



# GIPSA News

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

July 2004

## 2004 Honor Awards

On June 25, **Secretary Ann Veneman** presented the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Honor Awards to individuals, teams, and group leaders for their exceptional achievements. The Secretary's Honor Awards are the most significant awards the Department gives. Congratulations to GIPSA's 2004 Honor Award recipients: the **Biotechnology Team**.

Team members are:

- Louis Bussjaeger**
- Ronald Jenkins**
- Chuan Kao**
- Donald Kendall**
- Bob Lijewski\***
- Sandra Lockridge**
- John Pitchford**
- David Shipman** (group leader)
- Luke Shokere**
- Steve Tanner**
- Marcia Holden**

The team was recognized for developing and implementing programs that have enhanced economic opportunities for U.S. producers and the grain industry by providing domestic and international confidence in U.S. grain.

During the past 4 years, the team developed and implemented the GIPSA Proficiency Program, the Rapid Test Performance Evaluation Program, biotech reference materials and methods, the Japan StarLink™ Corn Monitoring Program, and the official inspection system's System StarLink™ Corn Monitoring Program. These programs ensure the availability of reliable and inexpensive testing for biotechnology-derived grains and oilseeds, enable organizations doing DNA-based testing for biotechnology-derived grains and oilseeds to improve the reliability and accuracy of their methods, and provide much needed information and tools to enable U.S. producers and the grain industry to more effectively manage their risks.

Congratulations also to **Beth Hayden**, Data and Information Analysis Branch, who received an Honor Award for the work she did with her previous employer, the Agricultural Marketing Service, on the USDA Beef and Beef Products Export Verification (BEV) Programs. These programs were designed to address concerns by Japan that U.S. products exported to Japan do not include products of Canada. The pro-

gram guaranteed that there was no disruption in trade with Japan, the largest export market for U.S. beef which purchases \$3.1 billion of U.S. beef annually. In just under 3 weeks, **Beth** and her team designed and implemented the BEV Program, with auditors conducting audits in over 60 beef facilities in 23 states. Under this internationally negotiated program, AMS reviews and approves companies as eligible suppliers of meat and meat products according to USDA BEV Programs.

*\*Awarded USDA Certificate of Merit.*

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# Names in the News

## PERSONNEL

**Mark Leppert** is the new project leader for the Technical Service Division's (TSD) NIRT Group. **Mark** will be responsible for leading GIPSA efforts to standardize and monitor NIRT instruments used to determine wheat protein, soybean protein and oil, and corn protein, oil, and starch.

**Tom Steele** is the new supervisory agricultural commodity grader/quality assurance specialist in the Portland field office.

**Shane Rumsey** is the new grain marketing specialist with TSD's Digital Media Group. **Shane** is a 1986 graduate of Central Missouri State where he majored in Broadcasting and Film. He has 18 years experience in producing corporate and industrial educational video and multimedia programs and will be a great asset to the Digital Media Group. **Dana Stahl** and **Peter Jackson**, marketing specialists, joined the Trade Practices Branch, Office of Policy/Litigation Support. **Dana** and **Peter** previously worked with the Agricultural Marketing Service.

## AWARDS

**Joe Barney** and **Tom Weber**, physical scientists, and **Wesley Blake**, **Joanne Nielsen**, **Jim Rhodes**, and **Jason Vanfossan**, physical scientist technicians, TSD, received certificates of merit for working together to overcome significant additional challenges and delivering outstanding service to the Agricultural Marketing

Service's Pesticide Data Program.

**Ritch Blew**, grain marketing specialist, and **Larry Engebretson**, **Mike Eustrom**, and **Mark Wooden**, agricultural commodity graders, all of TSD, received certificates of merit for outstanding contributions toward the improvement of the rice inspection equipment.

**Ritch Blew**, **Roger Friedrich**, **Ruth Goff**, and **Eric Poling**, grain marketing specialists, TSD, received certificates of merit for their creative efforts and outstanding contributions to the mission of the Agency.

**Michelle Bosley** and **Connie Murphy**, secretaries, and **Marsha Schwartz**, secretary to the director, TSD, received certificates of merit for exceptional team support of the centralization of administrative/secretarial functions within TSD. Their expertise, dedication, and positive attitude have reduced paperwork and streamlined numerous processes.

*Continued, see Names on page 6.*

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## Neil Porter Retires

**Neil Porter**, FGIS' Compliance Division director, retired on July 2 with 36 years of Federal service. **Neil** began working with the Federal Government in 1968 as an agricultural commodity grader with the Commodity Inspection Section of AMS' Grain Division. He left in 1969 to join the U.S. Marines and upon completion of his military service in 1971 returned to AMS. In 1975, **Neil** was promoted and began working in the Regulatory Unit of Grain Division's Inspection Branch.

The Regulatory Unit became FGIS' Compliance Division when FGIS was created in 1976. At its inception, the Division consisted of six employees. With the passage of the amended USGSA in 1976, the Compliance Division's responsibilities, as well as its staffing, grew. Under **Neil's** leadership, the Division was organized into 4 branches. He was actively involved in the hiring of branch chiefs and employees (70+) and in the development of the Division's programs, which still exist today. In 1978, **Neil** was selected as the Division's deputy director and served in that position until 1993 when he became director.

**Neil** has been an invaluable asset to GIPSA. His contributions throughout his career reflect his outstanding leadership ability and his commitment to protecting the integrity of the national grain inspection and weighing system.

**Neil** will be spending his years in retirement with his wife, **Pat**, who retired from USDA in April 2004. The couple has three children...**Jennifer**, **Daniel**, and **Lauren**, and one new grandchild.

GIPSA thanks **Neil** for his contributions to the Agency, and wishes him a happy, healthful, and prosperous retirement.

# Jerry Grinnell Retires

*Roger Schneider, Washington, DC*

**Jerry Grinnell**, director of GIPSA's Economic and Statistical Support Staff (ESS), retired on July 2, 2004.

**Jerry** has been director of ESS (previously the Industry Analysis Staff) since he joined P&SP in 1990. He has participated in numerous advancements in the Agency, including expanding our capabilities to conduct economic analyses of the livestock and meat marketing industries. He played a significant role in repositioning P&SP to address competitiveness issues and increasing GIPSA contacts and involvement with economists at universities. He organized and directed a major Congressionally-mandated study of concentration in the red meatpacking industries, which culminated in a series of seven publications that were released in 1996. The publications are frequently cited as authoritative sources of information on livestock marketing. GIPSA's summary report in this series, *Concentration in the Red Meat Packing Industry*, has become widely known as the "Red Book" of the industry.

In recent months, **Jerry** has been heavily involved in planning and implementing a Congressionally-mandated Livestock and Meat Marketing Study. The study will address a wide range of issues relating to the availability, terms, effects, and implications of non-traditional types of marketing arrangements that are used in the cattle, hog and lamb industries from farm to retail levels. On June 14, 2004, GIPSA awarded a contract to Research Triangle Institute, at Research Triangle Park, NC, to conduct the study. Faculty members at six universities are working with RTI on the study.

**Jerry** holds B.S. and Ph.D. degrees in Agricultural Economics from the University of Kentucky. He used P&S data for his Ph.D. dissertation on livestock auction markets. He was assistant professor of economics at Morehead State University, Morehead, KY, for 3 years before joining USDA in 1974 as an agricultural economist with the Economic Research Service. While at ERS, he conducted economic research and analyses on the food wholesaling and retailing industries. In 1982, **Jerry** moved to USDA's Office of Energy as a policy analyst, where he analyzed a wide range of energy policy issues. He helped coordinate energy policy among USDA agencies, and represented USDA in deliberations with other departments, industry groups, Congress, and the general public.

After retiring, **Jerry** plans to stay in the Stafford, VA, area where he and **Louise**, his wife of 40 years, have lived since 1979, and near his grown children and young grandchildren. **Jerry** plans to manage his limited real estate investments and pursue other interests.

He reports that he has very much enjoyed his years at USDA and appreciates the many accomplishments and friendships that have been produced. Good public service is more difficult than many people realize and very rewarding. He wishes good health, happiness and success to all of his friends and fellow workers in GIPSA and USDA. And we at GIPSA wish him the same!

# Issuances

*Fred Kelley, Washington, D.C.*

## New Issuances

- FGIS PN-04-14, "NIRT Monitoring Program," dated June 2, 2004 (Distribution: A, C).
- FGIS Directive 9060.3, "Application and Agreement For Contract Service, Form FGIS-4," dated June 11, 2004 (Distribution: A, C, E).
- FGIS Directive 9180.74, "Service Fees and Billing Codes," dated June 11, 2004 (Distribution: A, C, E, F, H, T, X).
- FGIS PN-04-15, "Performance Evaluation Criteria for Aflatoxin Test Kits," dated June 16, 2004 (Distribution: A, C, E).

## Cancellations

- FGIS "Employee Development and Training Handbook," dated January 1, 1985.
- FGIS Directive 9180.74, "Service Fees and Billing Codes," dated February 26, 2004.
- FGIS Directive 9060.3, "Application and Agreement for Contract Service, Form FGIS-4," dated July 15, 1998.

Please call me at 202-720-0259, Fax to 202-690-2755 or E-mail to [Fred.H.Kelley@usda.gov](mailto:Fred.H.Kelley@usda.gov) if you have any concerns or suggestions.

# P&SP Addresses BSE

*JoAnn Waterfield, Washington, DC*

Following the December 23, 2003, announcement that a cow in Washington State presumptively tested positive for BSE, P&SP created Competition, Trade Practices, and Financial Protection Task Forces to protect livestock producers and members of the cattle industry from any possible violations of the P&S Act.

The task forces, based in PS&P's beef industry office in Denver, include technical experts from each of the regional offices and headquarters. The task forces initially developed strategies to identify and respond to any unlawful practices that might arise under the unique market conditions following the BSE announcement; conditions that were likely to have an impact on firms that market and slaughter cattle and sell beef and beef by-products.

The livestock and meatpacking industries responded quickly to changes that evolved from lost export markets and new regulations that required changes in plants' production processes. Market pressures resulting from the BSE incident suggested that some firms may encounter financial problems and most will be faced with challenges. Each task force took a different approach to possible changes in the markets and regulations.

The Financial Protection Task Force monitors livestock markets for financial failures. The Task Force has identified scheduled sales at auction markets that were cancelled in the days and weeks following the BSE announcement, identified firms likely to be more vulnerable to the impact of the BSE incident, and deployed rapid response teams to investigate financial concerns in the industry. They initiated

investigations of firms that could have been particularly financially vulnerable as a result of market changes following the BSE announcement.

The Trade Practices Task Force received complaints involving packers and livestock dealers that changed contract terms following the BSE announcement. In those cases, GIPSA deployed rapid response teams to investigate the complaints as possible violations of the Act.

The Competition Task Force implemented a pricing model that looked for abnormal pricing patterns in fed-cattle prices in various geographic areas; assessed whether price differences were likely to be due to data errors, small trading volume, and normal market forces; and investigated situations as warranted to determine if price differences that appeared after the BSE incident are the result of packers violating the Act.

The task forces activities are ongoing. They continue to identify regions and firms that may warrant further attention. We continue to monitor whether packers have altered their livestock procurement practices, and look for changes in contracts, increases or decreases in livestock purchases through various methods, changes in the source of livestock purchased, and changes to pricing grids, formulas and premium/discount schedules.

All the investigations have been done as rapid responses. By doing this, P&SP sent a clear message to industry that the Act will continue to be vigorously enforced, even under the current situation.

There have been some issues that have arisen, and while many have

been addressed informally, there are a number of ongoing investigations. Our investigations resulted from a combination of complaints, most in the trade practices area, and from the task forces building economic models that were used to identify potential problems. As of June 24, 2004, 59 investigations were started, 49 completed, and 10 are ongoing.

Industry has complimented our actions. The task forces' work has been met with an understanding of the potential problems and an appreciation of our rapid and considered response.

The Agency will realize long-term benefits from this experience. The modeling that was developed to look at possible changes in the industry will help GIPSA's competition program with future complicated investigations, which require sophisticated analysis. The experience gained through developing responses to rapidly changing market conditions will be helpful in anticipating any future issues that arise from potential market disruptions.

Finally, policy issues have been raised and resolved, such as exactly what constitutes an "as is" as opposed to a "subject to" sale of livestock under the current conditions, which will apply to future situations. These kinds of decisions will set precedents that GIPSA will use to base future investigations and enforcement actions.

GIPSA's BSE task force members and their leadership have done an extraordinary job protecting livestock producers and members of the cattle industry under difficult and demanding conditions.

# Wanted: Overseas Collateral Duty Positions Applicants

*John Pitchford, Washington, DC*

Over the years, many FGIS staff have traveled on temporary short-term overseas assignments to represent the Agency. These assignments, coordinated by the Office of International Affairs (OIA), typically address a specific issue. In 2002, FGIS instituted longer-term overseas assignments to allow us to work more proactively with our international customers and their Governments. We are now seeking additional employees who may be interested in possible overseas collateral duty assignments lasting three or more months.

The long-term overseas assignments provide more opportunity to listen, discuss, and initiate activities that better address both our and our customers' interests. In 2002, an FGIS representative was placed on a 3-month temporary duty assignment in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. A second trip to Kuala Lumpur followed in 2003, but this assignment was short-lived due to security and SARS complications. Recently, in June 2004, we placed another collateral duty representative in Hong Kong for a 3-month assignment. We expect our representative to travel throughout Asia to address both immediate and long-term issues in the region.

While each overseas assignment is unique, common activities include:

- Participating in educational seminars for importers and end users to explain FGIS' role and responsibilities. These seminars are usually sponsored by USDA

Cooperator organizations (e.g., U.S. Wheat Associates, U.S. Grains Council, American Soybean Association, etc.).

- Investigating a receiver's alleged discrepancies in quality or weight for grain shipments that were inspected and weighed by FGIS at the time of loading.
- Participating in Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS)-directed government-to-government discussions or negotiations on import restrictions or conditions/specifications that restrict U.S. trade.

The continuation of the collateral duty program, frequency of travel and duration of assignments depend on factors such as funding, the Agency's priorities, security considerations, and assistance from FAS and USDA Cooperators. We are, however, gearing up for FY 2005 and beyond by selecting additional grain marketing specialists, GS 12-13, for possible overseas collateral duty assignments.

This is a collateral duty position. Those selected will continue to work in their current positions when not assigned to a position overseas or to an OIA support role at headquarters. Incumbents may be eligible for a temporary promotion when assigned overseas. Incumbents may also be temporarily assigned to assist OIA in Washington to support the activities of others concurrently working in an overseas assignment. The OIA director will supervise the position. Those selected for the collateral duty

positions will receive training necessary for successful participation in the program.

When assigned overseas, collateral duty representatives will be required to establish and maintain effective interpersonal relationships in diverse work settings. Applicants should be self-starters who possess strong oral and written communication skills and can demonstrate the ability to initiate and prioritize multiple and diverse work assignments with minimal day-to-day supervision.

The collateral duty position may also require frequent and extensive travel on short notice, irregular work schedules, and work in settings that vary from office situations to work aboard vessels, warehouses, elevators and processing facilities. Prior to submitting an application, interested applicants are encouraged to consider any health conditions that would influence their ability to perform these duties.

A vacancy announcement will be posted on the *inGIPSA* website that will contain additional information about the position and the criteria that will be used in the selection process. In the meantime, please contact OIA staff at 202-720-0226 for additional information regarding the collateral duty position.

If shorter-term international assignments interest you and you have not yet expressed your interest to OIA, please let us know. Instructions are on *inGIPSA* at the website; give us a call if you have any questions.

## Names, from page 2.

**James Brown**, New Orleans, received an extra effort award for his outstanding contributions to the Agency's international outreach efforts. International trade teams visit the United States to learn about GIPSA and the U.S. grain inspection system, and especially about official sampling and inspection procedures at export locations. Many teams visit the New Orleans office for briefings and tours of GIPSA labs at nearby elevators. **James** helps by arranging site visits and briefing visitors. He is an outstanding speaker and delivers excellent presentations, tailoring each to the needs and interests of the particular visiting team. A trade team recently rated **James** "11" on a scale of 1 to 10!

**Louis Bussjaeger** and **Luke**

**Shokere**, physical scientists, TSD, received certificates of merit for key contributions to the development and implementation of programs to enhance economic opportunities for U.S. producers and the grain industry.

**Ron Jenkins**, chemist, TSD, received a certificate of merit for leading development and implementation of programs to enhance economic opportunities for U.S. producers and the grain industry.

**Sharon Lathrop**, grain marketing specialist, TSD, received a certificate of merit for her continuous commitment to excellence in completing assigned and additional duties.

**Terri Liberty**, administrative assistant, TSD, received a certificate of

merit for her outstanding relationships with customers, organization, and demeanor when assisting others. She has been an integral part of centralizing administrative functions.

**Larry McDonald** received the Administrative/Professional Service Award from the Greater Kansas City Executive Board. The award is given to outstanding Federal employees for their outstanding job performance, and efforts, dedication, and commitment to providing superior customer service.

**Patricia Smith**, Wichita, received a performance award for her outstanding work in helping to increase the efficiency of the Wichita field office in providing service to our customers.

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## Regulatory Info

*Tess Butler, Washington, DC*

### Federal Register Publications

- Request for Extension and Revision of a Currently Approved Information Collection - Published June 1, 2004
- Opportunity for Designation in the Columbus (OH), Farwell (TX), and Northeast Indiana (IN) Areas, and Request for Comments on the Official Agencies Serving These Areas - Published June 1, 2004
- Opportunity to Comment on the Applicants for the Amarillo (TX) and Louisiana Areas - Published June 1, 2004
- Designation for the East Indiana (IN), Fremont (NE), and Titus (IN) Areas - Published June 1, 2004
- Amendment to Certification of Nebraska's Central Filing System - Published June 21, 2004



### Independence

**Day** celebrates the birthday of the United States of

America. Founded July

4, 1776, with the signing of

the Declaration of Independence, America is celebrating

it's 228th birthday this year!

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

# Des Moines' Federal Employee of the Year Nominees

*Terry L. Taylor, Des Moines*

On May 6, deputy administrator **JoAnn Waterfield** attended an awards luncheon in recognition of Des Moines regional office employees who were nominated for Federal Employee of the Year in various nomination categories. The luncheon and awards are sponsored by the local Federal Executive Committee. **Gayle Barnett**, agricultural economist, was nominated under the Professional category for her instrumental work in designing the Swine Contract Library computer database and web site.

**Tanisha Mapes**, administrative assistant, was nominated under Administrative/Technical category for constantly seeking to improve her job performance and to increase the efficiency and cost effectiveness of the Agency's programs and procedures. **Arlan DeBlieck**, agricultural marketing specialist, was nominated under Public Service category for his exemplary effort during Operation Iraqi Freedom. While our nominees weren't selected for the ultimate award, we are very proud of their nomination and their accomplishments!

*Deputy Administrator JoAnn Waterfield (far left) congratulates Des Moines Federal Employee of the Year nominees (left to right) Gayle Barnett, Tanisha Mapes, and Arlan DeBlieck.*



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## GIPSA Welcomes Summer Interns

*Dawn Cowan, Washington, DC*

Our 2004 summer interns are all aboard!

The goal of the 2004 Summer Intern Program, as in the past, is two-fold: 1) to increase the numbers and diversity of the interns hired within GIPSA and 2) to encourage our supervisors and managers to convert interns from summer intern status to the Student Career Experience Program (formerly the Cooperative Education Program). The Summer Intern Program (SIP) provides paid job opportunities during the summer for college/university students. In addition to providing job opportunities, the SIP also provides students with infor-

mation about the various programs and career opportunities in USDA.

This year, GIPSA hired 10 summer interns: 5 in headquarters and 5 in the field. All headquarters interns arrived on June 1. From the Summer Intern Program are **Daniel Gehret**, who will be working with the Civil Rights Staff, and **Tara Mattson** who will join the Information Technology Staff. **Rashanda Walker**, 1890 National Scholars Program, **Angela Aibner**, Public Service Leaders Scholars Program (formerly called Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities), and **Cassie Fraser**, Washington Internship for Native

Students, will be with P&SP.

The Denver regional office welcomes **Katherine Horton** and **Courtney Finch**; New Orleans field office welcomes back **Barry Young**; Des Moines regional office welcomes **Dustin Roshental**; and the Technical Center welcomes **Daishia Burton**.

Welcome to all GIPSA Summer Interns! We are looking forward to positive and beneficial experiences for both our interns and our agency.

# For Your Health

*Mavis Rogers, Washington, DC*

Warm weather means activities and fun under the sun! Whether you love putting on shorts and feeling the warm outdoors or find it hot and sticky, everyone must be careful not to let a heat-related illness spoil the day.

Normally, the body can keep itself cool by letting heat escape through the skin and by evaporating sweat (perspiration). If your body does not cool properly or enough, you may suffer a heat-related illness. Anyone is susceptible although the very young and very old are at greater risk. Heat-related illnesses can become serious or even deadly if unattended. To prevent heat-related illness:

- Wear lightweight, light-colored clothing. Light colors reflect away some of the sun's energy. It is also a good idea to wear a hat or to use an umbrella.
- Carry water or juice with you and drink continuously even if you do not feel thirsty. Avoid alcohol and caffeine, which dehydrate the body.
- Eat small meals and eat more often. Avoid foods that are high in protein, which increase metabolic heat.
- Don't take salt tablets unless directed to do so by a physician.
- Avoid strenuous activity. If you must do strenuous activity, do it during the coolest part of the day, which is usually in the morning between 4:00 a.m. and 7:00 a.m.
- Stay indoors when possible.
- Take regular breaks when engaged in physical activity on warm days. Take time to find a cool place.

If you recognize that you or someone else is showing the signals of a heat-related illness, stop activity and find a cool place. Remember, have fun, but stay cool!

*Courtesy American Red Cross.*

# 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>
Marsha Morehouse, Portland, OR	FGIS and P&SP Field Employees Should Be Issued Professional Looking ID Cards
Carol D. Carter, Denver, CO	Add a "Completed Print Job" Folder in the New On-Line Travel Program
Jocelyn Ballard, New Orleans, LA	Increase Mileage Rates Due to Increased Gasoline Rates
Kenneth Critchfield, Wichita, KS	Designate a Person At Each Field Location To Perform Minor IT Tasks
Philip A. Warren, Denver, CO	Make All P&SP Forms Available in .pdf Format

## GIPSA Hotline Ideas Accepted and Approved for Implementation During June 2004

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.

-  Make All P&SP Forms Available in .pdf Format

Keep those ideas coming in! Send your ideas to the GIPSA Idea Hotline via e-mail: [gipsa-ideas@gipsadc.usda.gov](mailto: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.**

# GIPSA Awards Livestock and Meat Marketing Study Contract

GIPSA awarded Research Triangle Institute (RTI) the contract to conduct an exhaustive study on livestock and meat marketing. The study was funded by Congress in the FY 2003 Omnibus Appropriations Bill. GIPSA awarded a single contract to RTI for \$4,319,373 to study the cattle, hog and lamb industries.

“This study will give producers better information on which to base their decisions on whether to participate in non-traditional marketing arrangements and, if so, which ones,” said GIPSA administrator **Donna Reifschneider**. “It also will provide information on the role of alternative marketing arrangements, the extent of their use, reasons why firms enter into them and the implications of their use. The study will help identify emerging marketing information needs of livestock producers and other market participants.”

Reifschneider also said the study will provide objective information for market participants, Congress and USDA to consider while confronting the challenges facing the cattle, hog and lamb industries.

RTI, located at Research Triangle Park, NC, is an independent, non-profit corporation that conducts business in scientific research and technology development. It specializes in bringing a multidisciplinary team approach to research projects. RTI developed a coalition of researchers to conduct the study, including representatives from Colorado State University, Iowa State University, Kansas State University, Montana State University, North Carolina State University and The Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania.

GIPSA published initial plans for the study for public comment in the *Federal Register* on May 30, 2003. After considering the public comments and consulting with an interagency working group with members from USDA, the Department of Justice, Federal Trade Commission and the Commodities Futures Trading Commission, GIPSA released a request for proposals (RFP). Technical oversight on the contract will be provided by GIPSA. RTI was selected through a competitive contracting process.

# Travel Bits & Pieces

*Peggy Smith, Washington, DC*

**Mandatory Use of Travel Management Centers.** Just a reminder -- in 2001, GSA implemented the mandatory use of Travel Management Centers (TMC) for common carrier reservations AND for booking hotel/motel accommodations and rental cars with the following exemptions:

- Any travel for which advance reservations are impractical, e.g., when traveler is on the road and does not know where lodging will be needed.
- For travel situations where only a rental car is needed, travelers may deal directly with the appropriate company.
- Hotel accommodations for a conference, seminar, etc., where the sponsoring organization has arranged for a special rate and ensured that the facility complies with Hotel and Motel Fire Safety Act's standards.

**Are EEO/CR issues or concerns affecting your employment with GIPSA? Do you have questions? Need help? Then let your voice be heard.**



Call the EEO Advisory Committee at...

**1-800-639-5167**

Civil Rights Hotline

*GIPSA 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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Washington, D.C. 20250-3601  
Phone (202) 720-5091  
FAX (202) 205-9237  
dana.b.stewart@usda.gov

**by July 25, 2004!**

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AND STOCKYARDS ADMINISTRATION  
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