

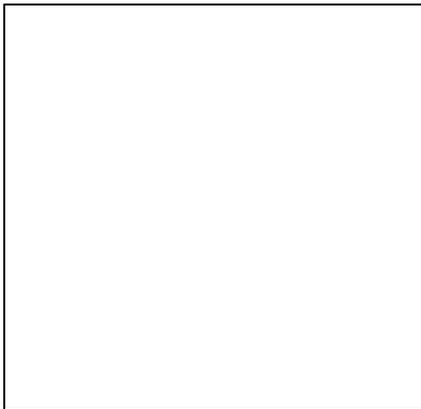


# GIPSA News

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

November 2001

## President Bush Presents Shipman with Presidential Award



Dave Shipman

On October 15, 2001, President Bush paid tribute to Dave Shipman, deputy administrator for FGIS, and 64 other recipients of the 2001 Presidential Distinguished Executive Awards. "Today we honor their exceptional performance. Their work covers a tremendous range of issues, yet they share some things in common: an outstanding work ethic, commitment to public service, and pride in a job well done," Bush said.

Each year, the Government recognizes and celebrates a small group of career senior executives with these Presidential Rank Awards. Winners have demonstrated their ability to lead a Government that delivers great service, fosters partnerships and community solutions to achieve results, and continuously pushes itself to get the job done more effectively and efficiently. Award winners are chosen through a rigorous selection process. They are nominated by their agency heads, evaluated

by boards of private citizens, and approved by the President.

**Dave Shipman** was recognized with this prestigious award for exemplary leadership and outstanding management of the nation's grain inspection and weighing system. He has built effective partnerships with state and private stakeholders, thereby improving the delivery of official grain and oilseed inspection and weighing services to American agriculture. Dave recognized the impact of technological change on agriculture and the need for USDA and the official inspection system to prepare for such change. For example, the Federal Government and private industry have invested billions of dollars in biotechnology research. As a catalyst for change, **Dave** recognized that this technology would significantly impact the nation's multibillion dollar agriculture production and processing industry and create new market challenges. Through his efforts, a Biotechnology Reference Facility was established which provides standardization for the sampling, reference methodologies, and rapid tests for biotech grains in domestic and international markets.

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# Names in the News

## PERSONNEL

**Susan Martin** is the new program support assistant for the Office of International Affairs. **Susan** formerly was with the Compliance Division's Review Branch.

**Patrick McCluskey** joined Field Management Division's Market Analysis and Standards Branch as an agricultural marketing specialist. **Pat** comes to GIPSA from the Kansas State University in Manhattan, KS.

**Warren Preston**, Competition Branch chief, left P&S on November 2, 2001, to accept a new position as senior economist for the Livestock and Seed Program of the Agricultural Marketing Service. Best wishes to **Warren** in his new position and many thanks for his significant contributions to the Agency over the past 9.5 years.

**Sharon Vassiliades**, Issuance Management Staff, retired on November 2, 2001. GIPSA will miss **Sharon** and we wish her well.

## AWARDS

**Raymond Andrews** and **Willie Washington**, Crowley, received spot awards for their continued extra effort during times of heavy workload while still maintaining a professional service.

**Terrell Bailey**, New Orleans, received an extra effort award for assisting with the scale testing and test weight reverification programs.

**George Banks**, **Gary Cooper**, and **Myron Hall**, New Orleans, received spot awards for superior performance in completing assigned duties within the QA/QC Program of the New Orleans Field Office.

**Larry Bennett** and **Neil Foster**, Crowley, received an extra effort award for working with the grain check 2312 and assisting with making milling degree samples.

**Wade Berteau**, New Orleans, received a time-off award for doing superior work in grading, certification of inspection, weights and automation.

**Wanny Carter**, New Orleans, received a spot award for doing an outstanding job with the shiphold office.

**Alonzo Craighton**, New Orleans, received a spot award for helping out the Crowley suboffice.

**William Digdo**, **Robert Doged**, **Lanita Hill**, **Roy Johnson**, **Fred Kelley**, **Thomas Lucas**, **Bernice Moreland**, **Richard Tomarelli**, **Gregory Tomas**, **Larry Troutman**, **Richard Uehara**, and **James Wilhelm**, Baltimore, received extra effort awards in recognition of their outstanding work performance in helping to increase the efficiency of the Baltimore Field Office in providing service to their customers.

**Rhondalyn Edwards**, New Orleans, received a time-off award for taking the extra steps in assisting fellow employees in performing their assigned duties.

**Barbara Fielder**, Washington, received a performance bonus award for her exceptional dedication and

professionalism in support of the Deputy Administrator and the Packers and Stockyards Programs.

**Walter Harness**, New Orleans, received a spot award for doing an excellent job in reviewing and correcting paperwork before being sent to the office.

**Garey Holmes**, New Orleans, received an extra effort award for assisting with the scale testing program and the testweight reverification program.

**Elsie Jones**, **Florence Hamm**, and **Stephen Michel**, New Orleans, received time-off awards for going beyond what is expected to ensure that our customers' needs are met.

**Doug Lacefield**, Washington, D.C., received a spot award from the Field Management Division in recognition of outstanding support in providing assistance in setting up the new laptop computers for the scales specialists.

**Cynthia Lamb**, Stuttgart, received a spot award for notifying supervisors that the Rice Mill was commingling off-grade milled rice with good rice going into carrier. This action prevented bag blending of off-contract rice with rice which was within grade, and a complaint concerning the quality of that lot.

**Gerald Raymond**, New Orleans, received a time-off award for providing good quality services to our customers.

*Continued, see Names  
on page 3.*

**Names**, from page 2.

**Jackie Stevens**, Jonesboro, received a spot award for his extra efforts at the Milling Yield Conference, and for filming the event and arranging to have copies made of the video. He completed all of this with little supervision.

**Clyde Steves**, manager, Stuttgart Field Office, received an extra effort award for taking the lead in providing the leadership in organizing a Milling Yield Conference to resolve GIPSA's milling yield problems.

**Charles Williams** and **Kenneth Dempster**, New Orleans, received time-off awards for consistently volunteering for assignments and providing exceptional service to our customers.

#### **35-YEAR SERVICE AWARD**

Warren Dicus, Washington, DC  
Doug Duncan, Nashville, TN

#### **30-YEAR SERVICE AWARD**

Michael Pacatte, Ft. Worth, TX

#### **25-YEAR SERVICE AWARD**

David Shipman, Washington, DC

#### **15-YEAR SERVICE AWARD**

Barbara McKee, Atlanta, GA  
Terry Platz, Springfield, IL  
Marlys Sahlin, Denver, CO  
Robert Schmidt, Atlanta, GA  
Creig Stephens, Atlanta, GA  
Dana Stewart, Washington, DC  
JoAnn Waterfield, Washington, DC

## **Seeking Advisory Committee Members**

GIPSA is seeking nominations for individuals to serve on the Grain Inspection Advisory Committee. Nominations are being sought for 5 members and 5 alternates, all of whom will begin serving their 3-year terms in March 2002.

The Committee is comprised of 15 members, appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture, who represent all facets of the grain industry. The Committee meets twice annually to advise GIPSA on the establishment of programs and services under the U.S. Grain Standards Act. Such advice is especially important as GIPSA adjusts its programs to meet the needs of today's global, consumer-driven food system. Members of the Committee serve without compensation; they are reimbursed for travel expenses.

Nominations are open to all individuals without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, mental or physical handicap, marital status, or sexual orientation.

Persons interested in serving on the Advisory Committee, or in nominating individuals to serve, should contact GIPSA, by telephone (202-720-0219), fax (202-205-9237), or e-mail (mplaus@gipsadc.usda.gov) and request Nomination Form AD-755. Nomination forms also are available from GIPSA's web site at: <http://www.usda.gov/gipsa/advcommittee/ad755.pdf>. Completed nomination forms must be received not later than November 30, 2001.

## **Missouri Livestock Marketing Law** *Milt Hansen, Denver*

In July 1999, the Missouri Livestock Marketing Law was signed, stating that a packer shall not discriminate in prices paid or offered to the sellers of livestock, unless the price difference is based on the quality of the livestock, actual quantifiable costs related to transporting and acquiring the livestock by the packer, or an agreement for the delivery of livestock at a specified time and date. It requires packers to publish prices paid for livestock and offer the same terms to other livestock sellers. The law provides for treble damages for any seller receiving or offered a discriminatory price in violation of the law.

In March 2000, the Federal District Court ruled that the law violated the Commerce Clause of the U.S. Constitution. The decision was appealed by the State of Missouri. Effective April 30, 2000, the Missouri Department of Livestock passed a rule exempting livestock auction markets from the law, based on the recognition that the competitive bidding process establishes a market price for livestock consigned for sale and the premise that the nature of public auctions ensures that discrimination does not exist. On May 14, 2001, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit reversed the District Court and upheld the Missouri Livestock Marketing Law. The law went into effect on May 29, 2001.

*Continued, see Law on page 6.*

# Everyone in the Pool

*Mark Leking, Chief, Employee  
Relations Branch, APHIS Human  
Resources Division*

That may sound like fun on a hot summer day, when the pool you are jumping into is a swimming pool. But if it is a sports betting pool and you are at work, the results may not be fun at all.

It is fairly common during football season, and at other times of the year, to be exposed to some type of gambling pool or lottery. As long as you choose to participate on your own time and away from the worksite, there should be no problem. However, any kind of gambling while on duty or at the worksite is prohibited, and exposes the gambler/employee to possible disciplinary action.

USDA Personnel Bulletin 735-1, "USDA Employee Responsibilities and Conduct," Subpart B, 735-201, which states that employees are prohibited from:

"(b) Conducting, or participating in, any gambling activity including the operation of a gambling device, conducting a lottery or pool, a game for money or property, or selling or purchasing a numbers slip or ticket while on Government-owned or leased property or while on duty for the Government."

This simple article is meant to deter activity of this type and therefore to prevent having to take disciplinary action against employees. The old expression "Ask *before* you act" is applicable here, as it is for any conduct or activity which you think may be addressed in the ethics or conduct regulations covering USDA employ-



## GIPSA Idea Hotline Update

*Norma Phelps, Washington, DC*



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

<i>Suggestor</i>	<i>Suggestion</i>
Vincent Volpe, New Orleans, LA	Federal Shiphold Inspectors Should Carry Monitoring Equipment for Radiation, Etc.
Marsha Morehouse, Portland, OR	GIPSA News Should Be Placed Online
David G. Bowen, Des Moines, IA	Use An Electronic Travel Voucher With Scanned Motel Receipts

October's tee-shirt winner: **Vincent Volpe!**

### **GIPSA Hotline Ideas Accepted and Approved for Implementation During October 2001**

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.

☛ **Require GIPSA Employees to Use Dates in Their Voice Mail Recordings**

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.**

ees. You can always ask questions of your supervisor, or you can contact any of the Employee Relations Specialists servicing your program. The following web site is an excellent source of information on the ethical

requirements and conduct standards that apply to all of us as Government and USDA employees. [www.usda.gov/ethics](http://www.usda.gov/ethics)

# Intruder Activity: The Ease of Exploitation

*Donna Wolf, Denver*

The war against terrorism raises the specter of increased security risks for information managers. Risks ranging from nuisance Web site defacements to the possibility that systems could be targeted in conjunction with a physical attack as part of an effort to maximize disruptions. Such attacks existed before the September 11<sup>th</sup> terrorist attacks against the United States, but the possibility of a significant attack specifically, a combined cyber and physical assault is being taken much more seriously since those events.

Rich Pethia, Director CERT/CC, said that experience shows that there has been a steady advance in the sophistication and effectiveness of attack technology. Intruders quickly develop exploit scripts for vulnerabilities discovered in products such as IIS. They then use these scripts to compromise computers and also share these scripts so more attackers can use them. These scripts are combined with other forms of technology

to develop programs that automatically scan the network for vulnerable systems, attack them, compromise them, and use them to spread the attack even further.

These new attack technologies are causing damage more quickly than those created in the past. The Code Red worm spread around the world faster than the Melissa virus in 1999. With the Code Red worm, there were days between first identification and widespread damage. The Nimda worm caused serious damage within an hour of the first report of infection.

In the past, intruders found vulnerable computers by scanning each computer individually, in effect limiting the number of computers that could be compromised in a short period of time. Now intruders use worm technology to achieve exponential growth in the number of computers scanned and compromised. They can now reach tens of thousands of computers in minutes where it once took weeks or months.

This fast exploitation limits the time security experts have to analyze the problem and warn the users. Exacerbating the problem is the difficulty of catching the attackers. Today's Internet protocols make it easy for intruders to disguise their identity and location. Automated attack technology further distances the attacker from the attack. In the great majority of attacks, attackers go unidentified and fear of prosecution offers little deterrent.

USDA computer systems can capture information entered by all users. Although the Department has sophisticated firewall software in place, as described above, we cannot begin to keep up with the amount of intruders that may want to penetrate our systems. When accessing your personal bank accounts or retirement accounts keep in mind, you are using a Government computer and we are now and probably always will be a target for exploitation.

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## Travel Bits & Pieces

*Peggy Smith, Washington, DC*

### **Credit Card Expiration Dates.**

The travel credit cards expire at the **end** of the month shown on your card. For example, if your card expires 11/02, that means that your card will expire at the end of November. Renewal cards are mailed out 10-14 business days before the end of the month.

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## Balancing Family and Work Life

The Department has a number of programs that can help USDA employees balance our family and work life. These programs cover adoption benefits, child care, elder care, telework, transit incentives and much more. To learn more about these programs, go to the USDA Work Life Program website <http://www.usda.gov/da/employ/ffwg.htm>

### **Help is within reach.**

For confidential assistance,  
call your Employee  
Assistance Program

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

# Women's Issues: A Conversation

*Linda Alston, Civil Rights Staff*

The Women's Employee Advisory Council, one of five new USDA advisory councils established in 2000, held its first National Outreach Training Conference, "Women's Issues: A Conversation," in USDA's South Building. The forum was a great opportunity to hear speakers addressing important issues facing women day-to-day: diversity, training, career advancement, and family issues.

**"You Can Have Your Cake & Eat It Too, But Only If You Bake It!"** The first speaker was Dr. William Guillory, founder of the consulting firm, Innovations International Inc. Dr. Guillory focused on three major themes: **"Having Your Cake,"** creating your idea of success; **"Eating It Too,"** living consistently with your idea of success; and **"Baking It,"** the process of constructively dealing with those obstacles and barriers we must overcome to earn the freedom to live successfully. Dr. Guillory's most recent book is *The Living Organization—Spirituality in the Workplace*.

**"What Do You Want: A Job or a Career?"** The next speaker was Evelyn White, deputy assistant secretary for human resources, Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Ms. White focused on how training helps career advancement and overall self-improvement. By setting goals, searching for opportunities, and looking within one's self for inner strength, we can all become more productive and fulfilled individuals. Before joining HHS, Ms. White was USDA's director of human resources.

**"A Heroine is Nothing But a**

**Sandwich"** The final speaker was **Leslie Milk**, playwright and lifestyles editor, Washingtonian Magazine. Before becoming a full-time journalist, **Ms. Milk** headed a press office for the Department of Labor, which provided her with background for one of her plays entitled, "Woman Spends Year in Labor." Through humor, Ms. Milk addressed "the Sandwich Generation," the generation now caught between caring for children and elderly parents. Based on personal experiences in dealing with her

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## Law, from page 3.

In response to the law, packers elected to stop buying livestock on a cash basis, and began purchasing only on a grade and yield basis in the state of Missouri. Individuals and industry organizations alleged that the packers were violating the Packers and Stockyards Act. GIPSA was asked to investigate. Two rapid response teams, comprised of **Dan Van Ackeren, Milton Hansen, Terry Ryno, and Karen Rhodes**, went to Missouri. Their preliminary investigation found no violations of the Act. **Bob Holden**, Missouri Governor, asked the state legislature to revise the controversial marketing law. On September 28, 2001, the state legislature repealed the controversial portions of the law and adopted most of Section 202 of the Packers and Stockyards Act into the law. With the repeal of the severe threats of the former law, the packers have returned to the cash market in Missouri.

aging mother and 20-year-old daughter, Ms. Milk discussed how this "sandwich" impacts our lives and how we can deal effectively with such issues.

The conference also included open dialogue with mission area heads and representatives. The members of the audience were invited to "step up to the mic" and openly and candidly discuss issues of concern in the workplace. This dialogue was the first step for the Women Employee Advisory Council in improving performance and the workplace.

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## For Your Health

*Mavis Rogers, Washington, DC*

**Safe-Lifting Basics.** Nearly 80 percent of Americans will have back problems that might cause them to lose time from work. A wise way to avoid back injuries is to lift and set down objects correctly. As a general rule, keep the object as close to your spine as possible, keep your back straight, and move smoothly during the entire process. When in doubt, get help or use a lifting aid. Here are five-step guidelines to help you lift safely:

- Squat close to the object. Keep your back nearly vertical. Pass the object between your knees if possible. Otherwise, bend to lift it.
- Get a secure grip with both hands. Lift with your legs.
- Hold the object close to your body. Watch where you step.
- Turn with your feet. Don't twist your back.
- Set object down smoothly. Keep your back as straight as possible.

# Designation Activities

*Jan Hart, Washington, DC*

GIPSA has designated Columbus Grain Inspection, Inc., and Michigan Grain Inspection Services, Inc. to officially inspect and weigh grain in northwestern Ohio. This action will be effective on December 1, 2001. This area was formerly served by Fostoria Grain Inspection, Inc..

Columbus, Fostoria, and Michigan each applied to provide official services on GIPSA's behalf in all or part of the Fostoria area. Based on criteria established under the United States Grain Standards Act, GIPSA determined that both Columbus and Michigan are better able to provide customers with the official services they need, including mycotoxin and StarLink™ testing, at a reasonable cost.

Michigan will serve all of Fulton and Henry Counties, Ohio, in addition to the area they currently serve, which includes most of Michigan and northwestern Ohio. Michigan's headquarters and laboratory are in Marshall, MI (telephone 616-781-2711), and a full-time laboratory in Lima, OH (telephone 419-999-9996).

Columbus will serve all of Crawford, Hancock, Seneca, Sandusky, Wood, and Wyandot Counties, OH, in addition to the area they currently serve, eastern Ohio. Columbus' headquarters and laboratory are in Circleville, OH (telephone 740-474-3519), and a local full-time laboratory in Bucyrus, OH (telephone 419-562-8250).

GIPSA also granted new 3-year designations to three official agencies to provide domestic official inspection services under the Act. Two agencies also provide official weighing services. The agencies and the

total official inspections and weights they provided during fiscal year 2001 are: Amarillo Grain Exchange, Inc. (100,545); D.R. Schaal Agency (32,873, plus 74 official weights); and the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (41,197, plus 34,516 official weights)

Designated agencies provide front line official inspection services to the grain trade on GIPSA's behalf for domestic grain moving throughout the United States. Here's some information about these partner agencies and their key players.

**AMARILLO.** In 1920, **John F. Ross** called a meeting of grain elevator managers to organize the Amarillo Grain Association, the forerunner of today's Amarillo. The company operated for 8 years as an association, then received a State charter and incorporated as Amarillo Grain Exchange, Inc., in 1928. Amarillo's first office was in the rear of the Amarillo Hotel Building. After many years and several moves, they located their current location at 1300 South Johnson Street. They have another full-time laboratory in Guymon, OK. Amarillo serves North-central Texas and the Oklahoma panhandle.

**Ross**, a licensed inspector, was the company's first chief inspector until 1931, when he was succeeded by **C. M. Goodnight**. **Don Burris** was hired in 1958 as a weighmaster, and became general manager in 1976. With GIPSA's approval, Amarillo's ownership was transferred to **Don** in 1978. **Don** was owner and official agency manager for the next 22 years,

until his death in 2000. **Cash Burris**, his youngest son, along with his wife **Sharon**, now own and manage Amarillo. **Cash** began his career at Amarillo in 1980, as a sampler, later adding his technician license. Sharon has worked in Amarillo's office since 1991.

**SCHAAL.** Schaal is operated by the fourth generation of Schaals in grain-related businesses. The original Schaal Grain Co. was a grain elevator and cattle feeding operation started by **John Adam Schaal** in 1885. His son, **D.F. Schaal**, operated the business from 1902 to 1945. **D.R. Schaal**, third generation, ran the business during the 1930s and 40s, but left to become owner and chief inspector of a grain inspection service in Belmond, IA, in 1946. The agency continued under **D.R. Schaal's** direction until 1987, when son, **Lewis**, and his wife **Nancy**, incorporated the agency and applied competitively for designation.

**Lewis** remembers helping load probe samples from boxcars into the back of a '57 Chevy station wagon, carrying water to the sampling crew, and standing on the work counter with the top of a grain divider at eye level. **Nancy** grew up on an Iowa farm and knows first-hand grain and livestock. Both **Lewis** and **Nancy** are University of Iowa alumni.

Schaal has developed equipment-networking systems, using single data entry methods, and offering real time grain inspection results with wireless connections at remote locations.

*See Designations, page 8.*

## Designations, from 7.

Schaal serves the heart of north-central Iowa's corn and soybean growing region. Their headquarters and laboratory are located in Belmond, IA, and they have three onsite grain inspection laboratories in Iowa.

**WISCONSIN.** State law created the Wisconsin Grain and Warehouse Commission in 1905. Three people, appointed by the Governor and based in Superior, managed the program. This changed in 1969, when the grain program came under the Marketing Division of the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture.

Significant changes in scope and volume took place in 1959 with opening the St. Lawrence seaway system, making exporting grain the primary function of the port cities. In 1978, Wisconsin was delegated for export and designated for domestic services by FGIS. The Milwaukee inspection program, which had been managed by the Milwaukee Grain Exchange since the late 1800s, came under the State program at that time. Wisconsin now serves export markets in Superior and Milwaukee; maintains domestic grain inspection laboratories in Clinton, Darien, and Ripon; and provides service at barge facilities on the Mississippi River in Wisconsin. At the peak of grain exports in the late 1970s, over 300 employees worked for the inspection program, which currently employs 44 people.

**Mike Granlund** is Wisconsin's official agency manager and manager for the Superior area. He started his career with Wisconsin in 1971 and became the manager in Superior in 1984. The manager for the Milwaukee area is **Jerry Nault**, who began working for Wisconsin in 1977.

## Training Issues

*Rosemary Mayne, Training Officer, Washington, DC*

Many of you used or will use the revised Individual Development Plan (IDP) form. Thank you. The fillable form is on inGIPSA's Training and Development page. The Collateral Duty Training Officers (CDTO) already have suggested revisions to the form for next year.

Some employees remain confused about its purpose. An IDP is not a wish list unrelated to one's job responsibilities and the organization's goals. It is a planning tool linked to the position you occupy in GIPSA.

According to the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), employees are responsible for working with the Agency to identify training **needed** to improve individual and organizational performance. The key word is need. Sometimes employees want training that is not required for their work responsibilities. An employee's training activities must be related to the established employee objectives as related to GIPSA's strategic objectives.

The CFR also says that employees are responsible for self-development, and, as an agency, we encourage self-development and life-long learning. After all organizational training needs are met with available time and funding, and when a potential benefit is identified, a manager can work with employees to support self-development learning "wants." This might include official time, employee's time, dollars, or some combination of the three. Approval is at the manager's discretion. Be creative. Use e-learning tools, books, videos, audio-cassettes, and CD-ROMs. Work with your CDTO and supervisor. There is a listing of available Agency resources in inGIPSA's Training and Development section. Work through your office staff to borrow these learning tools, and call me if I can help you identify options (202-720-6242).

Employees and management must communicate to ensure that individuals training, development, and learning are in line with the goals of the organization.

For both training and development, remember to measure their value to the Agency. All learning must be transferred into performance and results. Measurement can be accomplished through various means, such as reports, projects using what was learned, or presentations or brown-bag lunch talks to share the information with fellow employees. Whatever method is used, remember to measure the benefit the Agency will derive from the employee's learning.

Eric Kofman and Peter Senge remind us that "Learning is too important to leave to chance." Your IDP is not static, so continually revisit your plan as changes occur. Be a continual learner.

**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...

**800-639-5167**

Civil Rights Hotline



# Biological Agents

*Mack Manis, Safety and Health Officer, Washington, DC*

**Protect Yourself.** To appreciate the threat of biological terrorism, you must understand the advantages a biological release gives terrorists. Biological material, even in small amounts, can have devastating effects, can be relatively easily disseminated, are easily spread by nature, and can be hard to detect -- all of which makes them difficult to defend against. As we have seen in the past month, potential terrorist targets for "bio" attacks are normally places that are of high symbolic and/or media importance. But, as we have also seen, no one is immune from this threat.

Letters and packages containing biological agent are often accompanied by some type of liquid, a solid such a powder or crystals, or a vapor. Bioterrorist packages sometimes contain literature. If you discover an unknown substance in a letter or package, you should be alert to a note that contains any of the following key words, including, but not limited to: Anthrax, Ricin, Small Pox, Plaque, Botulism, Ebola, Q-fever, or Toxins.

If you come in contact with a possible biological agent, remember to do the following:

- Stay calm.
- Close the container or letter, if it is open.
- Do not remove the letter or container from the location where it is found.
- Individuals who have been in im-

mediate contact with the suspect item should isolate themselves from the remaining office staff.

- Do not allow anyone to enter or leave the immediate area.
- Wash hands with soap and water, if readily available.
- Avoid further contact with the unknown powders, crystals, and liquids.
- Notify the police by calling 911.

**Coping.** Everyone will react to current events. Be aware that your reactions belong to you – there is no "right" or "good" way to react. Some of the normal feeling and reactions you may experience include, but are not limited to: numbness, helplessness, fearfulness, frustration, anger, worry, sadness, preoccupations, curiosity, irritability, uncertainty, "hyperness", no apparent reaction, and confusion. Some people will find little impact in their personal and work life, others may find a substantial impact in one or both. To cope:

- As always, try to maintain healthy habits – eat and sleep well, minimize use of alcohol or other non-prescribed mood altering substances, and continue routine activity including recreation, exercise and social activity.
- Balance your intake of news and information with normal activity. Take a break from the TV, radio, and newspaper coverage, particu-

larly if you find yourself feeling unusually tired, anxious, fearful, sad, angry, irritable, or helpless.

- Attend to safety instructions from reliable sources—health, school, or workplace safety officials. If you have specific questions or concerns find a reliable resource and seek out information.
- Exercise patience and understanding with yourself and others—give yourself and others a bit of "slack" in this challenging and uncertain time.
- Check in periodically with yourself and others close to you (family, friends, co-worker and supervisors)—find ways to seek and offer support to one another.
- Make well thought out decisions—be mindful of the potential for rash action—talk to others before acting on matters of importance. Don't be afraid to retract and correct a statement or action that might have been impulsive.

If you are concerned about the way you are reacting, consult with your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) by calling 1-800-222-0364 (TTY 1-888-262-7848).

The EAP has both information and resources that can help you understand and cope with the normal emotional and physical reactions that all of us are subject to when exposed to stressful situations.

# Thoughts on the Terrorist Attacks

*Dennis S. Murray, Sr., Washington, DC*

Natural disasters happen all the time; they can't be avoided. In the winter of 1982, a tremendous snowstorm hit Washington, D.C. Government and private sector employees were released early; bus and rail systems ran at a snail's pace if at all; a Metro subway train derailed; snow and accidents clogged roads. In the midst of this mad house, there was a calm feeling in the air. Strangers became saviors when they offered some a ride or an overnight stay. The snow frightened us, but it was only snow and we got through it.

The events of September 11, 2001, a bright sunny day, brought horrific terror to our country. This wasn't a drill or a snowstorm; it was the real thing — an act of terrorism in our own land. Peace on our land had been compromised. Many were concerned about loved ones; people from all over were running for safety; thousands were stranded at airports across the country. No one could have anticipated this happening in the United States. This nation has not witnessed many terrorists' acts of crime and violence, but on September 11, 2001, this country was victimized with brutal violence.

Fire fighters, police officers, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and the American Red Cross descended on New York City and Washington, DC, immediately to assist in the rescue efforts. GIPSA was on alert like most Government agencies in the metro area. That day, all government agencies in Washington were released and thousands of people started to find a way home. Traffic was a mess, horns were blowing. People were walking between cars and along roadways to get home, some were just sitting on benches talking on their cell phones. People were scared, not knowing what the outcome would be.

On my way home, out of the blue, a driver of a government bus started to pick up people one by one, as many as the bus could carry on its way to Rockville, MD. The bus driver was a breath of fresh air, and his kindness was gratefully received. Everyone who got on board was offered a cold beverage and a smile. It's funny I never got his name. He dropped me off on North Capital and Missouri Avenue and said have a safe day.

After the dust settled, the attack seemed to put people in a coma not realizing that some of their loved ones didn't make it. One of our own USDA family member's daughter was taken from us in the Pentagon hijacking. Asia Cottom, 11 years old, and full of life was on her way to a National Geographic Conference in California with her teacher when the hijackers crashed her plane into the Pentagon. Little Asia is the daughter of Michelle Cottom of Agriculture Marketing Services, Civil Rights Staff. Our blessings and heartfelt sympathy are with the Cottom family.

As we mourn, we embrace each other by opening up our hearts and minds to our families and the victims' families after this attack on American soil. We should continue our efforts to help all diverse cultures and embrace change in our lives. We can share with friends and family those memories that our loved ones left behind as we start to heal.

# October Issuances

*Charlie Turner,  
Washington, DC*

- ❑ PN-01-12, "Fumonisin Testing Service," dated 10/22/01.
- ❑ PN-01-14, "Suspension Of Moisture Testing Method and Calibrations For Western Production Medium Grain Rice," dated 10/16/01.
- ❑ PN-01-15, "Hard Milled Rice Certification," dated 10/17/01.



## American Indian Heritage Month - November 2001



**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 November 26 , 2001!**

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