



GIPSA News

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

October 2002

Administrator's Awards

Donna Reifschneider

I'm delighted to announce that the Awards Committee is now accepting nominations for the annual Administrator's Awards. This unique awards program offers each and every GIPSA employee the opportunity to recognize the outstanding accomplishments of your coworkers. Remember, anyone may nominate anyone, regardless of grade level.

Please take this opportunity to help me and the Agency recognize your coworker -- someone who goes the extra mile, makes an extra effort, did something especially noteworthy this year, or just works at an exemplary level each day.

The deadline for submitting your nomination is November 1, 2002 (nominations must be "postmarked" by this date -- U.S. post office, fax, or e-mail). Mail nominations to:

Incentive Awards Committee
Office of the Administrator
USDA/GIPSA
STOP 3601
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-3601

Or fax your nomination to: 202-205-9237; or e-mail your nomination to: John.C.Giler@usda.gov.

For a sample nomination, please see attachment 3-B of GIPSA Directive 4451.1, Employee Recognition Program.

I look forward to seeing this year's nominations!

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New on the Web

- Updated, revised GIPSA directory (access via: www.usda.gov/gipsa/aboutus/about_us.htm)
- Updated Directory of Firms Registered to Export Grain (www.usda.gov/gipsa/oversight/regdir.pdf)
- Updated Lentils Standards (www.usda.gov/gipsa/reference-library/standards/lentils.pdf)

Names in the News

PERSONNEL

Ruth Goff is the new agricultural marketing specialist in the Board of Appeals and Review's (BAR) Digital Media Group. Prior to this selection, Ruth was a secretary from 1996 to 2002, administrative clerk from 1991 to 1996, and a physical science technician in the TSD Quality Control and Testing Branch, from 1989-1991. She originally started her career as a part-time employee. Her desire and hard work have led to a career change that will heavily involve **Ruth** in the creation/production of visual aids, educational /informational material, power point presentations and training CDs. We wish her well in this new challenging career.

AWARDS

William Bates and **Robert Lijewski**, Field Management Division, Washington, DC, received spot awards for providing support to the Administrator's Office when APHIS support services were unavailable.

Chuck Britton, Sacramento, CA, received an extra effort award for his initiative and proactive approach in developing, administrating, and improving the Quality Assurance/Quality Control Program in California.

Anne Bullard, ACG, New Orleans, received a time-off award for exhibiting initiative and teamwork when interacting with co-workers.

Scott Cooley, Olympia, WA, received an extra effort award for his initiative and proactive approach to identifying potential grading challenges posed by new varieties by forging alliances with plant breeders.

Gale Calkins, Wichita, KS, received an extra effort award for his initiative and proactive approach to implementing and administering the grading of new Hard White wheat varieties in the Wichita Field Office circuit to prevent market disruptions.

Doug Doerhoff, intern, Washington, DC, received a spot award for displaying special initiative and skills in completing projects and assignments in an exceptionally competent manner while working with the Office of International Affairs (OIA) this summer.

Ed Durgin, OIA, received an extra effort award in recognition of his outstanding contributions to the mission of the Agency.

Rose Fremin, **Angela Marine**, and **Carla Cambre**, clerical staff, New Orleans, received time-off awards for processing T&As during a most difficult week, the week of August 12, 2002.

Harold Jackson, ACT, New Orleans, received a time-off award for outstanding performance during periods of change.

James McLaurin, **Terrell Bailey**, and **Garey Holmes**, New Orleans, received extra effort awards for assisting with modifications, testing and training on the ASIST Project.

Byron Reilly received an extra

effort award for developing and implementing an International Travel Training Program, and for his ongoing work with Mexican government and industry representatives to address grain quality and trade issues.

Bobby Webb, ACG, New Orleans, received a time-off award for exhibiting teamwork and leadership when interacting with co-workers and customers.

James Whalen, Kansas City, MO, received an extra effort award for his proactive approach in identifying potential inspection challenges, informing all affected parties, and developing surveys and training to ensure inspection personnel readily meet these challenges.

CONDOLENCES

Sidney Davis, New Orleans, passed away on September 16, after suffering a heart attack. **Sidney** began his career with us in the Port Allen office in December 1977, and before that was a South Louisiana Grain employee. **Sidney** was 59 years old. Cards and condolences may be sent to: Mrs. Sidney Davis, 3741 Byron Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70805.

Sandy Robertson, former secretary of the Weighing and Equipment Branch and the Baltimore Field Office, passed away after fighting breast cancer. Contributions in **Sandy's** memory may be made to: The Komen Foundation, P.O. Box 650309, Dallas, TX 75265-0309, or via telephone to 1-800-462-9273.

5 Steps to Successful Job Accommodation

Dawn Cowan, Washington, DC

Agencies are required to seek reasonable accommodations for employees with disabilities, and may accommodate other impairments as well. Each job accommodation requires specific attention to the employee's unique injury or disability. However, there are some strategies that are universal to the job accommodation process.

The Job Accommodation Network (JAN), a creation of the Labor Department's Office of Disability Employment Policy, has initiated a five-step process for providing job accommodations. **Tracie Saab** and **Mandy Gamble**, human factors consultants for JAN, offer the following tips:

Step 1: Define the situation.

The accommodation process generally starts when a worker notifies the employer of a disability or medical condition that requires a change in the work environment or process. However, the employer might be the one to recognize the need for an accommodation if a worker is experiencing difficulty performing job functions. JAN recommends considering the following questions to define the accommodation:

- What specific symptoms and functional limitations are creating barriers to accessing the workplace, performing job tasks, or benefiting from an equal employment opportunity? Each individual's symptoms and limitations must be addressed. For example, knowing that an employee has diabetes or a back injury may not provide enough information to clearly define the situation. Is the individual's condition progressive, stable, or progress-

ing quickly? Your approach may be to address current accommodations, as well as those that will be effective in the future. For many medical conditions, such as multiple sclerosis and HIV, symptoms and limitations can be unpredictable. Plan a flexible accommodation strategy.

- What specific job tasks, work environments, equipment, or policies are creating barriers to successful job performances? It may be necessary to restructure the job in some way to eliminate marginal job tasks.

Step 2: Perform needs assessment of the injured or disabled employee's needs. Questions to consider should include:

- Is it necessary to modify the job? It may be necessary to modify the job by eliminating marginal tasks, changing shifts or hours worked, providing a flexible schedule, or sharing job duties.
- It is necessary to modify a policy?
- Is it necessary to modify the facility? This may include installing ramps, modifying restrooms, providing accessible parking spaces, or removing physical obstacles that might be potential hazards.
- Is it necessary to provide a product or piece of equipment? Assertive technology, ergonomic and independent living aids may be required.
- Is it necessary to modify or design a product? An accommodation tool may be designed inhouse.

Step 3: Explore alternative placement options. If an accommodation in the employee's original position is not possible, consider alternative work. Reassignment is generally the accommodation of last resort,

but it should be considered and might be required by the Rehabilitation Act (see Equal Employment Opportunity Commission regulations, 29 CFR 1614.203).

Step 4: Redefine the situation.

At this step, redefine the accommodation process. Identify an option may have been overlooked. Assemble an accommodation team to brainstorm ideas. The team should include individuals who understand functional limitations, job functions, and accommodation concepts. Members of the medical community, such as doctors and physical therapists, may provide help.

Step 5: Monitor accommodations.

Saab and **Gamble** said the most neglected step in the process is monitoring accommodations once they have been implemented. Address the following questions:

- Who is responsible for monitoring accommodations?
- Does the employee know the process for communicating any problems that arise with the accommodation?
- Has any change occurred with the employee's condition, limitations, work environment, or job duties that might affect existing accommodations?
- If the job was modified, is the employee able to perform the essential functions effectively?
- If a policy was modified, is it being enforced?

For more information on job accommodation strategies, contact the Civil Rights Staff at 202-720-0218.

Issuance Info

Mack Manis, Washington, DC

New Issuances

- MRP Directive 4630.2**, Mentoring/Tutoring Programs, dated July 12, 2002. (Distribution: AMS, APHIS, GIPSA)
- FGIS Program Notice 02-08**, Odor Determination, dated September 3, 2002. (Distribution: A, C)
- FGIS Program Notice 02-09**, Railcar Fall Protection, dated October 1, 2002. (Distribution: A, C, E)
- FGIS Program Notice 02-10**, Performance Evaluation Testing Fee, dated September 3, 2002. (Distribution: A, C, E)

Please contact me at telephone 202-720-0244, fax 202-720-4628, or e-mail (j.mack.manis@usda.gov) if you have any concerns or suggestions.

Regulatory Management Info

Tess Butler, Washington, DC

Federal Register Publications

- Designation for the Aberdeen (SD), Decatur (IL), Grand Forks (ND), Hastings (NE), McCrea (IA), Missouri (MO), and South Carolina (SC) Areas - Published September 3, 2002
- Opportunity for Designation in the Jamestown (ND), Lincoln (NE), Memphis (TN), Omaha (NE), Sioux City (IA), and Tischer (IA) Areas, and Request for Comments on the Official Agencies Serving These Areas - Published September 3, 2002
- Opportunity to Comment on the Applicants for the Springfield (IL) Area - Published September 3, 2002
- Solicitation of Nominations for Members of the Grain Inspection Advisory Committee - Published September 12, 2002

Milled Rice Standards Revised

GIPSA is revising the United States Standards for Milled Rice to establish a new level of milling degree, "hard milled," to the existing milling requirements, and to eliminate reference to "lightly milled" from the standard's milling requirements.

These changes will facilitate the marketing of rice by better aligning the standards with current processing and marketing practices.

GIPSA published a direct final rule on this action in the September 30, 2002, *Federal Register*. The changes to the standards will become effective December 1, 2002, without further action, unless adverse comment is received by October 31, 2002. If adverse comment is received, GIPSA will publish a timely withdrawal of the rule in the *Federal Register*.

Written comments must be submitted to Tess Butler, USDA, GIPSA, Room 1647-S, STOP 3604, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C., 20250-3604; FAX (202) 690-2755; or e-mailed to comments.gipsa@usda.gov.

Disability Awareness Month



October 2002

Our Security Responsibilities

Carol Remmers, Washington, DC

Your role is nothing less than the foundation of success in information systems security (ISS) endeavors. Certainly, those of us who are charged with managing the information security efforts for GIPSA can't simply wave a magic wand and make it happen. It takes each person, from the Administrator on down, doing his or her best to help with security efforts.

As for what you can do — well, there's plenty. Here are a few key ways you can have a direct and positive impact on ISS:

- **Protect** computer equipment and other information assets and data from theft, fraud, misuse, loss, or unauthorized modification. Where possible, lock your computer, desk drawers, and office doors when you aren't present. Be extra alert when traveling with a GIPSA notebook computer.
- **Use** systems only as authorized. Access (or attempt to access) only the data or resources specifically authorized to you. Don't use information technology (IT) resources for games or for sending jokes or chain

letters. Don't use them for purposes that violate ethical standards, including harassment, sending or accessing pornographic or similar offensive materials, gambling, or for-profit activities. And never try to break into any computer, whether USDA, Federal, or private.

- **Choose** a good password and then protect it diligently. Don't share your password with anyone. Learn more about what makes a good password. Change your password often.
- **Guard** information resources as you would any valuable asset, such as money. Information is the lifeblood of GIPSA.
- **Control** access to IT resources. Protect dial-up telephone numbers, passwords, and all other system access keys against unauthorized disclosures. Change your password(s) often and use passwords that give no clue to names, content of data, or systems being protected. Don't leave your computer terminal unattended while it is signed on. Use a password in conjunction with a screen saver (set to activate after only a few minutes) to help protect your system

when you must leave unexpectedly.

- **Prevent** access to data for which others have no valid need. Sharing information widely — when appropriate — is a key to GIPSA success. But there is some information (examples: personnel, contractual, financial, trade secret, market-sensitive) for which some people don't have a legitimate need. Protect sensitive information in paper form, too, such as data input/output. If you aren't sure about the sensitivity of data, ask your supervisor.
- **Erase** unneeded files that contain highly sensitive data. Simply deleting a file doesn't actually remove the information from a disk. Empty your computer's recycle bin, too.
- **Ensure** that you have backup copies of essential data and programs — and that those backups are stored in a safe location away from the primary copies.
- **Prohibit** unauthorized software on your system. Don't use pirated software. Be certain that all software comes from a trusted source to avoid computer viruses. Comply with all software licenses and copyright restrictions.
- **Recognize** deviations from expected processing results or significant variations in input data. Report suspicious differences.
- **Practice** good housekeeping with all electronic equipment.
- **Report** actual or suspected violations to your security representative.

Never hesitate to contact your ISSM or me, GIPSA's ISSPM, with questions and actual or suspected security problems.

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

Asia Assignment: The Best of Times and the Worst of Times

Ed Durgin, Office of International Affairs, Washington, DC

To develop a more proactive approach in working with overseas customers and/or their Governments in Southeast Asia, GIPSA's Office of International Affairs (OIA) recently completed the necessary planning to place representatives in the region on long-term temporary duty assignments.

The establishment of an Asian collateral duty assignment represents a new opportunity for the Federal Grain Inspection Service (FGIS) to conduct international activities consistent with our Agency's mission.

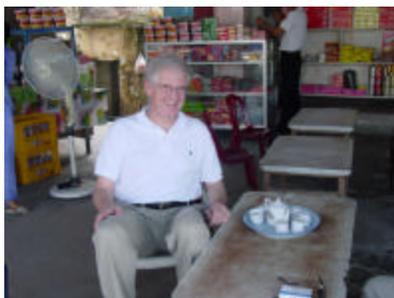
In the past, FGIS employees have traveled on short-term assignments to participate in educational seminars, investigate alleged quality or weight discrepancies, or participate in Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS)-directed Government-to-Government discussions concerning conditions that restrict U.S. trade. These assignments are typically undertaken for the purpose of addressing specific issues. A longer-term assignment, however, represents a new opportunity for the Agency to work with our overseas customers and their Governments in a more proactive manner. It allows for increased opportunities to listen, discuss, and initiate activities that better address both our interests and those of our overseas customers.

My recently completed 3-month detail in SE Asia represents the first long-term temporary duty assignment under this program. "Home" was Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, where I maintained an apartment and worked at the American Embassy.

During my assignment, I engaged USDA Cooperators (U.S. Wheat Associates, U.S. Grains Council and American

export grain cargoes. In retrospect, this assignment provided several opportunities to participate in market development activities with USDA Cooperators, and it also afforded opportunities to address both the immediate and the long term concerns of our customers in the region.

Upon returning to my "other home" (Washington, D.C.), I was frequently asked to describe my activities and travels. When answering these questions, however, I have found it necessary to include personal reactions in my



Ed Durgin at a stop for tea along the road outside Hanoi during a trip to visit a flour mill in northern Vietnam

Soybean Association) in at least one project each, continued discussions with a major importer of U.S. wheat to address longstanding origin/destination dockage differences, and completed projects which involved seven countries in the region. On several occasions, I was asked to develop and deliver formal presentations at meetings organized by Cooperators; I was asked to assess grain sampling activities at flour mills; I participated in Government-to-Government bilateral meetings in China; and I met with traders, end users and Government officials in several countries to discuss grain quality issues and explain the role FGIS plays in inspecting and certifying



At the BiBi Restaurant -- Ed and representatives of Intermilling Flour and FAS in Ho Chi Minh City.

responses. The professional and personal are inextricably blended in producing the whole that was my Asian experience, and I find it difficult to separate these two qualities when responding to queries about just what I had done during my assignment in SE Asia.

As I have responded to queries about my experiences, the opening words from Charles Dickens' masterpiece, *A Tale of Two Cities*, come to

Continued, see Asia on page 7.

mind and frame my responses: “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times....”

It was the best of times: When dessert included tree-ripened mangos.

It was the worst of times: When I lay curled up in a fetal position in my Jakarta hotel room wondering what I had eaten the previous night.

It was the best of times: When those I met expressed an appreciation for my presence...when ideas were exchanged in an atmosphere of candor and mutual accommodation.

It was the worst of times: When I laid in my hotel room suffering chest pains...feeling alone and without a support system...wondering how I would ever get enough work planned and completed.

It was the best of times: When, upon returning to my room in Chilicap City, Indonesia, I discovered that the hotel staff had acknowledged my birthday by presenting me with a wonderful fruit basket and birthday greetings.

It was the worst of times: When my heart collided with images of poverty...images that led me to feel a sense of compassion for and connectedness with those I encountered...daunting images...stark images...images that raised unsettling and unanswered questions.

When pressed to “cut to the chase” and to “get to the bottom line,” however, my assessment is clear. My experience was, hands down, the best of times. It was a time for wonderful and productive conversations; it was a time for commensality; it was a time for championing GIPSA’s mission.

For Your Health

Mavis Rogers, Washington, DC

The best way to prevent back injuries is to develop habits that reduce the strain placed on the back. There are some basic things you can do to help.

Avoid Lifting and Bending Whenever You Can. If you can, set something down on a table or other elevated surface instead of on the floor, do it so you won’t have to reach down to pick it up again. The best zone for lifting is between your shoulders and your waist. Put heavier objects on shelves at waist level, lighter objects on lower or higher shelves. Use carts and dollies to move objects, instead of carrying them yourself. Remember that it is easier on your back to push carts than it is to pull them.

Use Proper Lifting Procedures. You can’t always avoid lifting, but you can reduce the amount of pressure placed on the back when you do so. By bending your knees, you keep your spine in a better alignment, and you essentially take away the lever principle forces. Instead of using your back like a crane, you allow your legs to do the work.

1. Take a balance stance with your feet about a shoulder – width apart. One foot can be behind the object and the other foot next to it.
2. Squat down to lift the object, but keep your heels off the floor. Get as close to the object as you can.
3. Use your palms (not just your fingers) to get a secure grip on the load. Make sure you’ll be able to maintain a hold on the object without switching your grip later.
4. Lift gradually (without jerking) using your leg, abdominal and buttock muscles and keeping the load as close to you as possible. Keep your chin tucked in so as to keep a relatively straight back and neckline.
5. Once you are standing, change directions by pointing your feet in the direction you want to go and turning your whole body. Avoid twisting at your waist while carrying a load.

Follow these lifting guidelines and practice good body/back management to prevent back injuries on the job and at home.

Courtesy Parlay International Health & Safety Magazine

Travel Bits & Pieces

2003 Per Diem Rates. There are new per diem rates for travel effective on or after October 1, 2003. The rates are available at www.policyworks.gov.

Paper Tickets. All airlines that issue a paper ticket for domestic itineraries upon the traveler’s request when the ticket is eligible for electronic ticketing will be subject to an increased charge. Most airlines are now charging at least \$20 for a paper ticket. This charge is in addition to the Travel Management Center fee.

GIPSA in East Africa

Deborah Shipman and Joey McNeil, Washington, DC

From August 29 through September 14, **Joey McNeil**, compliance officer, Washington, D.C., traveled to the East African Region (Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania) to assess a USAID-African Trade and Investment Program-funded project to harmonize grain standards between Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania. The project was implemented in 2000 by the Foreign Agricultural Service. Assessment team members were **Jane Misheloff** and **Jennifer Maurer**, Foreign Agricultural Service, Washington, D.C., **William Hall**, Sea-Port Consultant, Inc., Seattle, Washington, and **Joey McNeil**.

As part of the assessment, the team interviewed 50 individuals from both the private and public sectors. The team

also visited export facilities in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania, and Mombasa, Kenya, and the Bureaus of Standards and other government facilities in each country. Private company site visits included Azam Bakeries, Ltd.

tize the railroad system. Kenya is looking into privatizing the container facility at the Port of Mombasa. There also is progress in the harmonization of axle weights for truck traffic between the three countries. Standardization and simplification of some export and import requirements have already been implemented, with more on the way.

The USDA-USAID program provided technical assistance activities to East African participants in the form of visits of our U.S. export facilities, the Kansas City Technical Center, and other domestic facilities, and a series of in-country workshops. Participants reported that while progress can be painfully slow, the region is moving forward in removing technical and non-technical barriers to agricultural trade.



The Port of Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania

(flourmill) and the export container facility in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania, and the Grain Bulk Handlers Ltd. (ship unloading and bagging operation) at the Port of Mombasa, Kenya.

The officials interviewed indicated that progress has been made in the harmonization of standards between Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania. Lines of communication have been established between the private and public sectors, and both are working together more closely to improve non-technical trade barriers. Progress has also been made in the privatization of some public transportation systems. For example, Uganda is in the initial stage of letting out bids to priva-

Here to help you...

the Employee Assistance Program

For confidential assistance,

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

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

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 October 25, 2002!

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