



GIPSA News

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

June 2011



J. Dudley Butler

GIPSA and the federal budget

Dudley Butler, Washington, DC

I wanted to take a little time to update you on the federal budget and thank each of you for the efforts you have already put in to help improve efficiency and innovate during these uncertain times.

In 2010, GIPSA received about \$84 million to fund agency activities with about half of the money coming from Federal Grain Inspection Service user fees to support grain inspection and weighing activities and the other half (\$42 million) coming from Congress through appropriations.

Before this fiscal year started in October, the President proposed a \$1.2 million increase for GIPSA, but, because Congress did not pass a budget by October 1, 2010, we had been operating at 2010 levels through short term spending bills called continuing resolutions or CRs. In April, a CR covering the rest of the fiscal year was enacted which cut GIPSA appropriated funding by about 4%.

As you know, we have worked to use our resources carefully and reduce spending where possible while maintaining a high level of operations. I want to thank you for your part in these efforts. I did not fully appreciate the number and extent of everyone's efforts until I reviewed the summary of the savings across the agency that Lisa Fyall and Tammy Lindsey have begun collating. The savings range from a few hundred dollars to tens of thousands of dollars and show a real dedication across GIPSA. I know some of these changes have also meant changes to procedures such as teleconferences instead of meeting in person and even additional responsibility. Thank you for your patience and positive attitudes.

While we finally have certainty about funding for the current fiscal year, we have just started the Fiscal Year 2012 process. Earlier in the month, the House of Representatives passed an appropriations bill that proposed to cut USDA by \$2.6 billion—or about 15%. GIPSA's cut to appropriated funding was about 8%. The Administration expressed serious concerns that the funding level provided is insufficient. Also, keep in mind that the Senate has not taken action on its version of the legislation.

I will update you periodically, but my message for you now is thank you for putting GIPSA in the position it is in and keep up with what you've been doing to identify ways to be more efficient and innovative.

Names in the News

PERSONNEL

Stephanie Brown is the new Assistant to the Deputy Administrator for FGIS. See the separate article by Randall Jones for more information.

Tammy Chang from MBS left GIPSA in mid-May. **Tammy** has accepted a position with the U.S. Department of the Treasury to work on economic analyses pertaining to the national debt. All who had the pleasure of working with **Tammy** over the past three years will miss her dedication, diplomacy, and good nature. Few were aware of all that she did to ensure that the Agency's budget formulation process ran smoothly.

RETIREMENT

ACG **Robert Moses** from the New Orleans Field Office is retiring on June 30, 2011 after 32 ½ years with GIPSA. **Robert** joined GIPSA in the Lutcher Field Office directly after graduating from Alcorn State University in 1977 with a Baccalaureate degree in Agricultural Economics. He has remained an avid supporter of all sports at his alma mater. **Robert** and his wife, **Yvonne**, live in Sorrento, LA and have four children.

ACT **Linda Remondet** from the New Orleans Field Office is retiring on June 30, 2011 after 23 ½ years with GIPSA. She began her career in the Lutcher Field Office on 9/27/1987. **Linda** enjoyed going on details and learning about the different elevators and how they operate. She really enjoyed working with APHIS on the Medfly program. **Linda** is looking forward towards retirement and plans on attending all of the LSU football games with her husband, **Butch** and also spending time with her family.

P&SP Missouri Resident Agent **Terry Ryno** retired recently with 24 years of service. **Terry** started his career with P&SP as an Auditor in Memphis, TN. In 1999, during P&SP's reorganization, **Terry** relocated to Springfield, MO. **Terry** and his wife, **Pat**, an elementary school teacher, both retired at the same time. He plans to do a lot of fishing and traveling.

CONDOLENCES

LaVoir D. Duvall passed away on June 18, 2011 in Valleyford, WA. He is survived by his daughter, **Necia Sinden** (David); son, **Reed L. Duvall**; two sisters, **Doris Goodrich** and **Velda Simmons**; twin brother, **DeMar E. Duvall**; four grandchildren and two great grandchildren. **LaVoir** came to Moscow office from Baltimore Field Office in the early 1980s and retired from here about May 1992.

Bob Fitzgerald passed away on May 11. **Bob** worked in budget at GIPSA and was great to work with. He was survived by his wife **Katie**.

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

2011 Mid-Year Performance Reviews

by Irene Omade

USDA requires all supervisors with performance ratings responsibilities to complete and document mid-year reviews within 30 days after the mid-point of the rating cycle.

GIPSA is happy to report 100% compliant in meeting the April 30th requirement to perform mid-year performance reviews. Thanks to all GIPSA supervisors for your great work on this very important task.

Employee Assistance Program

Call for confidential help.

1-800-222-0364

GIPSA Idea Hotline

The GIPSA Idea Hotline is open for business. Please send your suggestions or ideas to GIPSA-Ideas@usda.gov; fax them to 202-720-1015; or telephone them to 1-800-455-3447 or 202-720-7045. It is best to send them via fax or email to reduce the possibility of transcription errors; however, ideas will be accepted regardless of the method of transmission.



Issuances

*Terri Henry,
Washington, DC*

- FGIS Directive 9180.61, Official Calibrations for the Dickey-john GAC 2100 Moisture Meter, dated May 1, 2011
- FGIS Policy Memorandum Reference No. 237, Inspection of Insect Damage Kernels in Wheat, dated May 5, 2011
- FGIS Policy Memorandum Reference No. 238, Unit Train Inspection Options, dated May 5, 2011
- FGIS Policy Memorandum Reference No. 239, Determining Odor in Grain, Rice, and Similar Commodities, dated May 5, 2011
- FGIS Program Notice 11-06, Sample Collection Responsibilities for Verifying the Accuracy of Moisture Meter Calibrations Crop Year 2011, dated May 16, 2011

FGIS Matters....!

Randall Jones, Washington DC

As we near the end of the marketing year our total inspections are 10% ahead of last year and 14% higher than the five year average. Wheat export inspections continue to be the strong force behind the increase, up more than 9.0 million metric tons (mmt) over last year which is a strong 55% increase. Corn inspections have slowed somewhat but remain similar to last year but lag the five year average by 3.9 mmt. Soybean export inspections continue to be well above historic levels, up 1.2% over last year's record pace.

Year-to-date League City continues to be extremely busy and shows the largest increase in volume, up 4.0 mmt or 36%, which is due exclusively to increase in wheat exports. New Orleans is up 3.8 mmt or 9 % as compared to last year.

Our other field offices also continue to handle large increases in wheat inspections compared to last year. Domestic Inspection Operations Office (DIOO) is up 0.3 million metric tons (74 %), New Orleans is ahead 1.2 mmt (45 %), Olympia is up 2.1 mmt (69 %), Portland is up .4 mmt (10%), and Toledo is up 1.0 mmt (117%).

In May, FGIS managers met with the American Association of Grain Inspection and Weighing Agencies (AAGIWA). This annual meeting is an excellent forum to communicate with the Official Agencies and discuss relevant issues with them such as the changes to our organizational structure, implementation of the Quality Management Program, FGISonline and recent program and policy issuances by the Field Management Division (FMD).

Also in May, Bob Lijewski, Director, FMD, and I visited the League City Field Office and met with ADM officials from New Orleans and Galveston regarding service delivery issues. We also met with the field office staff and discussed current operations. As previously mentioned, this year has been very demanding in the League City market and their hard working is greatly appreciated.

In May, Tom O'Connor, Director, Quality Assurance and Compliance Division, Bob Lijewski, and I met with the Union leadership from around the country. We discussed a number of issues including the delivery of services at our export labs, centralization, quality assurance, and budget. We certainly value our relationship with the Union leadership and the insight that they bring to helping make FGIS a better place to work. Likewise they play a critical role in assisting us in our quest to improve the delivery of our services.

(Continued on page 5)

In June, I was in Kansas City to address the 9th International Conference on Electromagnetic Wave Interaction with Water & Moist Substances. Scientists from our Technology and Science Division presented at this conference which goal is to encourage working relationships among many of the world's best-known experts in the electromagnetic science field. Scientists from 10 countries attended the conference. We can be very proud of the work by Dr. Funk and his team in Kansas City as they continue to be a world leader in developing new technologies that facilitate the marketing of grain.

In June, the Grain Inspection Advisory Committee Meeting was held in Kansas City. See the article on Advisory Committee Resolutions to learn about the resolutions passed by the Committee.

Keep up the good work and stay safe!

Randall Jones visit to League City (May 18, 2011)



Front left: Jorge Vazquez, Tieu Pham, Brittany Brown, Sarah Skrivanek, Cheryl Taylor, Ana Trujillo, Randal Jones

Back: Julian Biley, Ray Lavine, Bob Lijewski, Dave Grady, Alan Wadyko, Venice Tony, Adel Ibrahim, Jim Woodman

Welcome to Stephanie Brown

Randall Jones, Washington, DC



I am pleased to announce that on June 20, 2011, Stephanie Brown will join FGIS as the Assistant to the Deputy Administrator. As part of the Executive Management Team, Stephanie will take a lead role in reviewing and defining the delivery of our services to meet the ever changing needs of our stakeholders. She will also coordinate activities and departmental requests within FGIS and other parts of GIPSA as well as the Department. Essentially she will perform many of the same types of functions for FGIS that Mike Schmidt handles as Chief of Staff for GIPSA—even backing each other up and pitching in together as needed.

Prior to joining FGIS, Stephanie worked in the Office of the Deputy Administrator for Farm Programs in the Farm Service Agency (FSA). In her role as Program Manager for Requirements, Stephanie worked across the agency facilitating project teams to implement process improvement and reengineering projects.

Stephanie started her career in USDA working in the NRCS Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) program. She then moved to FSA and worked in Georgia State Office. During her 9 years at FSA, Stephanie worked extensively with conservation, special initiative programs, and geographic information systems (GIS) in the development and implementation of web-based technology initiatives.

Stephanie is a native of Coweta County in Georgia where she grew up on a beef cattle farm and was an active member of the local 4-H club. She received her Bachelor of Arts from the University of Georgia and is currently working on her Master's of Science in Organization Development and Knowledge Management at George Mason University. She resides in Alexandria, Virginia with her husband.

As you can see from Stephanie's experience and skills, she will be a great addition to the FGIS and GIPSA family. As you always do, please give her a friendly welcome and your efforts to assist her are greatly appreciated as she becomes familiar with her new role.

Grain Inspection Advisory Committee Meeting

The Grain Inspection Advisory Committee met in Kansas City, MO on June 21-22, 2011. The following resolutions were introduced and passed by the Committee:

1. The Advisory Committee recommends that GIPSA moves forward on implementing new diverter type (D/T) check testing procedures at both the export and domestic markets. The Advisory Committee charges GIPSA to replace the current procedures with procedures that focus on safety and reliability such as drop, visual, and installation certification.
2. The Advisory Committee is concerned that the newly formed Domestic Inspection Operations Office (DIOO) is currently understaffed to properly perform their required duties (equipment, federal appeals, testing, SIMS samples, AMA) and supervise approximately 30 agencies in the domestic market. The Advisory Committee recommends that GIPSA evaluate the number of personnel under the DIOO banner, including what steps will be taken to ensure that GIPSA will be able to facilitate the marketing of grain in the domestic market under the increased workload of DIOO.
3. The Advisory Committee recommends that GIPSA continues to support marketing to Asian markets through the Collateral Duty Officer (CDO) program and explore ways to expand the program. The Advisory Committee suggests that the Agency work with industry, if possible and appropriate, to look at ways this may be accomplished.
4. The Advisory Committee recommends that GIPSA continue to identify new and improve current rapid technology in the area of protein quality (visco-elastic test) and ensure that the results correlate with end users.
5. The Advisory Committee recommends that GIPSA continue working on sorghum odor. In continuing this effort, reach out for industry and end-user feedback to set a storage musty sorghum odor reference that refers to end uses.
6. The Advisory Committee strongly recommends that export user-fees collected and maintained as retained earnings be solely used to support services that facilitate the export of grain and grain related products and not be subject to use for any other purpose.
7. The Advisory Committee recommends that FGIS/GIPSA continue to go forward with the evaluation and adoption of the 149 MHZ technology as the new official standard for grain moisture measurement.
8. The Advisory Committee recommends that GIPSA expedite the scheduled review of the barley standards considering the needs of all stakeholders.

GIPSA Celebrates a Billion Acts of Green and Invents the Future

Idelisse Rodriguez, Washington, DC

On April 28, 2011, GIPSA participated in the USDA's celebration of Earth Day, Take our Daughters and Sons to Work, People's Garden, and Farmers Market, all in one day! This year's theme was a "Billion Acts of Green and Invent the Future!" The celebration included booths and exhibits from 20 USDA agencies, Earth Day activities, and the farmers market. GIPSA's creative and educational booth was among the most popular at the Whitten Building Patio. Visitors took home animal magnets; ground samples of wheat; made grain art with different types of grain and weighed their full containers.

GIPSA's booth was a success because of our employees' participation before and during the event. Special thanks to **Rita Bhanot, Sherri Murphy, Candace Hildreth, Julie Nelis, Jennifer Zuckman, Tammy Chang, Jennifer Hill, and Bill Bates** for all their help. I would also like to extend our appreciation to **Sandra Metheny, Tom Steele, Dave Grady, Carla Kania, Ken McDunnah, Vicki Kottke, and Ed Stallman** for providing grain.



GIPSA employees Candace Hildreth, Julie Nelis, and Tammy Chang attending the booth.

Billion Acts of Green and Invents the Future, *continued from page 8.*



Mark Kemp's daughter, Mya, making grain art at the GIPSA booth.

Help NTCSB Help YOU! Frieda Achtentuch, CIO, Washington, DC

Where is the Help Desk? Why doesn't anyone answer the phone? I am sure that many of you have asked this question while trying to contact the GIPSA Help Desk. Currently our Help Desk, which is part of the Network, Telecommunications, and Customer Support Branch, NTCSB, is down 3 people. We are not sure when or how many of these positions will be filled. However, it is important to the IT Staff to give the best IT support service to our 700+ GIPSA employees.

How can you help NTCSB provide better service? The best way to get service is to enter a Help Desk ticket. By entering a ticket your request becomes documented. Also, as your Help Desk ticket is worked on you will receive updates via email. You will see who worked on your ticket, when it was worked on, and the progress that is being made.

How do you use the Help Desk system? On your computer, you should see a Fire Extinguisher Icon, or an Icon that says "GIPSA Help Desk User." Click on that icon. Click on enter a new incident. Enter a title that describes your current problem. Click on Category and select the appropriate category. Upload any attachments. In the Comment area enter as much information that you have describing your current issue. The more information you provide, the easier it is for NTCSB to understand and repair your problem. Click OK, and you are done! By entering a ticket, the Help Desk can review your information, prioritize, and get busy! Thanks for Helping NTCSB Help You.

Important Information for New Employees

Caroline Thorpe, Washington, DC

All new employees are required to review and complete the items on the New Employee Orientation. This check-list provides available resources with information on:

- Federal personnel practices and procedures
- GIPSA and its functions
- Impact of employees actions on themselves, the agency, USDA and those we serve
- Being a professional government employee.

This site offers answers to common questions such as:

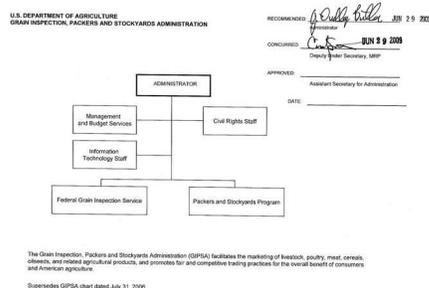
Where are the rules regarding pay, leave and travel?

- OPM: <http://www.opm.gov/topics.asp>
- GIPSA: <http://ingipsa/Employee-Resources.aspx> (travel is on the lower-right)

Is there an organizational chart and directories for GIPSA?

- Organization: <http://archive.gipsa.usda.gov/rdd/gipsa-org.pdf>
- Directories: <http://ingipsa/directories.aspx>

The Organizational Chart for GIPSA:



Is there information on my job description, classification and performance evaluation? http://inside.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/performance_management/toolkit_performance_plan.shtml

Where is the New Employee Orientation located?

On the inGIPSA Training site at: <http://ingipsa/Employee-Resources/Training.aspx> (Look for the heading **New Employee Orientation** in the lower-right corner and click on the New Employee Orientation and New Employee Orientation Brochure.)

If you have any questions or comments on the New Employee Orientation please contact me, Caroline Thorpe @ Caroline.C.Thorpe@usda.gov or call 202-690-2332.

IDPs: An Opportunity to Transform Your Work and Your Life

Rosemary Mayne, Washington, DC

Each year GIPSA offers you the opportunity to reflect on your work and ensure your focus and commitment to moving things on your planned path. Whether you are thinking about small change growth or larger leadership moves, or perhaps thinking about that move to retirement, this tool can work for you. You have the power to grow into who you want to be, and GIPSA wants to hold that discussion with you. Together, you and the agency can look for mutually productive needs that can enable you to set your goals soaring to new heights.

With a new directive on IDP's (DR 4040-410), USDA is putting a special emphasis on the great benefits for employee's to use the IDP tool. Here are some benefits:

1) Succession Planning. Increasing numbers of Federal employees are eligible to retire and will need to be replaced by engaged employees. If you will be here for a few more years, would you like a better job or consider applying for other more challenging work assignments? Even if the new assignments come your way without any job change, you can be better prepared for the new challenges. If you are leaving, what you can do to leave a lasting positive lasting legacy? Give the Agency and its newer employees the benefit of your knowledge, experience, and wisdom. Take on the challenge to ensure the best transition possible. Coaching other employees can bring great personal benefits.

2) Personal Planning. Committing to specific developmental changes each year can point you in a direction of growth. As Lewis Carroll wrote, "If you don't know where you are going, any road will take you there." So **plan out your route**. Each year, at a minimum, check your progress. Are you moving toward that destination? Adjust if necessary, but continue toward that goal you set. Add to or amend your IDP after a discussion with your supervisor.

I remind you that everyone has a leadership role. First, you need to lead yourself. Are you doing a thoughtful and purposeful job of that? Are you adding value for yourself and for GIPSA? If so inclined, then you can aim for, prepare yourself, and be open for opportunities to add other leadership roles: leading projects, people, or agency strategy.

So take some time for planning, use your IDP as a tool, and sketch out your needs in relation to the competencies and your performance elements, next, sit down with your supervisor to discuss your draft. Your supervisor will bring his/her perspective of your needs to the discussion. The goal is to develop a meaningful IDP to guide your progress.

Today's world for learning is not limited to classroom training. You have many methods for development to check out: online learning (AgLearn), community offerings, books, videos, webinars, on-the-job training, seminars, details, projects, volunteer groups, etc. Don't limit yourself to classroom training as the only option, as funding may well not be available. Talk to your supervisor, your Collateral Duty Training Officer, Caroline Thorpe, or me to help your brainstorm learning opportunities to reach your goals.

For Your Health

Mavis Rogers, Washington, DC

Fire It Up Safely.

The summer season will be officially starting soon and millions of Americans will celebrate with a cookout. On May 25, 2011, the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) urges consumers to take their grills and fire them up safely to prevent fires and carbon monoxide poisoning. Before lighting the grill, do a safety check.

- Has your grill been recalled? Check SaferProducts.gov. If the grill has been recalled, contact the manufacturer and stop using it until you get a repair or replacement.
- Visually inspect the hoses on a gas grill for cracking brittleness, holes and leaks. Make sure there are no sharp bends in the hose or tubing and that all connections are secure. Replace if necessary.
- Check for propane gas leaks. Open the gas supply valve fully and apply a soapy solution with a brush at the connection point. If bubbles appear, there is a leak. Try tightening the tank connection. If that does not stop the leak, close the gas valve and have the grill repaired by a qualified professional.
- Is the grill clean? Regularly cleaning the grill as described in the owner's manual and also cleaning the grease trap will reduce the risk of flare-ups and grease fires.

Once the safety check is complete, make sure to operate the grill as safely as possible. Use grill outside only in a well-ventilated area. Never use a grill indoor or in a garage, breezeway, carport, porch or under a surface that will burn. Gas and charcoal grills present a risk of fire and/or carbon monoxide poisoning that could result in injury or death. An estimated 3,800 gas or charcoal grill-related injuries were treated in hospital emergency rooms in 2010. While almost all of the injuries were burns, a lot of the charcoal grill injuries were related to carbon monoxide.

Never leave a grill unattended. If a flare-up occurs, adjust the controls on the gas grill or spread out the coals on a charcoal grill to lower the temperature. If a grease fire occurs, turn off the gas grill and use baking soda and/or a kitchen fire extinguisher to put out the fire. Keep the grill hose as far away as possible from hot surfaces and dripping hot grease. Keep children away from the grill area. The outside surface of a grill can get hot and burn when touched.

*Continued, see **Heart Disease** on page 13*

Fire It Up Safely, *continued from page 12*

See CPSC's Gas Grill Fact Sheet for additional safety tips for gas grills and Charcoal Grill Safety Tips for more information on Charcoal Grill Safety.

The United States Consumer Product Safety Commission is charged with protecting the public from unreasonable risks of injury or death associated with the use of the thousands of consumer products under the agency's jurisdiction. Deaths, injuries and property damage from consumer products cost the nation more than \$800 billion annually.

SOURCE: U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission

Reminder— Press inquiries

If a reporter contacts you with a question or for information, please take down their contact information and question and share it with Mike Schmidt (john.m.schmidt@usda.gov or 202-720-5091). He will coordinate GIPSA's response with the Office of Communications. Thanks.

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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