



GIPSA News

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

July 2000

From My Desk

Jim R. Baker



Jim R. Baker

I am asked often what does GIPSA’s Federal Grain Inspection Service really do for the grain industry?

Our job is to facilitate the market of grain and oilseeds, lentils, and pulses in both the domestic and export markets. We set the standards that are used in pricing most of these commodities in the marketplace. Our job is to measure the quality and quantity of product involved. Our official tests and certificates add value to both the buyer and seller.

Most buyers and sellers look for checks and balances that establish integrity in the marketplace, and GIPSA's involvement through the official system

provides that integrity both in domestic and export markets.

No one knows what tomorrow will bring with the challenges of change in the structure of industry we serve. We will all be measured on how we adjust to the changes and add some value for customers.

The most successful people I know are good at adjusting to changes. I consider them innovative but really they recognize the need to change first and some of us follow. I am sure you, like I do, know a few who are resistant to change. Their common song is “this is the way we have always done it. It’s worked — everyone’s pleased, we are risking our performance by doing it a new way.” That has never sold a better deal and never will!

Tomorrow, 5 years from now, who will the players be who provide the service that supports the needs of the industry we serve? I think the information technology staffs in this agency will be challenged more than ever before to keep us a visible player.

New technology comes at a price. It adds risks. For some, it adds fear, mainly because we can’t see what’s around the corner or through the door. We have to be on the cutting edge — maybe just a little bit out front. I don’t believe success is found when you start. I do believe you have to start to find success. I know that our success is in the future, not the past. I appreciate the job that you all do and thank you for the support you provide to me and agriculture.

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Names in the News

Personnel

Congratulations to **Hal Crocker**, senior marketing specialist, Atlanta, who was recently selected to participate in the USDA Graduate School's year-long Leadership Development Program (formerly the Women's Executive Leadership Program).

The Atlanta Regional Office welcomes **Eric Harris**, legal specialist. **Eric**, originally from upstate New York, received his J.D. from the University of Richmond Law School and is a licensed attorney in Virginia. Before joining GIPSA, he was assistant director of Virginia's Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation. Welcome also to **Tamara Dawson**, legal instruments examiner. **Tamara**, a native Georgian, received her Associate of Arts Degree from University of Alaska. She was honorably discharged from the Army in 1998, after 11 years of service in logistics and supply related positions. Her most recent position before joining GIPSA was lead stock accountant with a product supply warehouse. Atlanta also welcomes **James Cannon** and **Amos Dienne**, auditors.

The Denver Regional Office welcomes **Pam Rodriguez**, a former temporary employee who was hired as a documents examiner; and **Holly Miyazawa**, a summer temporary clerical assistant. Denver also welcomes summer interns **Nick Miller**, Monroeville, OH, who is a senior at Cedarville College majoring in accounting and marketing; and **Brent**

Lawrence, Gainesville, FL, who is a senior at the University of Florida majoring in animal science with a minor in agribusiness.

The Des Moines Regional Office welcomes **Adam Fast**, auditor. **Adam** is a graduate of Buena Vista University, Storm Lake, IA, with a degree in accounting. Welcome also to **Beth Miner**, marketing specialist and **Bruce Gardner**, auditor.

Congratulations to Atlanta's **Creig Stephens**, **Joe Moore**, and **Nilsa Ramos**, who were selected as senior marketing specialists in the regional office.

Farewell to **Clifford Deffke**, auditor, Denver.

Awards

Grand Forks Field Office manager **Tom Wrenn** recently presented cash awards to the following employees for helping the field office achieve **19 years without a lost-time accident**:

Carmon C. Adam
Cindy R. Butz
Mark A. Einarson
Duane O. Evanson
Penny K. Kilbride
Mary M. Knutson
Fred B. Lindseth
Valerie J. Lunde
Ed R. Stallman
Jim M. Tullous

Leah Akbar, public affairs specialist; **John Edmond**, marketing specialist; **Barbara Fielder**, secretary;

Catherine Grasso, budget analyst; **Gerald Grinnell**, economist; **Larry Haller**, economist; **Louise Jones**, secretary; **Dennis Murray**, public affairs specialist; and **Peggy Smith**, management analyst, Washington, DC, received time off awards for their diligence and efficiency in assisting in the planning and organization of the GIPSA Millennium Conference held in Kansas City, May 9-10, 2000.

Sean Beach, marketing specialist, Denver, received a spot award for his extra effort in the initiation and timely completion of the kidney harvest investigation and for his assistance to the Financial Unit in the collection of documentation for the Ameriserve Food Distribution, Inc., Addison, TX, failure to pay investigation.

Clifford Deffke, auditor, Denver, received a spot award for extra effort in organizing and evaluating the facts gathered in the investigation of Ameriserve Food Distribution, Inc.'s failure to pay for \$47 million in meat purchases.

Gary Erskine, quality assurance specialist, League City, TX, received a spot award for outstanding effort in the Quality Control Program.

Christopher Gray, marketing specialist, Denver, received a spot award for his dedication and effort in conducting the Steve Schild investigation, which resulted in a fully documented report detailing the theft of 3,768 cattle valued at \$1.6 million.

Continued,
see Names on page 3.

Names, from page 2.

Larry Haller, economist, Washington, DC, received an extra effort award for his significant sustained professional development and for assuming additional assignments that have contributed materially to the accomplishment of GIPSA's mission.

Craig Hoover, agricultural commodity grader, League City, TX, received a spot award for outstanding contribution to the automated weighing system at Farmland grain elevator.

Pam Lake, administrative officer, Atlanta, received an extra effort award for her effort in planning and organizing the poultry, livestock, and grain issues summit meeting in Atlanta, GA, on April 11, 2000.

Donna Melton, program analyst, Washington, DC, received a time off award for her willingness to attend meetings when asked, and for extra effort in assisting all offices with problems concerning travel, time and attendance, and personnel systems.

Brett Offutt, legal specialist, Washington, DC, received a performance bonus for his continuous effort in providing additional time and quality service to the agency during his tenure with the Office of Policy/Litigation Support.

Norma Phelps, Washington, DC, received a spot award for her work in planning and organizing the field office managers' conference.

Mavis Rogers, Washington, DC, received a spot award for her outstanding work in support of FGIS' Safety and Health Program.

Marlys Sahlin, auditor, Denver, received a spot award for facilitating the timely completion of the investigation of Ameriserve Food Distribution, Inc.'s failure to pay for \$47

million in meat purchases

Roger Schnieder, economist, Washington, DC, received an extra effort award for sustained extra effort since the beginning of 2000, including serving as Acting Director of the Economic/Statistical Support Staff for 4 weeks in February 2000.

Congratulations

Wedding bells rang for the Denver Regional Office's **Tom Duggan** and his bride **Sherri**; and for **Deborah Mallon** and her husband **Martin Pither**, who married on a rare sunny day in the Cotswalds district in England and then honeymooned in Greece.

Condolences

Embree Gremillion, who retired from the Lutcher Field Office in 1981, passed away. **Embree** had worked in the Port Allen suboffice.

Austin Thomas, agricultural commodity grader, New Orleans, passed away on June 20. He started with FGIS in 1976. He leaves behind a wife and three children.

Oops

Donna Jo Wolf, computer specialist, 303-375-4260, is the computer security representative for the Denver Regional Office. In the June issue, we erroneously reported that **Robert Clemans** held that position.

May 30, 2000

Dear Mr. Baker:

On behalf of the Indiana Packers Corporation, I would like to express our gratitude for the help and service we received last week from agricultural marketing specialists **Duane Short** and **Dewey Blatchford**. These two individuals were exceedingly professional in their oversight duties, but more importantly, took the time to help us better understanding the regulatory requirements under which we operate.

While this industry sometimes views with trepidation anyone who introduces himself with the line "... I am from the government and I am here to help," **Mr. Short** and **Mr. Blatchford** were truly helpful. We now better understand how much of a resource the GIPSA organization can be to the packing industry.

Respectfully,

Russell L. Yearwood
Vice President
Quality Assurance
Research & Development
Indiana Packers
Corporation

Calling All Field Reporters

A warm welcome to **Maryls Sahlin** and **Anna Gonzales**, who have volunteered to represent the Denver Field Office as reporters for *GIPSA News*. So, Denver, if you have any ideas about newsletter stories, please work with **Marlys** or **Anna** to get your story in the *News*.

Maryls started with P&S, Denver in September 1986, then transferred to the Portland, OR, regional office in 1989 as a supervisory auditor. She transferred back to the Denver office in 1993 after the Portland office closed. **Marlys** and her husband **Michael** have two children, **Nathan** and **Sarah**.

Anna, an Outstanding Scholars appointee, started with GIPSA last November as an auditor. Prior to joining Federal government, she worked in private industry, and then returned to college to obtain her undergraduate degree. **Anna** is currently a Master's Candidate in the Graduate School of Public Administration at the University of Colorado at Denver and will earn her Master's degree next year. She is also studying for her CPA examination. **Anna** and husband **Leroy** have two sons, **Esteban** and **Conrad**, and two granddaughters, **Carrissa** and **Tyana**.

If you'd like to become a field reporter, please ask your supervisor to contact the editor of *GIPSA News* at telephone 202-720-5091 or via e-mail to dstewart@gipsadc.usda.gov. We look forward to welcoming a reporter from each of our field locations!

Saluting Major Jimenez



Major **Wanda Jimenez**, better known to us at GIPSA as our EEO counselor, recently received one of the highest honors that can be bestowed on members of the U.S. Army Reserve: the Meritorious Service Medal. The medal was awarded to **Wanda** for:

Exceptionally meritorious service as the system integration administration officer, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Information Management, 311th Theater Signal Command. Her support was instrumental in ensuring the readiness of the command to assume its wartime duties in support of operations in the Pacific area of responsibility. Major Jimenez' distinctive accomplishments reflect great credit upon herself, the unit and the United States Army Reserve.

When she's not working to resolve EEO concerns in the agency, **Wanda** is a major in the U.S. Army Reserve's 311th Theater Signal Command. **Wanda** received her commission as a Second Lieutenant (2LT) on May 31, 1986. She joined the 770th Military Police Company, Army National Guard, Puerto Rico, and performed the duties as Platoon Leader. While at the unit, she also was mess officer, safety officer, and ammunition officer. When she moved to Washington, D.C. in 1990, she joined the 261st Theater Signal Command, Dover, DE. During her time at the 261st, she held various positions: human relations/EEO operation officer, management officer for the comptroller, and headquarters company commander. **Wanda** was the first female selected to be headquarters company commander during the 25 years of existence of the 261st Signal Command! That was the last position she held prior to transferred to the 311th Theater Signal Command, Army Reserve, Fort Meade, MD, in 1996, where she was system integration officer from then until December 1998. She took part in many major overseas exercises as signal officer in the Theater Communications Control Center (TCCC) and System Control Center. In January 1999, after receiving her promotion to major, she became the administrative officer for the deputy chief of staff for information management (DCSIM). She's also the officer in charge for the Army Physical Fitness Test, and the drug and alcohol control officer. **Wanda** is qualified as finance and signal officer, and is working on her third branch qualification as adjutant general officer.

She has received numerous awards during her 12 years of military service: Army Commendation medal (2, with oak cluster leaf), Army Achievement Medal (3), Army Service Medal, Humanitarians Service Medal, Overseas Ribbon (Reserve)(3), and the National Defense Service Medal, among others.

GIPSA congratulates **Wanda** on her many, many accomplishments and achievements. We're proud she's part of the GIPSA team!

Establishing Field Office Fitness and Health Programs

Mack Manis, Safety and Health Officer, Washington, DC

Almost everyone knows that exercise promotes a healthy heart, lungs, and muscles. It helps control weight, relieves stress, and helps reduce work-related injuries and nervous tension that is often associated with working in a high-stress environment. For all of these reasons, the FGIS Safety and Health Staff has been working to make it easier for you to establish your own field office fitness and health program.

Even though we are not in a position to consider implementing an

Agency-wide employee exercise program or providing Agency employees with “paid time-off” for exercising, there are several options that individual field offices may opt to explore. Your field office might consider contracting with an existing fitness facility, establishing an in-house exercise facility, either alone or in cooperation with other local Federal agencies, or joining an existing Government facility through a cooperative agreement.

One office has already jumped on

the fitness bandwagon. Last year, the New Orleans (NOLA) Field Office established the first — of what we hope will be many — field office fitness program in the country. Under the leadership of **Frank Jackson**, a team of field office employees investigated the various NOLA-area health clubs for “package deals for government workers.” At the same time, they worked with **John Shropshire**, New Orleans field office manager, to develop a fair “co-pay” plan, and then they rolled-out the program to the field office employees. Even though the plan has only been in place for little over a year, it’s already been a great success. Currently, 55 field office employees are enrolled in the program with more planning to join soon.

If you would like to put together a fitness program for your office, please keep in mind that only GIPSA employees can enjoy the benefits of any subsidized fitness facility and that time spent by employees at a fitness facility would be on the employees time, not on official time.

To get started, you and your associates should talk with your field office manager about exploring ways to subsidize a fitness facility in your area. Keep in mind that any contracts for a fitness facility must be forwarded to the APHIS Field Servicing Office (FSO) for approval. In fact, FSO may have some ideas regarding how best to contract for a fitness facility.

Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act

Deborah Shipman, Washington, DC

Section 508 is part of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which requires that electronic and information technology developed, procured, maintained, or used by the Federal government be accessible to people with disabilities. On August 7, 1998, President Clinton signed into law the Workforce Investment Act of 1998. This includes the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998, which strengthens provisions and covers the technology access requirements in Section 508.

Federal agencies must ensure electronic and information technology be accessible to employees and the public.

Section 508 provides coverage for Federal employees with disabilities, and mandates reasonable accommodation to qualified applicants or employees with disabilities, except without undue hardship.

Secretary Dan Glickman signed the Departmental Reasonable Accommodation Issuance on May 25, 2000. GIPSA must comply with Departmental Regulation, Number 4300-8, dated March 9, 2000 (Reasonable Accommodations for Employees and Applicants with Disabilities). This encompasses the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission Enforcement (EEOC) Guidance on Reasonable Accommodation and Undue Hardship under the Americans with Disabilities Act, Appendix A, issued March 1, 1999.

The GIPSA Civil Rights Staff is developing a plan and strategy to address the new requirements.



GIPSA Idea Hotline Update

Norma Phelps, Washington, DC

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

<i>Suggestor</i>	<i>Suggestion</i>
David Funk, Kansas City, MO	Develop Spreadsheet for Scoring 360 Feedback Assessments
David Lowe, Kansas City, MO	Include in the Inspection Handbook When Other Grains Are Considered Damaged
Jim J. Staiert, Des Moines, IA	Develop System to Electronically File Annual Reports and Other Documents
Ray Lavine, League City, TX	Allow Local Offices to Book Air Travel Directly With Airlines
Vicki Kottke, Moscow, ID	Revise Directive 4790.3—Include Purchase of Smaller/More Cost-Effective First Aid Kits
Susan Mahon, Washington, DC	Improve the Transit Incentive Program
Judy Johnston, Wichita, KS	Add Belts and Heavyweight Shirts to the FGIS Clothing Program

June's tee-shirt winner: **Vicki Kottke**, Moscow, Idaho!

GIPSA Hotline Ideas Accepted and Approved for Implementation During June 2000

This list does not necessarily indicate that the idea was implemented as suggested or that it is currently in place (it could be in the development/implementation stage). To avoid the chance of misinterpretation, please call the Hotline if you have any concerns or questions regarding the following list of ideas.

- Revise Directive 4790.3—Include Purchase of Smaller/More Cost-Effective First Aid Kits

Keep those ideas coming in! Send your ideas to the GIPSA Idea Hotline via e-mail: gipsa-ideas@gipsadc.usda.gov; FAX to 202-720-1015; or telephone 800-455-3447 or 202-720-1013. **We encourage you to send ideas via fax or e-mail to reduce the possibility of transcription errors; however, ideas will be accepted regardless of the method you choose to use.**

Merit Promotion Plan

Beverly Reeder, APHIS

The first Marketing and Regulatory Programs (MRP) Merit Promotion Plan has been issued. The plan provides updated guidance to the MRP agencies and provides a mechanism for improved operating consistency across programs.

This issuance combines the separate plans and directives which were previously issued by the Agricultural Marketing Service, the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, and GIPSA. The combined plan was a collaborative effort between the staffs of the Human Resources Offices and of the MRP agencies. The combined plan, the Department Merit Promotion Plan, and guidance in the form of the Human Resources Desk Guide can be accessed via the MRPHR home page (www.aphis.usda.gov/mb/mrphr).

June Issuances

Charlie Turner, Washington, DC

- Directive 9180.61, Official Calibrations For The Dickey-John GAC 2100 Moisture Meter, dated 06/15/00
- Directive 9180.64, Inspection of Popcorn, dated 6/8/00
- Directive 9180.65, Inspection of Hullless Barley, dated 6/8/00
- Directive 9180.66, Zearalenone Testing, dated 6/8/00
- Directive 9180.67, Statement for Non-Transgenic Grain and Graded Commodities, dated 6/1/00

The Inspectors

(This article appeared in the North Star Port, the magazine of the Duluth Seaway Port Authority, Winter 1999-2000 issue, and is reprinted with permission. Thanks to Steve Bennett, Minneapolis, for sending it along!)

There's more than just a grain of truth in the work of **Art Boline** and **Robb Hermanson**. In fact, truth is ingrained in everything they do. They are agricultural commodity graders. "Or, in layman's terms," says **Mr. Boline**, "we are grain inspectors."

Theirs is an extraordinarily important role in the Port of Duluth-Superior because sellers and buyers of grain rely on the objectivity and accuracy of their work and, — without even considering it — so do the worldwide consumers of the grains that are shipped through the Twin Ports.

Messrs. Boline and Hermanson, under the direction of Officer in Charge **Theodore Respet**, work for the Federal Grain Inspection Service. The purpose of their work is clear: "We facilitate the marketing of grain," says **Mr. Boline**. "We guarantee uniformity in the application of standards. We are an unbiased third party protecting the interests of both buyers and seller.

At the risk of oversimplification, here is how the grain inspection system works in the Twin Ports. Let's follow a truck load of northern spring wheat from, say, Wahpeton, ND:

This truck, like every rail car and every other truck that arrives in the Twin Ports, has samples drawn for inspection. Doesn't matter if you're hauling a train of grain or a bushel of beet pulp pellets, every unit is sampled.

The federal service is not involved, hands-on, at this stage. Instead, each state [at the port] has its own inspection service and its own inspectors.

In this case, as the truck arrives [at the elevator] in Superior, WI, a Wisconsin inspector examines and grades the grain. The driver is given an Official Grain Inspection Certificate and then, but not until then, the grain is deposited into the appropriate bin in the elevator. If traffic isn't too high, the job can be done in an hour or so.

The load from Wahpeton is graded No. 1 — that's very good — and joins the other loads of No. 1 northern spring wheat in a bin just for that grain and that grade within the towers of the elevator. We'll send the truck on its way but watch over part of its cargo for a while longer.

As a coincidence, one of the samples from Wahpeton has gone to the office of the federal service. This isn't true of all loads that arrive in the Twin Ports, but can be true of any.

At the federal office, **Mr. Boline** or **Mr. Hermanson** or another member of the staff, reinspects the sample. Theirs is an oversight mission. Any significant variance in results will be called to the attention of the appropriate state service.

Meanwhile, our wheat from Wahpeton sits until it has a buyer. If its buyers is a customer in the U.S., it might or might not be in-

spected again. That would depend on the buyer. But, in the case of the Wahpeton wheat, the grain is bound for, oh, let's say Algeria.

As is true with every shipment of grain for export, the wheat from Wahpeton will be inspected again. This is incredibly important, because the buyer might specify a specific blend of wheat. Not just No. 1 northern spring wheat, but a blend, say of No. 1 and No. 3 with specific levels also of protein, moisture, and other characteristics. The specific characteristics of the order are based on how much the buyer wants to pay and how the purchase will be used.

Now, as the grain is loaded in the holds of a ship, sampling and grading are nearly continuous and will continue until loading is complete. The job can run from eight to 24 hours or more.

With the grain outbound from Duluth-Superior, the inspection process is complete. (Oh, we could follow a sample to yet another level — the office in Minneapolis, where it will get yet another look. Or we could discuss the appeals process. But for this exercise, we'll let the process end here.)

*Continued,
see **Inspectors**
on page 8.*

Inspectors, from page 7.

Grain inspectors are not like state troopers, with each state having different speed limits. Instead all grain inspectors work off the same sheet. All have passed federal tests and are licensed by the federal service.

Because the rules for inspection are developed by the federal service, techniques and standards are the same for all inspectors. Even the color and surface of the tables the inspectors use are the same, as are the lights. An inspector's work station might not win any prizes from **Martha Stewart**, but an ounce of spring wheat from Wahpeton will get the same grade in Superior or Duluth that it would get in Pascagoula. Standards are standards.

"We act as quality control," says **Mr. Hermanson** of the federal service. "We are the controlling arm of each state. We provide expertise in case of questions. We are like the reference desk at the library."

"The guys up here — in our office and in the two state offices — take a back seat to no one. They take real pride in what they're doing. And that shows in their performance."

Some of the inspection is visual as inspectors check for deficiencies such as premature sprouting, as premature sprouting, as has occasionally been the case in recent months because of a relatively warm, moisture fall in the Red River Valley.

Other parts of the inspection are based on the results of devices that measure protein levels, moisture, and "falling numbers," an important measure that forecasts the performance of a grain in a baker's oven.

The largest inspection office in the Twin Ports in Wisconsin's, under the direction of **Mike Granlund**, with about 20 inspectors... at peak season. "We have always prided ourselves on service."

Minnesota's office, under the direction of **John Tanski**, has four inspectors in Duluth. "I think one of the key features here," he says, "is the experience of our staff. Most everybody here has 20 years plus."

The federal office in Duluth-superior has three inspectors.

The offices are not tax-supported; instead, they operate on the fees they charge buyers and sellers. The U.S. Grain Standards Act has specifications for 13 different grains. In the 1999 shipping season, 204 million bushels of grain were moved through the Twin Ports — every one with assurance of quality.

Career Planning

*Rosemary Mayne,
Washington, DC*

You are responsible for your own growth and development, and for your career plan. Your career planning strategy starts with identifying and writing your career goal. Know your work preferences and work needs, your occupational possibilities, and the qualification requirements for your targeted career. Next, get a realistic assessment of your strengths and weaknesses relative to the competencies needed for your targeted goal. With all this information, identify the training and experience you need in order to achieve your targeted career. Prioritize your development needs and write your Individual Development Plan.

Training enhances but isn't a substitute for experience, so your career planning strategy needs to be varied. Consider training and education, task forces, focus groups, developmental assignments, cross-training, community and volunteer opportunities, reading, videos, CD-ROMs, Distance Learning, meetings and conferences, professional organizations, special assignments, and project teams, as possible learning options.

Help is within reach.

For confidential assistance,
call your Employee
Assistance Program

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

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

Grain and Livestock Summits

Leah Akbar, Washington, DC

The Grain and Livestock Summit, a conference of Federal and state agricultural representatives and states attorneys general, which was held on April 11, 2000, in Atlanta, concluded three highly successful regional meetings for GIPSA. The March edition of *GIPSA News* featured an article that laid out the goals and objectives of the Summits.

Through dialog, debate and discussion, USDA and state representatives have agreed to:

- Work to develop model legislation for addressing concentration;
- Obtain feedback on the Rapid Response Teams;
- Update and initiate Memoranda of Understanding with the states to share and refer information for investigations;
- Encourage FTC to participate in meetings of this sort;
- Relay complaints to states when they do not fit into Federal law;
- Ensure that USDA gets feedback on the proposed rule for the Livestock Mandatory Reporting Act*;
- Link GIPSA web site to Internet bank of contracts and the IOWA web site on contractual information*;
- Request USDA's support of the Grassley, Daschle-Harkin, Leahy Bill on concentration;
- Investigate whistleblower protection legislation, as many producers fear retaliation due to coercion and collusion.
- Support an increase in resources for OGC to strengthen their ability to support investigations and litigation;
- Provide a means for states to get empirical data to Packers and Stockyards Programs for relevant investigations; and
- Provide pertinent and investigative information to states on a regular basis.

* These initiatives have been substantially accomplished. Other initiatives will require additional resources to implement.

(Thanks to Marlys Sahlin and Anna Gonzales, our eager field reporters in Denver, for providing the photograph of Mr. Baker at the Denver Summit.)



Administrator Jim Baker addressing the Grain and Livestock Summit in Denver.

New PCMS Software

PCMS v4.0 is now available. This version includes new screens and functionality for fleet card managers, and miscellaneous improvements/refinements to the Purchase Card screens. All offices must install the new PCMS software by **July 31, 2000**. Headquarters units should have received instructions for downloading the software; FGIS field locations will receive the software upgrades by mail. You also can visit <http://www.hqnet.usda.gov/pcms/> to download and install PCMS v4.0; and www.usda.gov/da/procure.html for new and improved PCMS v4.0 user documentation.

**Are EEO/CR issues
or concerns
affecting
your employment
with GIPSA?**



**Do you have
questions?**

Need help?

**Let your voice be
heard.**

Call the
EEO Advisory
Committee at...

1-800-639-5167

Civil Rights Hotline

Physical Security

Carol Remmers, Washington, DC

With all the talk in the news lately about viruses and worms, we tend to think of security only in the terms of the PC. However, there are other equally important aspects of security, such as physical security. Listed here are “best practices” for physical security, many are taken right from GIPSA Directive 3140.2. Please take the time to familiarize yourself with the following:

1. Lock office doors when leaving for lengthy meetings, seminars, lunch, or if leaving for the day.
2. Log off the network when office/PC is unattended. Screen saver passwords are a good way of protecting your PC from unauthorized use. Remember, use only the screen savers that come with Windows—do not download screensavers.
3. When leaving for the day, turn your PC off.
4. Secure any media (floppy disks, backup tapes) that contain sensitive data in a locked cabinet.
5. All GIPSA computers and equipment are to be used for official purposes only.
6. **SMOKING, DRINKING, and EATING** in the immediate vicinity of any personal computer is **DISCOURAGED**. Tobacco smoke is extremely damaging to storage media (disks, diskettes, tapes). Food particles and tobacco ash that are dropped on the keyboard can work down around the keys and cause them to malfunction. Liquids spilled on the hardware or storage media can cause irreparable damage.
7. All microcomputers and peripherals are to be equipped with power strips/surge suppressors.
8. Be aware of social engineering techniques. There have been several reports throughout GIPSA of company’s calling/sending e-mail requesting information not related to our mission (personal surveys of your likes and dislikes). Politely inform these companies that your phone/e-mail account is for official government business. If they persist, contact me, your ISSPM.
9. Politely challenge people you do not recognize. If you notice an

unfamiliar person walking around your office or field location simply ask if they need help. Physical security requires being aware of who’s in your work area so as to protect your equipment from theft or damage. Equipment from a mouse to a laptop can be fairly easily stolen, but challenging unfamiliar individuals can help mitigate this problem.

10. Back up all important data!

If you have questions about these best practices or any issues concerning security please don’t hesitate to contact me at (202) 690-0044.

How many economists does it take to put together a set of bookshelves?

Dianah L Wolf, Des Moines

Some members of the competition unit of the Packers & Stockyards’ Des Moines, IA, Regional Office eagerly showed the newest economist in our office, **Stefanie Osterman**, how to help out with general office duties. They assembled two new bookshelves that will be used by the legal specialists and the Swine Contract Library that the office is setting up.



*It takes at least four economists to set up a set of bookshelves, as demonstrated by Des Moines Regional Office’s (left to right) **Stefanie Osterman**, **Gayle Pounds-Barnett**, **Ralph Bierlen**, and **Jim Staiert**!*

The Administrative Support Staff greatly appreciated their assistance in this since the usual “office carpenter,” **Jim Vanderwielen**, was travelling that week.

For Your Health

Mavis Rogers, Washington, DC

Reducing Sodium Intake

Most experts recommend using salt in moderation to prevent as well as to control high blood pressure. Moderate salt intake means no more than 2,400 mg a day. To put this in perspective: $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of tomato juice has 660 mg of salt. Here are some tips to help you reduce your sodium intake:

- Read food labels before you buy, especially on processed foods such as canned soup and frozen foods.
- Avoid high-salt foods such as chips, bacon, and ham.
- Taste food first before eating. If you must add salt, use one “shake.”
- Use oregano, garlic powder, vinegar, lemon juice, fruit juice and other salt-free seasonings instead of using salt.
- Increase your potassium intake to help flush sodium from the body. Good sources include cantaloupes, cooked tomatoes, bananas, baked potatoes, strawberries and summer squash.

Colorectal Cancer Risk

Colorectal cancer — cancer of the colon, or large intestine, and rectum — is the second leading cause of cancer-related deaths among both men and women combined. People can reduce their risk of developing this cancer by making lifestyle changes. Many of the guidelines are the same ones that will reduce their risk of heart disease, stroke and other types of cancer. To reduce your risk

of developing colorectal cancer, the American Society of Colon and Rectal Surgeons recommends that you: eat a low-fat, high fiber diet; if you drink alcohol, drink only in moderation; if you smoke, quit; and exercise at least 20 minutes three to four times a week.

Because there are few symptoms associated with colorectal cancer, regular screening is essential for those age 50 or older. Your physician may recommend earlier or more frequent screenings if you have a personal or family history of inflammatory bowel disease, colorectal cancer or polyps, or ovarian, endometrial or breast cancer. The good news is that when colorectal cancer is detected and treated in the earliest stages, 80 to 90 percent of people can be cured.

Drink Up

When you head to the beach, go for a walk, or mow the lawn this summer, don't forget to take along something that is vital to your good health — water. Experts say we need an average of eight glasses of water or fluids a day under normal conditions and even more in hot weather or when we are active. The body needs water more than any other nutrient. Every system in the body depends on it. Fluids help regulate body temperature and transport wastes, nutrients and other substances. The body maintains proper hydration by balancing fluid intake and output. But, that job is more difficult in the summer, because we lose more fluids through

perspiration.

How much fluid do we really need? Here's a simple way to calculate. Divide your weight in half. That's how many ounces you should normally drink. For example, someone who weighs 144 pounds should drink 72 ounces or 9 glasses a day. Increase that amount in hot weather. And, drink fluids before, during and after exercise.

Water is generally the best choice to maintain proper hydration, but milk, juices and sports drinks work as well. Avoid carbonated or caffeinated beverages because they act as diuretics, causing you to lose fluids. Also, drink before you feel thirsty. Otherwise, you are already on the way to dehydration.

HEAT DANGER!!



Symptoms of Dehydration

- dizziness or lightheadedness
- muscle cramps
- nausea, headache
- dark urine
- sudden fatigue, weakness, confusion
- dry mouth and throat

USV Audrey Takes Off

Sharon Lathrop, Technical Center

The Technical Services Division's **Jim Lambert** has a stellar claim to fame — his son **Ian**! Starting as 7th graders with styrofoam, Christmas lights, folding chairs, and duct tape, Star Trek fans **Ian Lambert** and his friend **Jason Reskin** never planned to end up 10 years later with a 2 ½-ton, fully-functional space flight simulator. But that's what they did!

Ian and **Jason** spent many hours in **Jason's** basement over 10 years, gradually upgrading their initial Styrofoam and Christmas lights model of the bridge of the Starship Enterprise into today's highly technical outer space flight simulator, named the

atmosphere of a fictitious planetoid that orbits around a fictitious planet similar to Jupiter. **Ian** and **Jason** devised computer programs that create an ever-changing weather system on the planet surface to allow the ship, which moves in simulated space at more than 22,000 miles per hour, to enter sudden thunderstorms or even to evade space debris. Using springs and hydraulics, which are also computer controlled, the ship pitches and rotates. A semi-circle of five video screens situated above the pilots provide space travelers with a view of the trip. The graphics change in response to pilots' choices. The U.S.V. Audrey talks, giving astronauts mission data updates.

Audrey (named for actress Audrey Hepburn because "she always seemed so respectable and pretty and I think that's what a ship should be," **Ian** said) is 15 feet long and 7 ½ feet wide. A Singapore-based company recently leased the Audrey to use in their touring technological expos in Shanghai, Beijing, and

Seoul. The company saw **Ian** and **Jason's** website and contacted them in January, offering to lease and later buy Audrey for its shows. Under their agreement with the Singapore-based company, **Ian** and **Jason** will travel to Shanghai in June for three weeks. They'll train Events' company workers on how to operate and maintain Audrey.

In addition to paying for Audrey's

shipping, the Singapore company will pay **Ian**, **Jason**, and Ian's girlfriend



The control console of the USV Audrey.



Ian Lambert (left) and partner Jason Reskin bid farewell as Audrey heads off for Shanghai.

U.S.V. (United Stellar Vessel) Audrey. First they replaced the styrofoam with plywood, then the Christmas lights were replaced first by televisions then by computer screens. They learned computer programming languages to make their simulator more realistic.

Inside the U.S.V. Audrey, a pilot and crew can take a simulated trip through outer space or head into the

\$500 a week each for the 3 weeks they will be working in China. They also will receive expense money and \$12,000 for the 6 months the simulator will be on tour in Shanghai, Beijing and Seoul. The Singapore company also agreed to buy Audrey for \$25,000 and place it in a technology museum. To extract the flight simulator from the **Jason's** basement, a wall had to be removed and a 24-foot flatbed truck used.

Although **Ian** and **Jason** were sad to see the simulator that has been part of their lives for so long shipped off, they are happy it is going somewhere where people can enjoy it. And, of course, they are already planning on spending their profits to build an even better simulator.

1000 Cranes

Anna Gonzales, Denver

The Denver Regional Office celebrated Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month on May 30. **Ruby Miyazawa**, a Denver employee of this heritage, worked hard to prepare Asian entrees for a luncheon. Needless to say, they were very delicious.

Viola Nathan and **Stacey Schofield** decorated the tables and prepared some very delectable desserts. Anyone who knows the Denver office personnel knows that we like it that way!



Ruby Miyazawa leads Denver employees through the luncheon line at the regional office's Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month celebration.

There were origami cranes placed in front of each place setting. **Ruby** informed us that origami means paper folding. Tradition states that 1,000 cranes make a wish come true. Also, 1,000 cranes are often given to the sick to wish them a speedy recovery.

Travel Bits & Pieces

Peggy Smith, Washington, DC

New Travel Management Center for Headquarters. Effective July 15, 2000, Carlson Wagonlit Travel will be the new Travel Management Center (TMC) for Headquarters. Please be sure to get your new profile sheets completed as soon as possible since profile sheets from American Express will not be transferred. You can continue to make airline reservations through American Express through July 14 for travel through July 14. I will be passing new information on to you from Carlson as it is received.

Official Designation Activities

GIPSA has designated the following agencies to officially inspect and weigh grain in specified areas in Colorado, Indiana, Kansas, Ohio, and North Dakota.

Kansas Grain Inspection Service, Inc., is designated to inspect grain effective September 1, 2000, through June 30, 2003. Minot Grain Inspection, Inc., and Tri-State Grain Inspection Service, Inc., are designated to inspect grain effective October 1, 2000, through June 30, 2003. East Indiana Grain Inspection, Inc., is designated to inspect grain for a limited, 1-year designation effective September 1, 2000 through August 31, 2001.

Kansas can be reached at 785-233-7063, Minot at 701-838-1734, Tri-State at 513-251-6571, and East Indiana at 765-289-1206.

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 July 25, 2000!

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