, OR
Scott Cooley, Olympia, WA
Ken Critchfield, Wichita, KS
Hal Crocker, Atlanta, GA
James Davis, League City, TX
Ken Dempster, New Orleans, LA
Wendal Dillon, New Orleans, LA
Edward Durgin, Washington, DC
John Erickson, Portland, OR
Steven Everidge, Portland, OR
John Flemm, Olympia, WA
Carol Forest, New Orleans, LA
Rose Fremin, New Orleans, LA
James Gardner, Portland, OR
John Giler, Washington, DC
Larry Hanzelka, League City, TX
Joseph Kuseck, Portland, OR
David Johnson, Portland, OR
Craig Klever, Portland, OR
Vernett Knight, New Orleans, LA
Jeffery Lehaie, Portland, OR
James Ledoux, Portland, OR
Robert Lijewski, Washington, DC
James Magee, New Orleans, LA
Wallace Martin, New Orleans, LA
Melvin McLaurin, New Orleans, LA
Phillip Miller, Cedar Rapids, IA
David Morris, Kansas City, MO
Philip Moser, Portland, OR

Continued, see More Names on page 4.

30-YEAR SERVICE AWARDS

Gary Mustonen, Portland, OR
David Olson, Portland, OR
Kerry Petit, New Orleans, LA
John Schoonover, Portland, OR
Gerald Thibodeaux, New Orleans, LA
Gregory Tomas, Washington, DC
Lowell Watts, New Orleans, LA
Sarah Welch Hill, New Orleans, LA
Daniel Williams, New Orleans, LA
Wesley Williams, New Orleans, LA
Gary Zella, New Orleans, LA

25-YEAR SERVICE AWARDS

Frieda Achtentuch, Washington, DC
Terry Baron, Aurora, CO
Wesley Blake, Kansas City, MO
Donald Blalock, Portland, OR
Christian Celino, New Orleans, LA
Carl Jackson, Washington, DC
Patricia Jackson, Kansas City, MO
Vicki Kottke, Moscow, ID
Cathy Phelps, Stuttgart, AR
Niles Reed, Jr., New Orleans, LA

20-YEAR SERVICE AWARDS

Mary Carmouche, New Orleans, LA
Valerie Collins, Kansas City, MO
Albert Conerly, Washington, DC
Donald Damm, Kansas City, MO
Gary Davis, Aurora, CO
Brenda Evans, Kansas City, MO
David Funk, Kansas City, MO

Constance Grows, New Orleans, LA
Elsie Jones, New Orleans, LA
Terry Lebouef, New Orleans, LA
Sandra Lockridge, Kansas City, MO
Joseph Lopez, Kansas City, MO
Tracey Paugh, Washington, D.C.
Linda Remondet, New Orleans, LA
Ernestine Taplin, New Orleans, LA
Caroline Thorpe, Washington, DC
Beverly Whalen, Kansas City, MO
Bryce Wilke, Des Moines, IA
Beale Williams, New Orleans, LA
Phyllis Zeno, New Orleans, LA

15-YEAR SERVICE AWARDS

Charles Brown, League City, TX
Karen Collins, Atlanta, GA
Arlan Deblieck, Des Moines, IA
Erin Dubroc, New Orleans, LA
Neil Foster, New Orleans, LA
Morris Johnson, Washington, DC
Stacey Schofield, Aurora, CO
William Smith, Jonesboro, AR
Luis Sosa, Des Moines, IA
Melba Twitty, Carlisle, PA

10-YEAR SERVICE AWARDS

Clarence Brown, Kansas City, MO
Roy Landry, Jr., New Orleans, LA
John Rasmusan, Portland, OR
Johnetta Robinson, Atlanta, GA
Luis Valdes, Washington, DC

Goodbye Message from Eddie and Luccile Clark

Here it is, after almost 22 years of service with FGIS, my wife and I have decided to close this phase of work. We started together and will be leaving the same...



*Eddie and Luccile Clark
are ready for retirement!*

Our first order of business will be to get Luccile's health intact. When she is able to travel, we plan to travel abroad to Rome and Paris. Maybe not in that order but something like that.

After the traveling is over, we will come back to the real matter at hand. Having been an associate minister for the past 5 years, I will be focusing my energy on full-time seminary school, with the assistance of wife.

We would like to thank all those people who have assisted us on this journey of life with the Agency.

Thoughts: Life is not always fair, but who said it would be...hopefully the rewards are better in the hereafter.

May God bless you all!!!

DeBlieck and Flinn Receive Federal Executive Council Awards

Each year, the Federal Executive Council (FEC) of Central Iowa honors outstanding Federal government employees in 10 categories: Administrative, Clerical/Secretarial, EEO, Lifetime Achievement, Professional, Public Service, Recently Hired, Small Group, Supervisor/Manager, and Technical. President's Awards are given to nominees that exhibit excellence beyond a single category.

In 2008, P&SP's Midwestern Regional Office nominated employees in five categories: **Kristen Pirtle**, Administrative; **Agnes Flinn**, EEO; **George Pulwicz**, Lifetime Achievement; **Arlan Deblieck**, Public Service; and **Leslie Jordan**, Recently Hired.

Agnes Flinn was honored as Employee of the Year in EEO for her work on the FEC Diversity Committee. Among many activities, Agnes organized a charity drive for underprivileged women and children. The drive resulted in 12 boxes of donations delivered to 3 charities. Because of Agnes's willing, can-do attitude and perseverance; and her orderly, methodical skills, the FEC Diversity Committee's first attempt at a 'Giving Tree' was a huge success for the Federal employees and the Des Moines area community.

Arlan Deblieck received the President's Award for Public Service. **Colonel Deblieck** served in Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003 and 2004 and recently returned from serving in Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. Arlan's effort in public service is praiseworthy. By playing a major role in establishing the military operations and assisting in building Iraq's infrastructure and for his responsibility for Afghanistan's U.S. joint military transportation, he will leave an everlasting mark in the lives of everyone around us. He maintains the same work ethics and attitude with P&SP.



The Midwestern Regional Office's FEC Employee of the Year Award nominees: (left to right) Kristi Pirtle, Arlan Deblieck, Agnes Flinn, George Pulwicz and Leslie Jordan

2008 New Leader Program

The New Leader Program (NLP), offered by the USDA Graduate School, is a 6-month leadership development program designed to develop future public service leaders by providing assessment, experiential learning, and individual development opportunities. The NLP is for full-time permanent Federal employees at the GS-7-11 levels who wish to develop, enhance, or improve their leadership skills.

GIPSA participants will be selected through a competitive process. To apply, please submit by **June 16, 2008**:

1. A completed NLP Program Application Form, which is available online on the New Leader Program page of the Graduate School's Leadership Development Programs website: www.grad.usda.gov.
2. Your current resume that is signed, dated, and contains your current home address.
3. A written statement from your first-line supervisor on your leadership potential, and motivation to complete all requirements and fully participate in the NLP.
4. A Mobility Clause form and Continued Service Agreement, which are available from the GIPSA Training Office.
5. An approval statement and signature from your manager.

to **Mary McCoy**, USDA/GIPSA/MSS, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Room 1633-S, Washington, DC 20250-3649. Verify its receipt. For more information, call Mary at (202) 720-1734 or visit the above website.

Travel Bits & Pieces

Monica Alexander, Washington, DC

NEW! New Agriculture Travel Regulation. The USDA Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO) has updated and issued the *Agriculture Travel Regulation-DR-2300-001*. Please visit the GIPSA website to access the new directive. All previous versions of the directive are obsolete and new regulations are to be implemented immediately.

NEW! Travel Card Do's and Don'ts. The Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO) has issued a new Government Travel Card Do's and Don'ts brochure. The brochure is located at <http://www.ocfo.usda.gov/travel/pdf/dodont.pdf>.

NEW! GovTrip Agency Help Desk. Effective June 9, 2008, requests for assistance, inquiries, and comments related to GovTrip, the new Agency travel system, should be directed to the GIPSA GovTrip HelpDesk at 202-720-1016 or GIPSAgovTripHD@usda.gov. The HelpDesk will allow USDA to better track requests and provide efficient responses to traveler inquiries.

Airline Baggage Fees. Effective May 5, 2008, several domestic airlines implemented new checked baggage fees that the GSA city pair tickets purchased by the Agency may not cover. Please see the chart below for an explanation of fees for participating airlines. Travelers, travel preparers, and approving officials should be prepared for the increase in costs to the travel as appropriate:

Airline	2nd Bag Fee	Exceptions
American (domestic flights only)	\$25	Military members with identification are exempt
Air Tran Airways	\$10	Military members on contract fares with identification are exempt
Delta Air Lines (domestic flights only)	\$25	Military members with identification are exempt
Northwest Airlines	\$25	Government and military members on contract fares are exempt
United Airlines	\$25	Military members with identification are exempt
US Airways	\$25	Military members with identification are exempt
Alaska Airlines	Free	
Express Jet	Free	
Frontier Airlines	Free	
Jet Blue	\$20	No exemptions
Gol	Free	
Midwest	Free	

These fees are subject to change or increase when travel commences. Please adhere to airline rules when traveling.

Airline Fuel Surcharge. Effective May 16, 2008, several airlines, including American, United, and US Airways, implemented a fuel surcharge of \$30-50 each way on ticketed travel. This change may cause an increase to the ticket price for travel booked before the effective date. Please update authorizations or vouchers accordingly and obtain a receipt with the correct ticket price when traveling to avoid inconsistencies when vouchering for the travel.

HSPD-12 Implementation. On August 27, 2004, President Bush signed Homeland Security Presidential Directive-12 (HSPD-12) with the goal of

eliminating wide variations in the quality and security of forms of personal identification verification (PIV) cards issued to government employees and contractors. Since then, Federal agencies have been preparing their employees, contractors, and other non-employees for the implementation, such as ensuring each has a minimum background investigation. Compliance with the HSPD-12 initiative is required for stakeholders to obtain PIV cards. Each Federal department was allowed to name their PIV card. USDA chose to call ours the *LincPass*. The card will be used to access buildings and other property, as well as computer and information technology equipment in the near future.

Over the past months, many GIPSA personnel have received e-mail from GSA informing them that they have been sponsored and may proceed with enrolling in the HSPD-12 program. USDA's goal is to enroll 60 percent of all employees in the program by October 2008. With this in mind, when you receive this notice, you should:

- § Inform your supervisor of the notice
- § Coordinate a date and time to enroll that meets your unit's workload demands
- § Take the correct identification documents required for enrollment

The Agency will issue a notice to employees with background and enrollment information to assist you in this process.

Issuances

Terri Henry, Washington, D.C.

- FGIS Directive 9180-61, "Official Calibrations for the Dickey-john GAC 2100 Moisture Meter," dated May 1, 2008
- FGIS Directive 9181.3, "Proficiency Program: Detection of Biotechnology Events," dated May 1, 2008
- FGIS Directive 9181.2, "Performance Verification of Qualitative Mycotoxin and Biotech Rapid Test Kits," dated May 1, 2008
- FGIS Program Notice 08-05, "Requirements for Auxiliary Control Modifications of Diverter-Type Mechanical Sampling Systems," dated May 9, 2008
- FGIS Program Notice 08-07, "Reporting Insect-Damaged Kernel Results Based on a Stage 2 Decision in IDW," dated May 9, 2008
- FGIS Program Notice 08-08, "Sample Collection Responsibilities for Verifying the Accuracy of Moisture Meter Calibrations Crop Year 2008," dated May 22, 2008

Regulatory Info

Tess Butler, Washington, DC

Federal Register Publications

- Designation for the Maryland, New Jersey, and New York Areas, published April 29, 2008

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

Idea Hotline Update

*Norma Phelps,
Washington, DC*

Here is the idea received on the GIPSA Idea Hotline during May 2008. If you have questions about any ideas or the Hotline, please call me at 202-720-1017.

Idea Received During May 2008

Gretchen VanWalbeek
Des Moines

- Use Magnetic Decals on GSA- or Agency-Owned Vehicles

Keep those ideas coming in! Send your ideas to the GIPSA Idea Hotline via e-mail: gipsa-ideas@gipsadc.usda.gov; FAX to 202720-1015; 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.**

Office of International Affairs Seeks Volunteers to Monitor Wheat Exports to Iraq

Ed Durgin, Washington, DC

The Office of International Affairs (OIA) is seeking volunteers for a special, temporary but recurring assignment to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to monitor the sampling of wheat cargoes en route to Iraq.

In 2005, a major commercial sale of U.S. wheat to Iraq gave the seller the option of selecting an impartial third party to witness sampling and testing at discharge. The seller nominated GIPSA and our representative worked in both Iraq and Syria to facilitate shipments under this sale. GIPSA also developed a set of special loading procedures to ensure that cargoes were properly sealed and documented according to the requirements of the Grain Board of Iraq (GBI) as part of an overall strategy to regain the nearly \$1 billion annual grain market that the U.S. lost after the 1991 war with Iraq.

OIA solicited volunteers for this assignment under that initial contract. Since then, several exporters have continued to ask GIPSA to monitor loading operations to satisfy GBI requirements and avoid discharging delays when cargoes arrive in Iraq. The work has evolved over time. For example, in 2007, vessels carrying U.S. wheat began to stop in the UAE en route to Iraq. GBI inspectors, accompanied by a GIPSA representative, board the vessels to draw samples and send these samples to the GBI lab in Iraq for analysis prior to a vessel's arrival for discharge.

Because the assignments have continued, and the duties and responsibilities have evolved, we are renewing our invitation for employees to express their interest in such assignments.

To be considered for this assignment, you must:

- ◆ be a journeyman level agricultural commodity grader with export wheat inspection experience (GS-9 and above);
- ◆ be a confident self-starter with strong skills in decisiveness, communication, and persuasion;
- ◆ have the ability to develop and grow cooperative working relationships with GBI inspectors; and
- ◆ be able to work independently as GIPSA's sole representative onsite.

The work schedule typically is irregular, and the assignments involve work on and around vessels at anchor. The duration of the assignment may be for several weeks or months, and may change during the course of the assignment. Training will be provided to the individual(s) selected for assignment.

If you are interested in such assignments or have questions about this opportunity, please contact Ed Durgin at edward.c.durgin@usda.gov or 202-720-0226 by June 30, 2008.



Facelift for AgLearn

On June 3, 2008, you'll see a new face on AgLearn. This significant upgrade and "facelift" will add new capabilities for all AgLearn learners.

Changes to look for include:

- 📌 A new AgLearn welcome screen that provides easily accessible information on continuing education credit and preparation for professional certifications using online training. The welcome screen will also highlight the ever-expanding library of over 3,000 online courses, including the most recently added series on Environmental Safety and Health.
- 📌 Implementation of the revised Office of Personnel Management online external training request form (SF- 182).
- 📌 Online training courses available directly from the AgLearn Welcome Page to help you manage the upcoming changes.
- 📌 The New AgLearn Tour, which covers a variety of topics, including Navigating AgLearn, Managing Your Learning, SF-182 Requests, Reports, and Communities.
- 📌 Completing the SF-182, which includes Initiating a New SF-182, Review the Status of SF-182 Requests, Review and Edit a Pending SF-182, Approve or Deny an SF-182 Request, and Supervisor Approval of Verification of Training.
- 📌 Each online course includes additional resources available for download, such as job aids and Frequently Asked Questions.

Be sure to login to AgLearn on June 3 to see why *Learning Just Got Easier!*



Designation Activities

GIPSA made the following designations to officially inspect and weigh grain in specified areas in Alabama, Georgia, Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Montana, Texas, and Washington.

GIPSA designated the Georgia Department of Agriculture (Georgia); Montana Department of Agriculture (Montana) and MidIowa Grain Inspection, Inc. (Mid-Iowa) to inspect or inspect and weigh grain effective July 1, 2008, through June 30, 2011 for Georgia and Montana, and effective July 1, 2008 through June 30, 2009 for Mid-Iowa. GIPSA determined that no qualified applicants were available to provide service in the southeast Texas region.

GIPSA is seeking applicants to provide official services in Alabama; Essex, Illinois; Springfield, Illinois; Savage, Minnesota; and Washington State areas and is requesting comments on the official agencies currently serving these areas. Applications and comments about the current service providers are due by July 1, 2008.

For official grain inspection services, contact Georgia at 229-386-3129; Montana at 406-452-9561; Mid-Iowa at 319-363-0239 and the GIPSA League City, Texas, Field Office at 281-338-2787.

For further information contact, Virginia Roseberry at 202-720-9803, fax 202-690-2755, or e-mail Virginia.V.Roseberry@usda.gov.

IT Tidbit

Rodney Kent, Washington

Sorghum Standards Changes

Before migrating any FGISonline application to the production platform, functional testing is performed to ensure the highest level of quality is achieved for each application in the FGISonline system portfolio. The testing team of the Application Development Branch uses several automated functional testing products to help achieve this level of quality. The functional testing tool suite includes HP Quality Center (QC) and Mercury Quality Test Professional (QTP).

What is functional testing? Also called integration testing, the objective of functional testing is to measure the quality of the business components implemented as part of an application and/or system. Testing verifies that the system behaves as intended from the business/user perspective, and functions accordingly to the requirements identified by the business Joint Application Development (JAD) sessions or any other designs used to specify the application and/or system requirements. Functional testing must determine if each business component performs within identified specifications, responds correctly to conditions (incoming events, processes, and data), moves information correctly from one component to the next component or data store, and that business components are executed in the sequence necessary to process the data correctly to meet the business objectives.

An efficient testing cycle must identify a core set of processes (with accompanying deliverables) for each of the phases within the testing cycle. The core processes include planning, business decomposition and requirements definition, test case design, traceability (Requirement Traceability Matrix [RTM]), execution, and defect management. The use of automated testing tools such as QC and QTP help the testing team meet the process requirements.

Functional testing can be an overwhelming task if not properly planned and managed. To ensure the success of functional testing, the testing cycle needs to be defined and followed. Scope definition needs to be communicated and

understood by the testing team as well as the project team. Realistic work plans identifying clear deliverables need to be implemented. The key to functional testing success is to manage the expectations of the testing team and the project team while clearly communicating the current status of the functional testing effort on on-going basis.

Employee Assistance Program

Call for confidential help.

Washington, DC personnel, call...
1-800-222-0364

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

On June 1, revisions to the sorghum standards became effective. The changes, which were announced in the July 20, 2007, *Federal Register*, better describe the types of grain sorghum produced by American farmers and reduce the allowable levels of broken sorghum kernels and foreign material in the various quality grades of sorghum.

Specifically, the standards will be changed to amend the definitions of the classes Sorghum, White sorghum, Tannin sorghum, and nongrain sorghum; adjust the grade limits for broken kernels and foreign material (BNFM), and the subfactor foreign material (FM); insert a total count limit for other material into the standards and revise the method for certifying test weight; and modify the inspection plan tolerances for BNFM and FM.

Nearly 50 percent of the grain sorghum produced by American farmers is exported around the world for use as food and animal feed. In many parts of the world, sorghum is used in food products and various food items; porridge, unleavened bread, cookies, cakes, couscous, and malted beverages are made from this versatile grain. Domestically, sorghum is used primarily as animal feed with a lesser amount moving into food marketing channels and, more recently, into ethanol production.

The changes will promote the marketing of higher quality sorghum and facilitate both domestic and international grain sorghum trade.

For more information, call **Pat McCluskey** at (816) 823-4639.

For Your Health

Mavis Rogers, Washington, DC



Getting a good night's sleep is an important contributor to your overall health, safety and productivity. Sleep disorders are common, with 120 million Americans suffering from some type of sleep disorder. Making small changes to your daily routine can help; other disorders may need to be treated with medications. Sleep disorders can range from being merely annoying and frustrating to being dangerous to your health.

Here's some helpful information on sleep disorders and tips for getting a better night's sleep.

What are Sleep Disorders? There are a number of different kinds of sleep disorders. Some of the most common are:

- ★ **Insomnia.** Someone suffering from insomnia may have trouble falling asleep or staying asleep. One of the most common causes of chronic insomnia is depression. There are three levels of insomnia — mild, medium and chronic.
- ★ **Obstructive Sleep Apnea (OSA).** People with OSA experience repeating episodes during sleep when their throat closes and they cannot suck air into their lungs. When this happens, normal amounts of oxygen are not taken in. The person must wake up to resume normal breathing patterns again.
- ★ **Narcolepsy.** This disorder is the opposite of insomnia. People with narcolepsy have trouble staying awake. They may fall asleep at any time or any place even while at work, talking or driving a car. Narcolepsy can be dangerous and those with narcolepsy should seek professional help.

Helpful Sleep Tips. To get a better night's sleep, follow these helpful tips:

- ★ Avoid caffeine and alcohol before bedtime
- ★ Eat light snacks to promote sleep; heavy meals can disturb sleep
- ★ Exercise earlier in the day rather than in the evening
- ★ Keep light and noise to a minimum in the bedroom
- ★ Try to wake and rise at the same time every day, including weekends
- ★ Do not use your bedroom for anything other than sleep
- ★ Avoid napping during the day

Getting Help. If you would like more information, you can call Federal Occupational Health Service (FOH4you.com) at 800-222-0364.

A Sampling of AgLearn Courses

For your personal development...

- ◆ Balancing Your Personal and Professional Life
- ◆ Coping with Stress
- ◆ Goals and Goal Setting
- ◆ Increasing Personal Effectiveness
- ◆ Keeping Your Balance
- ◆ Managing Time
- ◆ Setting a Course
- ◆ Time Management

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
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by June 25, 2008!

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