



GIPSA News

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

August 2004

John Sharpe Named Compliance Division Director



John Sharpe, director, Compliance Division

John Sharpe is the new director of the Agency’s Compliance Division.

John brings to the position a lifetime of agricultural experience, and valuable skills and expertise gained during his diverse and highly accomplished professional career. A Florida native, he attended the University of Florida where he earned his degree in Food and Resource Economics and Animal Science. Before joining USDA in 1982, he

managed a corporate sugar cane farm and worked with the Georgia Department of Agriculture. While with the Department, he has worked for the Agricultural Marketing Service’s Warehouse Division, FGIS, Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (now the Farm Service Agency) from 1991 to 1993. He rejoined GIPSA, then FGIS, in 1993. Most recently, **John** was chief of the Data and Information Analysis Branch, where he re-engineered GIPSA’s national quality control program and developed a new Process Verification Program designed to meet the evolving needs of agriculture.

“**John’s** leadership and technical capabilities are valuable assets to the Agency,” said GIPSA administrator **Donna Reifschneider**. “We are delighted with the experience, technical and managerial skills, and integrity he brings to his critically important position.”

John replaces **Neil Porter**, who was director from 1993 until his retirement on July 3, 2004.

The Compliance Division protects the integrity of the national grain inspection and weighing system. The division ensures industry and official inspection system adherence to the U.S. Grain Standards Act and Agricultural Marketing Act and their respective regulations, and administers a preventive compliance program to identify and correct any problems that might adversely affect the operation, accuracy, or integrity of the official system.

Seeking BAR Chief

The vacancy for the Branch Chief, Board of Appeals and Review, is currently posted.

Those who are interested in applying should read the position responsibilities carefully. This position is not solely the traditional Board Chair. The responsibilities have been broadened and are more in line with future roles of the TSD and the agency.

Closing date is August 16, 2004.

Apply online for announcement number 634-2004-0008 at <http://www.usajobs.opm.gov>.

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Names in the News

PERSONNEL

Idelisse Rodriguez joined the ranks of the Compliance Division's Review Branch. She is working as an entry-level compliance officer at Headquarters. **Idelisse** has already worked for 2 summers as an intern for the Branch under the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities program. **Idelisse** is originally from Puerto Rico, where her family still lives. She attended Haverford College in Pennsylvania, where she received her B.A. in economics. Her hobbies are traveling, movies, dance, and reading fiction.

AWARDS

Matthew Bass, auditor, Des Moines, received a spot award for sustained effort and dedication in the performance of his professional duties.

Martin Begley, Field Management Division, Washington, D.C., received an extra effort award for significantly improving the administrative forms area of the Field Management Division, thus saving GIPSA over \$100,000 yearly in working capital fund expenses.

David Bowen, resident agent supervisor, Des Moines, received a certificate of merit for his leadership and managerial ability in motivating the resident agents to achieve greater quantity and quality goals during 2003.

Frank Bowen, resident agent, California, and **Gary Davis**, resident agent, Idaho, received time-off awards for their sustained perfor-

mance in meeting goals and priorities of the P&S Programs.

Cary Brown and **Al Rupert**, FMD, Policies and Procedures Branch, Chicago, IL, received time-off awards for their initiative in tackling a major portion of the work required to repair the FGWX 200000 test car. Their concern and commendable efforts kept the GIPSA track scale program on track.

Carol Carter, administrative assistant, Denver, received a time-off award for exceptional performance and assistance given to the resident agent supervisor in planning and coordinating the 2004 resident agent conference.

Nancy Chasse, Angela Fore, Steve Mason, legal instruments examiners; **Bart Di Giovanni**, marketing specialist; and **Barbara McKee**, administrative assistant, Atlanta, received certificates of merit for exceptional display of team work and dedication while performing additional duties during a period when the legal instruments examiners and administrative assistants were understaffed.

Joan Danielson, **Weylin Lucius**, and **John Mott**, economists, and **Maggie Mills** and **Stacey Schofield**, marketing specialists, Denver, received spot awards for their outstanding contribution to the fiscal year 2003 congressionally-mandated Assessment Report.

Tom Duggan, supervisory economist, Denver, and **Mary Heisey**, resident agent, Pennsylvania, received time-off awards for their excellent leadership ability during the first phase of the 2003 Assessment Report.

Liz Hughes, resident agent, Or-

egon, received a certificate of merit for her extraordinary effort, outstanding achievements, and unwavering perseverance in the investigation of the livestock business practices of Mark Porter.

Michael Johnson, manager, California Federal/State Office, received an extra effort award for working with the California rice industry to implement a program to introduce rice moisture calibrations which had a financial impact to the industry.

Pam Lake, Atlanta; **Terry Taylor**, Des Moines; **Sharon Setzer**, Denver, administrative officers, received certificates of merit for their outstanding and continued excellence providing administrative and budgetary management during Fiscal Years 2002-2004 in their regional offices.

Tanisha Mapes, administrative assistant, Des Moines, received a spot award for providing primary training for the new administrative assistant from May 2002-May 2003.

LaDondra Moon, **Kristi Pirtle**, and **Jeani Plautz**, legal instruments examiners, Des Moines, received spot awards for providing timely service to the industry during a heavy workload period while the legal instruments examiners were short-staffed.

Ted Respet, assistant manager, Duluth Suboffice, received a time-off award for providing excellent service and fostering continued goodwill to the local trade during his detail to the Montreal field office.

*Continued, see Names
on page 3.*

Names, from page 2.

Sharpe Graduates from SESCDP

Roger Schneider, economist, Washington, DC, received a certificate of merit for significant extra effort soliciting bids and awarding a contract for a congressionally-mandated livestock and meat marketing study.

David Skallerud, Cedar Rapids, IA, received an extra effort award for providing emergency scale testing on short notice, allowing the scale specialist to continue his regularly scheduled scale test without the customers being charged a large fee.

Dana Stahl, a new employee with the Trade Practices Branch, Office of Policy and Litigation Support, received a USDA 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.

Henry Wang, economist, Washington, DC, received a certificate of merit for extra effort in revising the ESS weekly fed-cattle price monitoring model and for working with P&SP's BSE Competition Task Force to use the model to help identify possible violations of the P&S Act.

July 23, 2004, was the culmination of a personal and professional growth journey for 82 candidates in the USDA Senior Executive Service Candidate Development Program (SESCDP) when they received their certificates and congratulations from **Secretary Ann Veneman**. The SESCDP is a Federal government-wide program designed to prepare future executives to assume key positions. GIPSA is proud that one of those 82 is GIPSA's **John Sharpe**.

During the past year, **John** participated in a broad range of developmental activities coupled with formal leadership training to enhance his individual executive competencies and increase his awareness and understanding of public policy, programs, and issues. In addition to coursework, **John** worked on a team project and presentation, read, worked with a coach and with a mentor, worked a 4-month developmental assignment, and wrote many papers. His team project and presentation were for the Assistant Secretary of Civil Rights and other departmental leaders.

John greatly appreciates both the opportunity to participate in such a challenging program and the support given to him. He said, "I am thankful to all the people who pitched in while I was away, especially the Quality Assurance Specialists who work so hard to keep GIPSA's inspection results the best in the world."

Congratulations on a great achievement, **John!**

Jason Kessel Begins ELP

Rosemary Mayne, Washington, DC

Congratulations to **Jason Kessel**, auditor, Denver, who was selected to participate in the 2004-2005 Executive Leadership Program at the Graduate School, USDA. Selection criteria included both his leadership/management potential and his motivation to fully participate in the program.

The program offers a great growth opportunity. On August 8, 2004, **Jason** will embark on a year-long journey to better understand Federal government operations and build self-confidence to achieve his personal and professional goals. He will be away from his current position for a total of 5 months over the 12-month period as he participates in residential training sessions and developmental work assignments.

Many challenges lie ahead for **Jason** in the next year, but the challenges offer opportunities. Good luck, **Jason!**

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

A P&SP Kind of Wedding

*Deborah Shipman,
Washington, DC*

On June 19, 2004, **Michael Meadows**, P&SP marketing specialist, and **Krimy Almodovar**, former P&SP marketing specialist, exchanged wedding vows in Puerto Rico.

Michael and **Krimy** became friends while working in the Atlanta regional office from 2001 to 2003. **Krimy** later accepted a position in Food and Nutrition Service in Atlanta. After dating for 3 months, they became engaged.

Approximately 100 people — including GIPSA's **John Rollins** and his wife, **Cary** and **Jill Ainsworth** and their children, **Nilsa Ramos Taylor** and her husband, and **Wanda Jimenez** — attended the traditional Puerto Rican Catholic wedding.

During the ceremony, both bride and groom were escorted down the aisle by their parents, and kisses were exchanged at the altar. After their parents were seated, coins were exchanged in "the passing of the coins" at the altar. **Michael** explained that the passing of the coins "symbolizes the groom's commitment of taking the responsibility of providing for his family. A pillow with coins is carried by a coin bearer. The groom takes the coins from the pillow and passes them to his bride by allowing them to fall from his hands into her hands. In the same manner, the bride passes the coins to the pastor."

Michael and **Krimy** honeymooned in Puerto Rico.

GIPSA wishes **Mr. and Mrs. Meadows** all the best!

Des Moines First Annual Kids' Day

LaDondra Moon, Des Moines Regional Office

The Des Moines regional office recently conducted its first annual "Take Your Kids to the Government Day." Four bright young children between the ages of 7 and 12 attended the event. The children had an opportunity to talk face-to-face with Administrator **Donna Reifschneider** and Deputy Administrator **JoAnn Waterfield** from miles away using the new video teleconferencing device. The day included educational events with presentations by **Daniel Lay** from USDA's Food and Nutrition Service and **Ellen Huntoon** from Senator Tom Harkin's office.

After lunch, the children took a tour of the Federal Building and other government agency offices, such as Immigration & Naturalization Service, Veteran Affairs, and General Service Administration. At the end of the day, the children took pleasure in speaking with **Smokey Bear** from the U.S. Forest Service. **Smokey** talked to the children about how hazardous and dangerous fires can be if they're not under control, and asked them their advice on how to prevent fires. Afterwards, the usually shy **Smokey Bear** happily posed for a group picture with the children.

The response of the children was ecstatic. The next day at work, one child's parent said, "She had a wonderful time and is looking forward to coming to work with me next year."



Kid's Day was a blast for (front row, left to right) Gabby Bierlen, Macey Wilke, and Sara Pirtle; (back row, left to right) La Dondra Moon, Seth Andrews, and special guest Smokey Bear.

**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

Remote Grading: Concept to Reality

The idea of using advanced technology as a medium to assess grain/commodity quality from remote locations is not new. Government and non-government agencies alike currently use digital cameras and enhanced computer technology to transmit detailed color images to provide quick visual confirmation of product quality to multiple, distant locations in real time. The systems also provide additional opportunities for training and improved communications.

The thought of incorporating this technology into the national inspection system was reintroduced to GIPSA in Dr. Surak's 2002 report, "Quality Assurance/Quality Control and Oversight Study," a study commissioned by GIPSA to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of its QC program and to make recommendations for improvement. Dr. Surak suggested the use of web-based communications to capture and transmit images to get real time opinions on challenging samples, perform over-the-shoulder supervisions, and perform web-based monitoring.

With this concept in mind, the Board of Appeals and Review's



(BAR) Digital Media Group (DMG) investigated different camera and video conferencing technologies to determine the feasibility of developing a reasonably priced system. Earlier evaluations of hardware systems for a parallel project led to the discovery of a CRT monitor (Sony Artisan) calibration system that ensures all monitors display colors accurately and identically, which is precisely what is needed for the remote grading initiative. More recent evaluations identified practical low cost Internet-based video conferencing technology and cameras capable of presenting acceptable quality images. It is possible that the combined system will present users with a practical "communication device" that will allow field inspectors and the BAR to exchange and discuss subjective grading quality information (i.e., images) in real time.

Three field locations were chosen to test selected equipment and soft-

ware to determine if current technology will meet this need: New Orleans, Toledo, and Moscow. Placing these systems in the field will provide us feedback on the value and practicality of the concept. If the concept has value, even though current technology may prove to be lacking, DMG will continue to pursue more suitable technology. To get a better idea of the equipment and software being tested, and to look at the quality of images being captured and transmitted, visit GIPSA's website at <http://www.usda.gov/gipsa/tech-servsup/metheqp/methdev.htm> and click on Remote Grading.

Technological advances continue to change the way in which GIPSA provides service to its customers and ensures consistency in the products it delivers. Because of these advancements, the possibility of adding "remote grading" to its list of services may be closer to becoming reality.

Travel Bits & Pieces

Peggy Smith, Washington, DC

M&I E Incidental Rate. In case you didn't notice when the new per diem rates came out on October 1, 2003, the M&I E Incidental rate increased from \$2 to \$3.

Agricultural Terrorism Conference

Becky A. Janssen, Des Moines

In June, I attended an Agricultural Terrorism Conference in Wichita, KS. The Department of Justice's Anti-Terrorism Advisory Council, along with the Regional Community Policing Training Institute, hosted a conference to help raise awareness of the issues arising from the potential use of animal diseases as a terrorist weapon. The conference identified the potential threat and the economic impact an agri-terrorism incident would have on the United States.

The diseases that are often mentioned in the context of biological warfare include the human diseases of smallpox, cholera and shigellosis. The animal diseases include African swine fever, foot and mouth, fowl plague, Newcastle, and rinderpest. Diseases that can be transmitted between animals and humans, also called zoonotic diseases, include anthrax, brucellosis, plague, Lassa fever, and glanders.

The Defense Science Board released a statement in July of 2002 stating that defending against the introduction or transmission of these diseases is the single most significant modern challenge to U.S. sovereignty. These threats are difficult to address because biological weapons can be delivered by a few; these weapons present a small signature for which the United States has ill-developed intelligence gathering capability; conventional concepts of deterrence are not necessarily effective; and, the nation has limited response capability to contain the consequences.

Many experts believe that it is not a matter of "if" there is an attack but "when" will it occur. The United

States has recovered documents from an Al Qaeda training camp in Afghanistan that appear to describe a plot by Al Qaeda to use disease as a biological weapon. They presume that the plot included the introduction of a disease into the United States.

Many speakers noted the general public's lack of concern over issues involving an attack on the agricultural system. The public's fear of an agricultural terrorist attack is said to be low compared to the fear of an attack through the use of a human disease.

The successful introduction of a foreign animal disease would have a catastrophic economic impact on the United States. A report of a single case of foot and mouth disease (FMD) would be classified as a national emergency. Exports from the United States would stop, animal movement within the United States would be halted, quarantine zones would be established, and animals destroyed. The cost of even a single case was projected to be in the billions of dollars. Dr. Lyle Jackson compared the costs of an FMD outbreak to that of the 9/11 attack and an anthrax attack. The economic cost of the 9/11 attack was \$27.2 billion dollars. An anthrax attack in which 100,000 people are exposed would cost an estimated \$26.2 billion dollars. An FMD outbreak would cost, at a minimum, \$100 billion dollars.

While the conference speakers mentioned the possibility that any one of several diseases could be used, the focus was on the introduction of FMD. North America, Australia and Antarctica are the only continents

without the presence of FMD, a virus that affects any cloven hoof animal. It is the most contagious animal virus known. One virus inhaled or ten ingested is enough to infect an animal. If airborne, the virus can travel between 20 and 30 kilometers. Hogs produce 10,000 times the virus that cattle do. FMD has a 10-20 percent mortality rate up to 95 percent morbidity rate. The virus can survive in some cured meats for 1½ years. While an animal can recover from FMD, its value is significantly diminished due to its lack of production. FMD is also difficult to control because there are many different types and subtypes. Any vaccine for FMD would have to be type or subtype specific in order to be effective. If the right type of vaccine were found, it would only provide between 6-12 months of immunity for the animal and, therefore, require vaccination at least twice a year.

The ease with which a person can introduce a foreign animal disease such as FMD into the United States was described as someone bringing into the country a handkerchief or other clothing article which is contaminated with the disease, finding a way to aerosol the disease, and then spraying the aerosol in the area to be contaminated. They also discussed simply mailing a vial containing the virus into the United States. The likely target would be large food animals using the marketing and concentration systems (Iowa has one of the highest concentrations of cloven

Continued, see Agri-Terrorism on page 8.

For Your Health

Mavis Rogers, Washington, DC

Home Food Safety Tips. Don't let uninvited guests spoil your picnic. The sunny days of summer bring hot temperatures and outdoor gatherings. They also bring increased risk for food poisoning, so be sure to practice outdoor food safety procedures. Before you pack the picnic basket, remember these simple tips to ensure that unwanted bacteria won't have a place at your table.

Wash Hands Often

- Bring moist towelettes or soap and water to clean your hands and surfaces often.

Keep Raw Meats and Read-to-Eat Foods Separate

- Bring extra plates – one for handling raw foods and another for cooked foods to prevent cross-contamination.
- Marinate foods in the refrigerator. Don't reuse marinade used on raw meat or poultry.

Cook to Proper Temperatures

- Cook your favorite foods to the right temperature by using a meat thermometer.
- Never partially grill meat or poultry to finish cooking later.

Refrigerate Promptly

- Pack food in a well-insulated cooler with plenty of ice or icepacks to keep temperature below 40 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Transport the cooler in the back seat of your air-conditioned car instead of in your hot trunk.
- Defrost meat, poultry, and seafood in the refrigerator before taking them to the grill.
- Remove from the cooler only the amount of raw meat that will fit on the grill.
- Don't leave food outside in hot weather (90 degrees Fahrenheit or above) for more than 1 hour.

Courtesy: The American Dietetic Association

Regulatory Info

Tess Butler, Washington, DC

Federal Register Publications

- ❑ Proposed Posting, Posting, and Deposting of Stockyards - Published July 6, 2004
- ❑ Designation of Kankakee (IA) to Provide Class X or Class Y Weighing Services- Published July 27, 2004

Threat Level Raised in DC

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) raised the threat level to Code Orange (High) for the financial services sector in Washington, DC, New York City, and Northern New Jersey. The rest of the Nation remains at an elevated, or Code Yellow, risk of terrorist attack.

Intelligence indicates that al-Qaeda is targeting several specific buildings, including the International Monetary Fund and World Bank in the District of Columbia. Reports suggest that car and truck bombs may be the weapons of choice to physically destroy these buildings.

Residents and visitors in the affected cities can expect to see increased security measures.

To further enhance our emergency preparedness, GIPSA headquarter employees in Washington, DC, are getting Grab-and-Go Kits to be used in case of a shelter-in-place emergencies.

New on the Web

- Historical Compilation of Changes in the Grain Standards of the United States

http://www.usda.gov/gipsa/reference-library/standards/history/standards_history.htm

- Memorandums of Understanding

<http://www.usda.gov/gipsa/oversight/MOU/MOU.htm>

Issuances

Fred Kelley, Washington, D.C.

New Issuances

- ❑ FGIS Policy Bulletin Board, Reference #203, "Classifying Hard White Wheat Kernels," dated June 28, 2004 (Distribution: FGIS)
- ❑ FGIS Directive 9180.17, "Inspection Of Export Wheat Lots For Canada Thistle Seed," dated July 20, 2004 (Distribution: A, C, E)

Cancellations

- ❑ FGIS Directive 9180.17, "Inspection of Export Wheat Lots for Canada Thistle Seed," dated September 3, 2003

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

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 August 25, 2004!

Agri-Terrorism, from page 7.

hoofed animals when considering the number of cloven hoofed animals per square mile). Specific potential targets were listed as haulers or transporters of livestock which often stop at rest areas providing easy access to them and allowing the disease to be carried to several areas. Feedlots, swine production units and livestock markets were also described as possible targets. A speaker from APHIS described in detail the route he would take through the Midwest and named the markets he would infect if he were a terrorist. This demonstration supports the need for a more cautious approach in P&SP's decision to provide members of the public with the names and locations of the entities falling within P&SP's jurisdiction.

Conference speakers emphasized 'recognize-report-respond' as the practice to be used in the event of an introduction of a foreign animal disease. Producers and veterinarians need to be able to 'recognize' a disease problem. Suspicious symptoms need to be 'reported' immediately. Government, emergency management and the veterinary community need to 'respond' effectively. Response includes creating and securing a quarantine zone, stopping livestock movement and creating holding facilities, decontamination of the area and traffic through the area, and destruction and disposal of infected animals. Other issues that would arise are the need to advise the public and funding for not only the actions taken but for the animals destroyed.

The conclusion of the conference included a discussion of an exercise called "Sudden Impact" which took place in Kansas and included a scenario in which a disgruntled employee with ties to animal activists intentionally introduced a genetically altered zoonotic virus into a small herd of animals in Kansas. The infected animals were sold at an auction and feed yard employees became infected with the virus. The discussion included how officials at the local, state and Federal level responded to the emergency. The lessons learned from conducting the exercise were that communication gaps exist between the different levels; turf issues must not exist; information sharing is necessary among the industry; and, state and Federal jurisdictional issues. Another exercise will be conducted in the fall of 2004.

Official Designation Activities

On July 27, 2004, FGIS announced that Kankakee Grain Inspection, Inc., is designated to provide Class X or Class Y weighing services under the United States Grain Standards Act, as amended. This action is effective June 25, 2004, through December 31, 2005, coinciding with their current designation. For official services, contact Kankakee at 815-365-2268.

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USDA, GRAIN INSPECTION, PACKERS
AND STOCKYARDS ADMINISTRATION
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