



GIPSA News

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

September 2010

15th Annual Administrator's Awards

J. Dudley Butler, Washington, DC

I'm pleased to announce that the Awards Committee is now accepting nominations for the 15th Annual Administrator's Awards.

The past 14 years of Administrator's Awards have offered unique opportunities for GIPSA employees to recognize the outstanding accomplishments of our coworkers – those who went the extra mile, made an extra effort, did something especially noteworthy, or just work at an exemplary level each day. This year, we expect to continue the tradition of acknowledging the contributions of our fellow employees. Remember, anyone may nominate anyone, regardless of grade level. Administrator's Awards are given for the following categories:

1. **Distinguished and Superior Individual Awards** for employees who make extra effort to fulfill GIPSA's mission.
2. **Distinguished and Superior Group Awards** for teams of GIPSA employees that have

come together to meet an Agency need.

3. **EEO/Civil Rights Awards** for individual(s) who contributes to ensuring that GIPSA is free from prejudice and discrimination.
4. **Safety Awards** for individual(s) who helped make our work environment safer and healthier.
5. **GIPSA Support Awards** for a non-GIPSA employee who has provided direction or support that has furthered GIPSA's effectiveness.

The deadline for submitting your nomination this year is **October 22, 2010** (nominations must be "postmarked" by this date). Send nominations to:

Incentive Awards Committee
Office of the Administrator
USDA/GIPSA
STOP 3611
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20250-3611
FAX: 202-205-9237
E-mail—Ruth.Ortiz@usda.gov

For a sample nomination, please see attachment 2-B of GIPSA Directive 4451.1, "Employee Recognition Program." Please address the selection criteria for Distinguished and Superior Individual Awards, EEO/Civil Rights Awards, and Safety Awards in Section 3.6 (2) of the Directive. If you have questions about the program, please contact the chair of our awards committee: **Ruth Ortiz**, 202-720-6719.

After more than a dozen years, we may become complacent and take exceptional contributions for granted. **Please don't!** People are what make GIPSA the productive, successful organization it is today. Over the next 2 months, please take the time to look around and use the Administrator's Awards to recognize those who play a vital role in our success.

I look forward to seeing this year's nominations!

Names in the News

PERSONNEL



George Banks is the new quality assurance manager in the New Orleans Field Office. He brings to the position 35 years of experience and service. He began his Federal service with the Army Corps of Engineers. In June 1978, he joined FGIS in the Lutcher Field Office as an agricultural commodity grader (ACG) as a recruit out of college. George worked closely with the Quality Assurance Program in Lutcher and was recognized early by Chairman of the Board of Appeals **Ernie Class**, assistant BAR chair **Eurvin Williams**, and Lutcher quality assurance specialist (QAS) **Gary Cooper** as an excellent analyst. He also trained AGCs in the Lutcher Field Office. George became an assistant QAS in the New Orleans Field Office, and in 2003 was promoted to a shift supervisor in area 4. Later, he became the QAS, spearheading the commodity (rice) programs and helping quality assurance manager **Jim Brown**. In addition, he was selected for and successfully completed the first New Leader Program in 1998. **George** was born in Natchez, MS. He is the second of six chil-

dren. He married **Gwendolyn** in 1979 and has three children: **Dustin, George, and Joel**. He has a Bachelor of Science degree in agriculture education from the University of Alcorn State.

Billy Brake joined the Eastern Regional Office (ERO) as an investigative attorney. **Billy** is passionate about agriculture and has been involved in farming and agribusiness most of his life. Raised on a small farm outside Jackson, MS, **Billy** attended Mississippi State University, where he earned both a Bachelor's and a Master's degree in Agriculture and Applied Economics. He received his Juris Doctorate from the University Of Mississippi School Of Law. Prior to joining GIPSA, he served as the Legal Advocacy Coordinator for the Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation. In his free time, **Billy** enjoys sports, the outdoors, and travel. He is truly excited to be part of the GIPSA team.

Nicole Emenhiser is the new resident agent in Fort Wayne, Indiana, for the Midwestern Regional Office. **Nicole** is a May 2010 Agricultural Education graduate of Purdue University.

Sandra Metheny is the new assistant field office manager for the FGIS Stuttgart Field Office. **Sandra** started her Federal career with GIPSA in 1989 as an agricultural commodity grader in our Stuttgart Field Office. She also served as the collateral duty

equipment specialist, training officer, and commodity coordinator until 1997. For the past 13 years, **Sandra** has served as the scale specialist/industrial specialist for the Stuttgart Field Office.

Roy Shepherd is the new area manager in the New Orleans field office (NOFO). **Roy** brings 37 years of excellent experience to his new position. After graduating from Prairie View A&M, **Roy** joined the Agricultural Marketing Service's (AMS) Fruit and Vegetable (F&V) Division in Orlando, Florida. After working 3 years with F&V, he transferred to the AMS/Grain Division in FT. Worth, Texas for 1 year and then moved on to Galveston, Texas as a shift supervisor when that FGIS office opened. In 1987, **Roy** became a shift supervisor in the Lutcher field office, which was later merged with the Belle Chase and Destrehan field offices to form the NOFO in 1996. **Roy** also works as a collateral duty grain marketing specialist with the FGIS Office of Departmental Initiatives and International Affairs. He and his wife of 38 years, **Bettye**, have 6 children and several grandchildren.

*Continued, see Names
on page 3.*

RETIREMENTS

Kenneth Dempster, agricultural commodity grader, New Orleans, retired after 33 years of Government service. He previously worked for the South Louisiana Inspection and Weighing Board and joined FGIS in 1976 as part of the old Destrehan Field Office. **Kenny** is an avid fisherman, and plans to enjoy his retirement by doing commercial and recreational fishing, playing golf, and camping.

AWARDS

Carnell Barrett, Jr., Washington, DC, received a spot award for providing outstanding support to all GIPSA end users.

Chuck Britton, Sacramento, received an extra effort award for his outstanding performance and professionalism during his Asia collateral duty assignment and for successfully developing favorable relationships with USDA cooperators and importers.

Ed Durgin, Portland Field Office manager, received the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) Group Recognition Award for outstanding coordination in demonstrating a comprehensive food safety system in the United States and a successful recognition by Indonesia for Decree 27. The Indonesian Ministry

of Agriculture issued Decree 27 to regulate the food safety of the import and export of fresh food of plant origin. It includes regulations governing (among other things) pesticide residues, mycotoxins, and heavy metals in grain and pulses. **Ed** was a member of the Indonesia Decree 27 Coordination Team. Earlier this year, he hosted an Indonesian team to demonstrate export inspection procedures and FGIS' work with the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service and FDA to ensure that grain exports do not pose a safety issue for Indonesia. The United States applied for and received recognition of our system for safety control systems, thereby avoiding having products tested upon arrival in Indonesia.

Angela Emrich, Washington, DC, received a spot award for outstanding leadership in purchasing, uploading, and distributing GIPSA's Blackberry devices. Her personal commitment and technical skills ensured that the continued use of the valuable Blackberrys continued without interruption.

Andrew Greenfield, Washington, DC, received a time-off award for outstanding effort and leadership in the development and analysis of EEO surveys disseminated to field offices.

Timothy Johnson, Denver, received a time-off award for his extra effort and resourcefulness disassembling and disposing of cubicles and excess property in preparation for office remodeling,

Robert Kayne, Washington, DC, received a spot award for his development of the PSP Tariff Program, and for being the lead on the Public Comment Analysis Tool that may be used by the Agency for the analysis of public comments associated to PSP regulations.

William Kelly, Washington, DC, received a spot award for outstanding support to all GIPSA end users, and his initiative to fly to the Midwestern Regional Office when an IT problem affected over 50 users. His knowledge and commitment to service allowed the office to be functional with minimal down time.

Tanisha Mapes, Des Moines, received a time-off award for her extra effort in successfully coordinating the sending of custodial account letters for all three region offices.

Douglas Neesen, Denver, received a time-off award for extra effort and resourcefulness in disassembling and disposing of cubicles and excess property in preparation for office remodeling.

Irene Omade, Washington, DC, received a spot award for outstanding knowledge and commitment to the GIPSA community, and for continued support of the Information Technology Staff.

*Continued, see More Names
on page 5.*

Issuances

*Terri Henry,
Washington, DC*

- ❑ FGIS Directive 9180.61, Official Calibrations for the Dickey-john GAC 2100 Moisture Meter, dated August 1, 2010
- ❑ FGIS Program Notice 10-10, Official Starlink Testing Discontinued, dated August 9, 2010

Regulatory Info

Tess Butler, Washington, DC

Federal Register Publications

- ❑ Export Inspection and Weighing Waiver for High Quality Specialty Grains Transported in Containers, published July 19, 2010
- ❑ Implementation of Regulations Required Under Title XI of the Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008; Conduct in Violation of the Act -Extension of Comment Period, published July 28, 2010

FGIS CCWG

Tandy Scholdberg, Kansas City

A new and exciting FGIS program has been developed which promises to be an excellent venue for all FGIS employees. The Change Control Workgroup (CCWG) will provide a structured scheme by which change requests from FGIS employees will be evaluated, directed to subject matter experts, taken action upon when appropriate, and used to provide recommendations to the Executive Management Team. This program has been modeled after the P&SP initiative.

The CCWG is composed of six representatives from different divisions and grade levels, and one liaison from the Office of the Deputy Administrator. Currently, the following CCWG members will serve in the capacities below:

- ❖ **Tandace Scholdberg**, Chairperson
- ❖ **Pat McCluskey**, Vice-Chairperson
- ❖ **Valerie Hills**, Reporter

All FGIS employees are encouraged to “put pen to paper” to share any recommendations to further the success of FGIS. To submit a change request, download a change request form from the *inGIPSA* webpage under the “Change Control Working Group” icon at <http://ingipsa/Program-Essentials/FGIS.aspx>. From this website, you will be able to access a change request form that addresses the following categories:

- ❖ Standard operating procedures
- ❖ Resources and information
- ❖ Program policies
- ❖ Administrative directives
- ❖ Regulation
- ❖ Legislative initiative
- ❖ Program initiative
- ❖ FGIS forms
- ❖ FGIS culture and morale
- ❖ Standardized letter templates
- ❖ Communication
- ❖ Publications

If you have a change request that does not fit into the aforementioned categories, indicate so by checking the “other” box and then describe the scope of your change request.

Upon completing the change request form, you can email the change request to: FGIS-CCWG@usda.gov

We are very excited about this new initiative and look forward to your participation in the program to further the success of FGIS employees and our programs.

Kind Regards,

The CCWG

More Names, from page 3.

Tracey Paugh, Washington, DC, received a spot award for successfully taking on the added responsibility of the Application Development Branch chief, along with her current migration and development duties.

Glenda Plautz, Des Moines, received a time-off award for her extra effort in preparing all travel arrangements for several Department of Justice employees to attend the 2010 Secretary's Honor Awards ceremony.

Diane Reeves, Washington, DC, received a spot award for outstanding leadership in ensuring that GIPSA's computer inventory is accurate. Her personal commitment to ensuring the IT laptop/desktop inventory is correct guarantees the safety of GIPSA's IT hardware.

Myron Simmons, Denver, received a time-off award for his extra effort and resourcefulness disassembling and disposing of cubicles and excess property in preparation for office remodeling.

Tracy Walton, Washington, DC, received a spot award for outstanding support to the Application Development Branch, and for continuously providing exemplary leadership, mentorship and guidance to the entire development team. **Tracy** also received a spot award for his instrumental work in the development of the PSP Tariff Program as well as providing assistance for the successful deployment of the FGIS Survey program.

35-YEAR SERVICE AWARDS

John Blake, Beaumont
John Carlson, Galveston
Michael Favorite, New Orleans
Craig Hoover, Galveston
Charles Williams, New Orleans

25-YEAR SERVICE AWARDS

Joseph Barney, Kansas City
Steve Pappaducas, Des Moines

20-YEAR SERVICE AWARDS

Crystal Akins, Atlanta
Wanda Liles, Corpus Christi
Leslie Maddox, Stuttgart
Regina Willis, Atlanta

15-YEAR SERVICE AWARDS

Chaud Brown, Denver
Angela Fore, Atlanta
Kerwin Lee, New Orleans
Bernadine Turley, New Orleans
Philip Warren, Denver

GIPSA Wins AgLearn Award

*Caroline Thorpe,
Washington, DC*

At the 2010 USDA AgLearn Spring Workshop, GIPSA received an award which recognized it as one of the top agencies at USDA with the some of the highest levels of per employee AgLearn usage. Thus, GIPSA has one of the highest returns on investment from its funding of Aglearn at the Department. Because of this, the agency was recognized for more effectively managing its training resources by both enhancing employee performance with online training while helping to reduce the costs associated with external training and travel for an added economic value.

10-YEAR SERVICE AWARDS

James Cannon, Atlanta
Gary McBryde, Washington, DC
Tanisha Mapes, Des Moines
Kraig Roesch, Denver
Thomas Weber, Kansas City
Jennifer Zuckman, Washington, DC

FGIS Matters...!

Randall Jones, Washington DC

With only about a month left in this fiscal year, export inspections are 10 percent ahead of last year, down slightly from last month but still maintaining a large cushion over the previous year. Soybeans continue to lead the way at 18 percent above last year's record. Sorghum shipments are up 15 percent, followed by wheat at 10 percent and corn at 3 percent. League City continues to maintain their large increase in volume over last year, inspecting an additional 50 percent (4.4 mmt). Portland has maintained their 1.3 mmt increase during the past month, which is still 27 percent ahead of last year at this time. Toledo's inspected tonnage is ahead of last year by 59 percent.

Since October 2009, rice inspections (both domestic and export) have averaged 375,600 mt per month, coming in near 310,000 tons during the month of July. Cumulative inspected rice tonnage through the month of July in the states of Louisiana, Arkansas, and California is 2.94 mmt, representing 78 percent of total inspections. Roughly 68 percent of total inspections this year have been destined for export.

FGIS is recognized internationally as the authority in grain inspection and weighing. This past month, our Portland Field Office and New Orleans Field Office received visits from international teams seeking our collaboration. On August 9, in Portland, **John Flemm** gave a presentation to a wheat value workshop team from Southeast Asia, sponsored by U.S. Wheat Associates. **John** discussed GIPSA's roles in inspection and certification of export shipments. On August 12, **Tom Steele**, quality assurance specialist, followed up with a hands-on wheat grading session that covered wheat damage; dark, hard and vitreous; subclasses; vomitoxin; and general wheat grading. Thanks to the **Portland Field Office staff** for all their hard work and excellent customer service.

Down in the "Big Easy," Honduran authorities met with a contingent from FGIS, the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), and the North American Export Grain Association on August 16 – 17, to discuss issues primarily related to phytosanitary certificates issued by APHIS.

The Executive Management Team (EMT) continues to discuss the recommendations from the Quality Roundtable. The EMT plans to announce changes focused on quality in upcoming weeks, which we hope to make effective October 1.

The FGIS Change Control Working Group is up and running. The team elected its officials during the first meeting: **Tandy Scholdberg**, chairperson; **Pat McCluskey**, vice-chairperson, and **Valerie Hills**, reporter. Congratulations to the elected officials. All employees can now submit their change requests forms to FGIS-CCWG@usda.gov. Please see **Tandy Scholdberg's** article with instructions and information on the CCWG.

Bob Lijewski and I will travel to Omaha, Nebraska, on September 14 -15, to attend the Board Meeting of the American Association of Grain Inspection and Weighing Agencies. On September 20-23, I will meet with FGIS managers in Portland, Oregon. The meeting agenda includes discussions on the Advisory Committee resolutions and updates from each field office and division. As a special treat, we will tour the Wheat Marketing Center located near the field office. I anticipate great outcomes from this meeting and look forward to our discussions.

Until next month. I hope you all enjoy the Labor Day Weekend.

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

Personnel News

Irene Omade, Washington, DC

Thrift Savings Plan. New employees hired after July 31, 2010, and are Federal Employees' Retirement System (FERS) employees will automatically be enrolled in the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP), and 3 percent of your basic pay will be deducted from your paycheck each pay period and deposited in your TSP account, unless you have made an election to change or stop your contributions. You may elect to make a change/stop your contributions by completing and submitting the following form to your HR office: Form TSP-1, Election Form.

Use/Lose Annual Leave. For the 2010 leave year, use/lose annual leave must be scheduled, in writing (or electronically) by the end of pay period 23. Pay period 23 ends on Saturday, November 20, 2010. Annual leave which exceeds personal annual leave ceilings at the end of the leave year could be forfeited (lost) if not used. For most employees, the maximum amount of annual leave that may be carried over from one leave year to the next is 30 days (240 hours); for certain other employees; the maximum carryover is 45 days (360 hours). With some exceptions, members of the Senior Executive Service are entitled to a maximum carryover of 90 days (720 hours).

Employees in a use/lose situation must pay particular attention to their leave balances and work closely with their supervisors to schedule and use any use/lose annual leave. If annual leave is forfeited at the end of the leave year, the following conditions must be met before it will be considered for restoration:

- The leave must be requested in writing, and approved in writing, no later than 3 pay periods prior to the end of the leave year. (In leave year 2010, this cutoff date is the end of pay period 23, November 20, 2010); and
- The prescheduled and approved leave was canceled in writing by the supervisor, with approval of a higher level official.
- Cancellation of the pre-approved leave was based on an emergency, unusual operational demands, or other exigencies; or
- The leave was forfeited due to personal illness or administrative error.

Compensatory time off in lieu of overtime pay should not be used during the leave year before use/lose annual leave. Use/lose annual should be used first. Compensatory time used before use/lose annual leave will not be subject to restoration. This does not include compensatory time off for travel (CTOT). Annual leave forfeited under the above conditions may be restored at the beginning of the new 2011 leave year and, generally, must be used by the end of the second leave year after restoration (i.e., restored in leave year 2011 to be used by the end of leave year 2012). Restored leave still remaining to the employee's credit at the end of this period will be forfeited without the right to further restoration.

electronic Official Personnel Folder (eOPF). Effective Pay Period 19, employees who have not registered for access to their eOPF will no longer receive paper copies of their SF-50s. The eOPF is an electronic version of your OPF and contains the records required to document your Federal career. The Human Resources Division (HRD), in conjunction with the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), is providing access to all employees as part of a government-wide initiative.

To register, please follow the steps outlined in the "eOPF Registration Using eAuthentication Guide" along with other related documents which can be found on the inGIPSA website at <http://ingipsa/Employee-Resources/Benefits.aspx>

Employee Assistance Program

Call for confidential help.

1-800-222-0364



For Your Health

Mavis Rogers, Washington, DC

When your work-life and personal life are out of balance, your stress level is likely to soar. There was a time when the boundaries between work and home were fairly clear. Today, work is likely to invade your personal life and maintaining a work-life balance is no simple task. But it's not out of reach. Start by evaluating your relationship to work.

Then, apply specific strategies to help you strike a healthier balance.

Married to your work? Consider the cost. It can be tempting to rack up hours at work, especially if you are trying to earn a promotion or manage an ever-increasing workload. If you are spending most of your time working, your home life will take a hit. Consider the consequences of poor work-life balance.

- ❖ **Fatigue.** When you are tired, your ability to work productively and think clearly may suffer. This could take a toll on your professional reputation or lead to dangerous or costly mistakes.
- ❖ **Lost time with friend and loved ones.** If you are working too much, you may miss important family events or milestones. This can leave you feeling left out and may harm relationships with your loved ones. It is also difficult to nurture friendships if you are always working.
- ❖ **Increased expectations.** If you regularly work extra hours, you may be given more responsibility. This may lead to even more concerns and challenges.

Strike a better work-life balance. As long as you are working, juggling the demands of career and personal life will probably be an ongoing challenge. Use these ideas to help you find the work-life balance that is best for you.

- ❖ **Track everything you do for one week,** including work-related and personal activities. Decide what is necessary and what satisfies you the most. Cut or delegate activities you do not enjoy or cannot handle -- or share your concerns with your employer or others.
- ❖ **Take advantage of your options.** Ask your supervisor about flexible options that are available for your work location. The more control you have over your hours, the less stressed you are likely to be.
- ❖ **Learn to say no.** Whether it is someone asking you to spearhead another project or your child's teacher asking you to manage the class play, remember that it is okay to respectfully say no. Make more room in your life for the activities that are meaningful to you and bring you joy.
- ❖ **Leave work at work.** With the technology to connect to anyone at any time from virtually anywhere, there may be no boundary between work and home -- unless you create it. Make a conscious decision to separate work time from personal time. When you are with your family, for instance, turn off your cellular phone and put away your laptop computer.

*Continued, see **Health** on page 9.*

Health, from page 8.

- ❖ Manage your time. Organize household tasks efficiently, such as running errands in batches, or doing a load of laundry every day rather than saving it for your day off. Put family events on a weekly family calendar and keep a daily to-do-list. Do what needs to be done and let the rest go. Limit time consuming misunderstandings by communicating clearly and listening carefully. Take notes, if necessary.
- ❖ Bolster your support system. At work, join forces with others who can cover for you and vice versa. At home, when family crisis arise, entrust friends and loved ones to pitch in with child care or household responsibilities.
- ❖ Nurture yourself. Eat healthy foods, include physical activity in your daily routine and get enough sleep. Set aside time for an activity that you enjoy, such as practicing yoga or reading. Better yet, discover activities you can do with your partner, family or friends – such as hiking, dancing or taking cooking classes.
- ❖ Know when to seek professional help. Everyone needs help from time to time. If your life feels too chaotic to manage and you are spinning your wheels worrying about it, talk with a professional – such as an Employee Assistance Program counselor or other mental health professional.

Remember, striking a healthy work-life balance isn't a one-shot deal. Creating work-life balance is a continuous process as your family interests and work-life change. Periodically, examine your priorities and make changes, if necessary, to make sure you are keeping on track.

Courtesy: Mayoclinic.com

GIPSA News is the employee newsletter of the USDA Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration. Send your news, ideas, suggestions, comments, questions, or thoughts for the next issue to:

Dana Stewart

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

by September 25, 2010!

Keep Your IDP on Track

*Caroline Thorpe,
Washington, DC*

On August 24, 2010, GIPSA Training hosted *Making the Most of Your Career; Putting Your Plan into Action* in Washington, DC. MasteryWorks and SPISolutions presented an energizing seminar to help employees keep momentum on their Individual Development Plan (IDP) goals.

The presenter expressed how important it is to take the time to work toward your career goals and how even a little time spent can result in a large return. Specifically, spend 15 minutes a day reflecting and making career plans. In addition to a career planning exercise, mentoring was covered. It was noted that there are many different types of mentors from work/life to organizational, not just job specific. It was also noted that people can search out perceived “experts” and approach them to request time to discuss areas of interest.

This workshop was in support of the IDP process to help encourage employees to follow through on their annual training for FY11. Employees from several USDA agencies attended.

OFFICE OF THE ADMINISTRATOR
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AND STOCKYARDS ADMINISTRATION
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