



GIPSA News

The newsletter of the employees of the Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration

June 2010



From the Administrator

J. Dudley Butler, Washington, DC

Last year, in keeping with the Department's strategic goals of revitalizing rural America, expanding producer access to growing local markets, and increasing access to healthy food, USDA launched 'Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food,' a Department-wide initiative to strengthen the critical connection between agricultural producers and consumers. 'Know Your Farmer' seeks to create new economic opportunities for agricultural producers, promote local and regional food systems that help keep wealth in communities, and encourage a national conversation on what we eat and where it comes from.

'Know Your Farmer' is not a program. Rather, it is a Department-wide initiative that promotes collaboration, coordination, and innovation among existing USDA programs so we are supporting local and regional food systems that complement

the national and international systems already in place. It seeks to provide producers with the information and support they need to take advantage of growing local and regional markets.

As USDA develops these new markets, we are giving producers of all sizes opportunities to improve their bottom lines, keeping American farmers and ranchers on the farm, and strengthening the American agricultural economy – while simultaneously improving access and options for consumers. Producers can earn more when the agricultural infrastructure they rely on – processing, aggregation and distribution, shipping, and sales – is thriving. As these local supply chains grow, they create more jobs and more prosperity in rural America. These new markets are also increasing access to nutritious foods – and empowering folks to have a better understanding of food – to help parents and children make healthy choices.

Local food is one of the fastest growing segments of agriculture. We expect consumer demand for locally grown food in the United States to rise from \$4 billion in 2002 to \$7 billion by 2012. During the last decade, we've seen 100 percent growth in direct-to-consumer food marketing sales. USDA aims to provide farmers with valuable information about these market trends so that they can better access these profitable, growing markets.

Every day, our 'Know Your Farmer' initiative is helping to grow these markets by building a stronger foundation to help local food systems thrive. For example, USDA is working to increase availability of slaughter in areas with livestock and poultry but little access. GIPSA is very involved with this initiative.

*Continued, see **KYF2**,
on page 4.*

Names in the News

PERSONNEL

Denise Fontanilla is the Midwestern Regional Office's (MRO) newest resident agent. Denise will be based in Evansville, IN. She is a December 2008 accounting graduate from Georgia Southern University.

Mallory Lambrecht is the new eastern Nebraska resident agent. She is a recent graduate of South Dakota State University with a BS in Animal Science and Ag Business. Her duty station is Columbus, NE.

Burt McKittrick, lead management analyst, Management and Budget Services, will be leaving GIPSA to work in the Agricultural Marketing Service's Compliance and Analysis program. His last day with GIPSA is June 4, 2010.

Ryan Montgomery is the new investigative attorney in the Business Practices Unit (BPU) of the Western Regional Office (WRO). Ryan formerly served as a BPU legal specialist.

Regina Pankowski is the new secretary, FGIS Office of the Deputy Administrator (ODA). In this capacity, **Gina** will be responsible for providing administrative support to the ODA and managing ODA's travel, training, time and attendance, correspondence, and procurement. **Gina** started her career with the federal government

in 2003 with the Architect of the Capitol in Washington D.C. She joined GIPSA in August 2004 as the secretary for the Field Management Division. **Gina** brings valuable skills and experience to ODA.

Craig Raysor is the new investigative attorney in the WRO's Business Practices Unit. **Craig** has an Agricultural Law LLM from the University of Arkansas and has been working in a private practice specializing in agricultural issues. **Craig** will join P&SP on June 6, 2010.

RETIREMENT

After 42 years of government service, **John Good** has retired from GIPSA. **John's** career included work at the Agricultural Research Service, the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, and GIPSA, and included work in staffing, classification, employee relations, personnel management, and labor relations. **John** came to FGIS in 1992 and worked in labor relations in FGIS Field Management Division until joining the Management Services Staff (now Management and Budget Services) when it was created in



2007. **John's** expertise on personnel matters has been highly valued. We wish him good health and much happiness as he and his family move to their new home.

LEAVE DONATION

Melanie Schwemer, agricultural commodity aid, League City, has been approved as a recipient under the Leave Transfer Program. On April 28, 2010, **Melanie** welcomed a new baby boy to her family. She has exhausted all of her available leave. Donations of annual leave or restored annual leave would be appreciated. If you would like to donate either annual or restored annual leave to this employee, please complete form AD-1043 and either fax or mail it (not both) to: USDA APHIS MRPBS HRD; Attn: LCT; Butler Square, 5th Floor; 100 North 6th Street; Minneapolis, MN 55403; fax: 612-336-3544. Form AD-1043 can be found on the web at:

<http://www.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/forms/ad.shtml>.

*Continued, see Names
on page 3.*

Names, from page 2.

CONDOLENCES

Glen Boyle, former P&S employee, passed away on May 15. **Glen** worked in the P&S Chicago field office in the 1960s. He retired from the St. Paul office at the end of 1981.

Michael Paul Eiswirth passed away on May 6, 2010, at age 60. **Mike** retired as a shift supervisor in the Belle Chasse area under the New Orleans Field Office in November 2004 with 30 years of government service. He started his career in grain with the New Orleans Board of Trade in 1973, and joined FGIS in 1977. Previously, **Mike** had served with the US Army in Vietnam and was a recipient of a Bronze Star.

AWARDS

Terry Baron, WRO, received a spot award for extra effort and diligence in completing ECM tasks in a timely manner.

Bettina Bledsoe, WRO, received a spot award for exemplary service and support as program assistant in the WRO

Tina Dillard, Washington, DC, received a spot award for her efforts in maintaining the Employee Library web pages and in developing the new interactive employee directory.

Glenda Plautz, MRO, received a time-off award for extra effort in disposing of outdated equipment while continuing to accomplish normal responsibilities.

Pamela Rodriquez, WRO, received a spot award for extra effort and diligence in completing ECM tasks in a timely manner.

Myron Simmons, WRO, received a spot award for leadership in updating the facility identification numbers and the tariff schedule.

40-YEAR SERVICE AWARDS

Robert Carter, League City
Ray Lavine, League City

35 -YEAR SERVICE AWARDS

George Banks, New Orleans
Eugene Bass, Washington, DC
Robert Campbell, League City
Henry Greenwood, Washington, DC
Myron Hall, League City
Dennis Thalacker, Washington, DC
Richard Uehara, New Orleans

30-YEAR SERVICE AWARD

Irene Omade, Washington, DC

25-YEAR SERVICE AWARD

Catherine Grasso, Washington, DC
Rosemary Mayne, Washington, DC
Dexter Thomas, Washington, DC

20-YEAR SERVICE AWARDS

Jamie Pitman, Kansas City
Stuart Frank, Des Moines

15-YEAR SERVICE AWARDS

Clarence Abrom, League City
George Jenkins, Kansas City
Dana Mitchell, New Orleans

10-YEAR SERVICE AWARDS

Adam Fast, Des Moines
Elmer Koski, Portland
Bernice Moreland, New Orleans
Jimmy Pan, Portland
Pamela Rodriguez, Denver

Merle Russelburg Named AFOM of the New Orleans Field Office

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Merle Russelburg

Merle Russelburg has been named assistant manager of the New Orleans Field Office.

Merle brings to the position 36 years of experience and service. He began his Federal service as an agricultural commodity grader in the New Orleans Field Office of the Agricultural Marketing Service's (AMS) Grain Division on June 9, 1974. He transferred to the FGIS Lusher, LA, field office in October 1976, where he worked as a shift supervisor. In June 1996, the Lusher office closed and Merle returned to the New Orleans Field Office. He worked in Area 3

from 1996 until his promotion to area manager in 2007.

Although his duty stations have centered around New Orleans, he also chaired the Field Management Division's Automated Data Processing Committee during the late 1980s and early 1990s. In addition, he has served the agency on international travel and numerous compliance review teams, and as a collateral duty training officer, acting field office manager and assistant manager, collateral duty assistant quality assurance specialist, team leader, and more. Merle also has worked closely with AMS and Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service staff throughout the years on implementing employee contracts, recruiting, hiring, and various other employee issues that will be very valuable to the New Orleans field office in his new position.

Merle was born and raised on a family farm in Henshaw, KY, to **Bernard** and **Lucille Russelburg** in 1950. He is the youngest of 16 children. He married his high school sweetheart **Kay**, who passed away in 2008. He has a Bachelor of Science degree in agriculture animal sciences from the University of Kentucky. In 1990, **Merle** successfully completed the agency-sponsored Management Development Program (MDP). While in the MDP, we also obtained several graduate college course certifications from the Louisiana State University.

Merle spent most of his career working a lot of overtime on weekends and holidays. Now, he enjoys more time pursuing fun and entertainment with his four children, their spouses, ten grandchildren, and other family and friends.

Through American history, people knew where their food came from and its important role in the social and environmental fabric of a community. Today, however, there is too often a disconnect between the public and the less-than 1 percent of the population who produce their food. So strengthening the connection between consumers and producers means helping Americans understand what agriculture and rural America do for them. That's why part of 'Know Your Farmer' is facilitating a national conversation to remind Americans that while not every family needs a lawyer or an accountant – every family needs a farmer.

Our success in reconnecting consumers to the farmers they rely upon for food and fiber is adding a critical component to the safety net USDA provides to farmers and ranchers.

For more information about the Know Your Farmer initiative, visit http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/knowyourfarmer?navtype=KYF&navid=KYF_MISSION.

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

MRO Team Receives FEC President's Award

Jay Johnson, Des Moines

The Des Moines Federal Executive Committee awarded the President's award in the category of "Small Group" to **Bryice Wilke, Ralph Bierlen, Gary May, and Kevin Studer**, all of the MRO. The group was recognized for significantly improving the transparency of pricing and accuracy of information available to livestock producers.

The Packers and Stockyards Act protects farmers and consumers from anti-trust activities and ensures competitive markets in agriculture. Over the past few years, significant changes in the hog industry have led to substantial changes in the way hogs are market valued. During 2009, GIPSA received numerous complaints from swine producers and packers about the health and viability of the competitive market for hogs.

In response, this small team, comprised of economists and legal specialists, investigated numerous complaints, including analyzing and data-basing business procurement and pricing records for numerous entities involved in the purchase of livestock. This group obtained, indexed, and reviewed over 1.5 million pages of documents relating to the market of livestock.

The work of this group exemplifies the Agency's commitment and efforts to ensure economic viability of small farmers and livestock producers by ensuring they have access to current, accurate, and complete market information.



MRO's FEC President's Award recipients: (left to right), Kevin Studer, Bryice Wilke, and Gary May. (Ralph Bierlen is not pictured..)

Seeking Advisory Committee Members

GIPSA has reopened the time period to solicit additional nominees to serve on the USDA Grain Inspection Advisory Committee. Nominations are being sought for five members and eight alternates, all of whom will begin serving a 3-year term immediately.

The Advisory Committee meets twice annually to advise GIPSA on the programs and services it delivers under the U.S. Grain Standards Act. Recommendations by the Committee help GIPSA better meet the needs of its customers who operate in a dynamic and changing marketplace. The Committee is comprised of 15 members and 15 alternate members appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture who represent all facets of the U.S. grain industry.

Members of the Advisory Committee serve without compensation, but are reimbursed for travel expenses. Nominations are open to all individuals without regard to race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, mental or physical handicap, marital status, or sexual orientation.

GIPSA will consider nominations received by June 24, 2010. For more information, contact **Terri Henry**, GIPSA, at 202-205-8281 or via email to Terri.L.Henry@usda.gov.

Issuances

Terri Henry, Washington, DC

- ❑ FGIS Directive 1410.2, Technical Reports, dated April 9, 2010
- ❑ FGIS Directive 9180.61, Official Calibrations for the Dickey-john GAC 2100 Moisture Meter, dated May 1, 2010
- ❑ P&SP Directive 4302.1, Employment of Attorneys, dated May 5, 2010
- ❑ FGIS Program Notice 10-08, Sample Collection Responsibilities for Verifying the Accuracy of Moisture Meter Calibrations Crop Year 2010, dated May 15, 2010
- ❑ FGIS Policy Memorandum Reference No. 232, Official Commercial Inspection Results reported on a U. S. Warehouse Act Certificate, dated May 18, 2010

Regulatory Info

Tess Butler, Washington, DC

Federal Register Publications

- ❑ Request for Extension and Revision of a Currently Approved Information Collection under the Clear Title Program, published May 20, 2010
- ❑ Request for Extension and Revision of a Currently Approved Information Collection under the Packers and Stockyards Act, published May 19, 2010
- ❑ Designation for the Muncie, IN; Fremont, NE; Maryland; and West Lafayette, IN Areas, published May 25, 2010
- ❑ Opportunity for Designation in the Columbus, OH; Dallas, TX; and Decatur, IN Areas; Request for Comments on the Official Agencies Servicing These Areas, published May 25, 2010
- ❑ Solicitation of Nominations for Members of the USDA Grain Inspection Advisory Committee, published May 25, 2010

New on inGIPSA

New on inGIPSA this month...

The Business Support—Travel page <http://ingipsa/Business-Support/Travel.aspx> has been updated with the addition of GIPSA Travel FAQs (http://ingipsa/Business-Support/Travel/travel_FAQ.aspx). The FAQs include GovTrip/TDY travel questions that are frequently asked of the agency travel coordinator. The GIPSA Travel FAQ is a dynamic document and will be updated as new questions are received, or information changes, so please check back often.

Also new is a link to the MRP Travel Services Center (<http://inside.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/travel.shtml>) that provides additional information on travel-related issues.

Under FGIS Essentials (<http://ingipsa/Program-Essentials/FGIS.aspx>), there are two new additions (1) a new Knowledge Management section that contains retiree and employee interviews and more, and (2) information on the FGIS Clothing Program.

FGIS Matters...!

Randall Jones, Washington DC

We are mid-way through 2010 and demand for our services remains very strong. Export inspections are outpacing last year's by just over 12 percent, with soybeans leading the way at 24 percent above last year's record level. Sorghum shipments have increased 22 percent; wheat is 5 percent ahead of last year. Corn remains relatively stable, with only a 3 percent increase. Much of the increased workload has been borne by our team members in League City as they have exported 4.0 million metric tons or 62 percent more than last year. Also, Portland has seen a 1.3 million metric ton (mmt) increase, which is 35 percent ahead of last year. Toledo has also experienced a dramatic increase in their workload as their tonnage is ahead of last year by 79 percent. Since October 2009, rice inspections (both domestic and export) have increased an average of 23,000 metric tons per month, coming in at nearly 490,000 tons during the month of April. Cumulative inspected rice tonnage through the month of April was 2.76 mmt, with roughly 68 percent of this destined for export.

This month, I was pleased to announce that **Regina Pankowski** is the new secretary of the Office of the Deputy Administrator (ODA). **Gina** started her career with the federal government in 2003 with the Architect of the Capitol in Washington, DC. She joined GIPSA in August 2004 as the secretary for the Field Management Division (FMD), a position in which she excelled for the past 6 years. In this new capacity, **Gina** will provide administrative support to the FGIS Deputy Administrator and manage ODA's travel, training, time and attendance, correspondence, and procurement. **Gina** brings valuable skills and experience to ODA. Please join me in congratulating **Gina**.

I also am excited to inform you of a new FGIS initiative that will provide a great opportunity for all FGIS employees. We will create a Change Control Working Group (CCWG) similar to the efforts initiated by our P&SP colleagues. The CCWG group will administer a structured procedure to evaluate changes requested by FGIS employees and facilitate implementation of those changes that enhance operational efficiency and effectiveness. Approximately seven employees from different divisions and grade levels will comprise this group. The FGIS Executive Management Team is currently reviewing applications to make the final selections.

FGIS met with representatives from the National Grain and Feed Association (NGFA) and the North American Export Grain Association (NAEGA) to provide program updates and address some of their concerns. Among the topics of discussion were the contract term "free from live insects," in-transit fumigation, and changes in tonnage fees and hourly costs. We also provided updates on the Korean Feed Association Sampling Project, wheat standards, the container standard proposed rule, and StarLink testing.

Bob Lijewski, Rita Bhanot, John Good, and I had a most productive meeting with Union leaders at the end of May. We discussed many important issues including EEO and civil rights, standardizing PAS samples, classification reviews, mandatory evacuations, testing of ACT 4s, 5s, and 6s, and more. As always, we appreciate the opportunity to work together with this group of dedicated employees. This was **John Good's** last meeting with the Union, as he retires on June 3 after more than 40 years of service. Congratulations, **John**, on your retirement!

I have two very important upcoming trips in June. **Administrator Butler, Bob Lijewski, Dave Mundwiler, Philip Tate,** and I will meet with Canadian stakeholders in Montreal, Canada. The Canadian Grain Commission (CGC) notified GIPSA that effective January 1, 2010, CGC would no longer provide sampling and inspection services for U.S. grain exported through Canadian ports and would no longer provide stowage examinations for these vessels. At that time, FGIS' Toledo Field Office began providing official services to U.S. grain customers in Canada. At this meeting, we will discuss fees and provision of official sampling and inspection services in Canada. I look forward to this meeting which I anticipate will strengthen our working relationship with our Canadian counterparts.

Also in June, FGIS will meet with the Grain Inspection Advisory Committee (GIAC) in Kansas City, MO. The GIAC meets twice annually to advise FGIS on its programs and services.

Until next month - keep up the good work and stay safe!

P&SP CCWG Facilitates Agency Change

Bart Di Giovanni, Atlanta

In January 2009, P&SP headquarters and regional office staff met in Huntsville, Alabama, to draft a charter and operating procedures for the Change Control Work Group (CCWG). Prior to the establishment of the CCWG, the agency had undergone a whirlwind of change, including new SOPs, work modules, and data systems. The CCWG was created to replace the many change agents, committees, and teams that had spearheaded the monumental change, and to become a standing committee to keep positive changes moving forward by administering a structured procedure to evaluate change requests and facilitate the implementation of changes to enhance agency operational efficiency and effectiveness. The CCWG charter is posted on the P&SP Employee Library.

The CCWG is comprised of seven voting members – two from each regional office and one from the Policy and Litigation Division (PLD); two non-voting members – one from the Business and Economic Analysis Division (BEAD) and a sponsor from the Office of the Deputy Administrator. Members of the CCWG are selected by the management team. Each voting member serves a 3-year term (charter members are serving different length terms in order to initiate a staggered rotation). To provide a wide perspective, CCWG membership is diverse. Voting members from the regional offices come from different work units (financial, business practices, and resident agents). Each voting member applied to join the CCWG and all were selected to serve by the program management team (PMT). The current members are: **Adam Fast** (chair), MRO; **Amy Blechinger** (vice chair), PLD; **Tina Dillard** (recorder), BEAD; **Nilsa Ramos Taylor**, ERO; **Bart Di Giovanni**, ERO; **Kevin Studer**, MRO; **Jared Koch**, WRO; **Rod Prather**, WRO; and **Regina Ware**, BEAD.

CCWG meetings are usually conducted by conference calls. Minutes of the meetings are posted to the Employee Library. During the conference calls, which may be lengthy, new change requests (CRs) are subjected to in-depth analysis and discussion. If the CR involves a technical issue beyond the knowledge of the members, it will be referred to a subject-matter expert for clarification and input before the CCWG makes a decision on the merits of the proposal. CRs approved by the CCWG go to the PMT for disposition. If approved by the PMT, the CR may be assigned to BEAD or PLD for implementation.

Since its launch, the CCWG has received over 100 CRs and sent over 80 CRs to the PMT for disposition. The PMT has approved over 60 CRs for implementation. Some CRs such as “bug fixes” for a simple AMS or ECM modification, can be implemented shortly after CCWG approval. However, many CRs are, by their nature, complex and require extensive work after PMT approval.

P&SP employees are encouraged to submit their ideas to improve agency systems, procedures, regulations, forms, and employee morale. A click on the CCWG tab located on the left hand column of the Employee Library provides access to a Change Request Form (which should be filled out with as much detail as possible and provide a proposed solution), and instructions as to how to start a CCWG work flow. The CR Form should be completed before the work flow is started so that it can be inserted into the created ECM folder. Once an ECM folder has been created, the status of the CR can be tracked by the submitter at any time.

Employees who have ideas that would impact all of GIPSA should use the GIPSA Idea Hotline or office suggestion box. Safety-related ideas or issues should be directed to the appropriate safety officer.

Employee Assistance Program

Call for confidential help.

1-800-222-0364



Computing in the Clouds

Tracy Gerke, Kansas City

Get your head out of the clouds and focus on real life! Isn't that what your mother used to tell you when you were a kid? Well, these days the clouds are real life. Cloud computing is one of new things in IT that many people are talking about.

What is cloud computing? A quick definition as provided by TechnoBuffalo.com is "a system whereby data storage, applications and to some degree processing power are freed from local constraints and are available via servers or computers elsewhere in the world." Another good definition comes from Maggie Fox, Founder and CEO of the Social Media Group in this video on YouTube (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6PNuQHUiV3Q>). She says, "If you need software, it's not cloud computing. If you need hardware beyond your laptop, it's not cloud computing. All of the activity you want to do should take place on a remote server elsewhere and all you should need is an internet connection."

What does this really mean? This means that your computer no longer has to have a program installed onto it in order to use the program or you no longer have to have a huge multi-gigabyte hard drive to store multitudes of files. Programs can now be run from the internet as well as accessing your files from internet storage.

Wow, sounds good, but what does this mean for me? There are good things and bad things about cloud computing. Some of the good things about cloud computing are that there is no expensive software to install on your computer, you have access to the application anywhere you have an internet connection, and collaboration is simplified. Some of the negative things about cloud computing are privacy and security concerns. Privacy is a concern because many online services share your personal information. You should always make sure that you read and understand how your personal information will be used and shared. As with any system, security is always a concern. One concern with any online service is the security of your personal data and protection from unauthorized access.

Well, I'm ok with the way I do computing now. I don't need cloud computing. Actually, you probably already do some cloud computing and didn't even realize it. The best example of cloud computing is web-based email. So if you have yahoo, gmail, aol, msn, or hotmail email accounts, you are in the cloud. Some other examples of cloud online storage are Humyo, ZumoDrive, Microsoft's SkyDrive, and Amazon's S3. There are even virtual office applications such as Google Docs and Microsoft Office Live that offer online productivity applications. These are just a few examples of cloud computing. If you are interested in learning more about it, just google "cloud computing" and you will find lots of examples and explanations.

So the next time someone tells you to get your head out of the clouds, you can say, "That's where I live."

USDA/DOJ Poultry Workshop

USDA and the Department of Justice (DOJ) held the second of five joint public workshops on competition and regulatory issues in the agriculture industry on May 21, in Normal, AL. The workshop, led by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack and U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder, focused on issues in the poultry industry, and featured panel discussions on poultry grower issues and trends in poultry production. And, it also included opportunities for public comments.

"All players in the poultry industry deserve an honest chance at success, and that requires a fair, viable, and competitive marketplace," said Vilsack. "Today's conversation helped bring a better understanding of the issues impacting growers on a daily basis and provided an opportunity to openly discuss some of the ideas that have been raised to address these concerns."

Attorney General Holder said, "[C]ompetition is crucial to ensuring opportunity and fairness in our agricultural markets. The Department of Justice is committed to working jointly with the Department of Agriculture in protecting competition in those markets."

Information about the workshops, and, when available, the transcripts of each, can be found at www.justice.gov/atr/public/workshops/ag2010/index.htm#overview.

For Your Health

Mavis Rogers, Washington, DC

What Exactly is Good Nutrition. Secretly, we all want just a few things in life, none more important than living a life that is healthy and energetic. One way to accomplish this is to eat a well-balanced diet that fuels the body to take on life's challenges.

One of the best things you can do to improve your overall health and well-being is to eat a diet that is well rounded and nutritious. Diet can make the difference between feeling great and just feeling okay. But, how do you know which foods are best for you? Proper nutrition is easy. All you need to do to ensure your health and well-being is follow these top five tips for maintaining optimal nutrition:



- ◆ **Eat a well balanced diet.** This means you have to incorporate foods from each of the five food groups: carbohydrates, vegetable, fruit, oil, dairy and protein.
- ◆ **Adopt the phrase “moderation.”** At no time should you consider some foods bad and other foods good. Rather, all foods can be nourishing if they are eaten in moderation.
- ◆ **Take a multi-vitamin.** Even the healthiest eater may not get all of the vitamins and nutrients they need from diet alone. Why? Our bodies are not always able to absorb nutrients efficiently from the foods we eat. Thus, it is important to take a multi-vitamin and mineral supplement daily.
- ◆ **Get enough sleep.** Sleep deprivation can wreak havoc on your diet and even contribute to weight gain.
- ◆ **Exercise daily.** Even 10 minutes of routine exercise can help your body maintain its peak fitness level.

Excessive consumption of alcohol can wreak havoc on your diet. Alcohol inhibits the body's ability to absorb vital nutrients such as calcium. In addition, alcohol in the evening can interfere with your sleep cycle.

Other things you can do to improve your nutrition include incorporating lean proteins and fish into your diet. Fatty fishes, including salmon, provide key nutrients called “essential fatty acids” which help your brains ability to function properly.

Nutrition is a choice. For you to be the healthiest person you can be, it is vital that you make choices that are good for you and your well-being. Adopting just a few of the strategies above will help you tremendously on your journey toward optimal health.

*Courtesy: Beverly Brooke:
Health and Finesse.com*

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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Retiring? To be included on our email distribution list after you retire from GIPSA, please send your email address to dana.b.stewart@usda.gov.

by June 25, 2010!

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