



GIPSA News

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

November 2002

GIPSA EEO Advisory Committee

Dawn Cowan, Washington, DC

The EEO Advisory Committee met September 24-26, 2002, in Washington, D.C. The Committee members are **James Woodard**, chairperson, New Orleans; **Krimy Almodovar**, vice chairperson, Atlanta; **Raymond Jones**, secretary, headquarters; **Eddie Clark**, Technical Center; **Jan Hart**, headquarters; **Durwood Helms**, headquarters; **Dawn Cowan**, headquarters; and **Ray Lavine** (alternate), League City. The committee agreed to address the following issues and concerns related to Equal Opportunity and Civil Rights in GIPSA during the upcoming fiscal year: Individual Development Plans; limited light duty; EEO element; grade structure (P&SP); merit promotion (FGIS); incentive awards; career enhancement/upward mobility; and recruitment/development

The EEO Advisory Committee is charged with advising management on issues related to EEO, Civil Rights, Affirmative Employment, and diversity issues; recommending policies, methods or procedures to increase the representation of women, minori-

ties, and persons with disabilities where underrepresentation exists; recommending programs to provide employees with continuous learning opportunities and career development and; increasing the awareness of all employees of EEO programs and initiatives.

If you have any issues or concerns please call any EEO Advisory Committee member or the GIPSA Civil Rights Hotline on 1-800-639-5167.

Special Emphasis Program Managers

The Special Emphasis Program Managers (SEPMs) met September 25, 2002, in Washington, D.C. The SEPMs are **Vanette Stewart**, Denver; **Chuan Kao**, Technical Center; **Stefanie Osterman** and **William Arce**, Des Moines; and, from Washington, DC, **Sharon Williams**, **Ellie Speelman**, **Duane Putnam**, **Jeannette Semon**, **Linda Alston**, **Dennis Murray**, and **Dawn Cowan**. The program managers agreed to address the following goals and pri-

orities during the upcoming fiscal year: quarterly meetings; job announcement dissemination to target groups; more visibility; and expand SEPM networking.

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Names in the News

PERSONNEL

Fred Kelley, formerly of the Baltimore Field Office, joined the Safety and Issuance Management Branch, Compliance Division, on October 7. **Fred** will be in charge of the FGIS Issuance Management Program. His duties will include assisting in the development of new and revised directives; coordinating the publication and distribution of directives; maintaining databases of FGIS-issued directives; and acting as a liaison with the APHIS directives distribution center. He also will be the Agency's representative on the USDA Crisis Action Team. Before coming to headquarters, **Fred** was a shift supervisor in Baltimore for more than 20 years, where he also was a Collateral Duty Safety and Health Officer. While in Baltimore, he worked with the Safety and Health Staff on many occasions, and with the Review Branch on compliance reviews and special projects. **Fred's** FGIS tenure also includes work in the Norfolk and Toledo field offices. Prior to joining FGIS, **Fred** was a Peace Corp volunteer for almost 3 years.

Welcome to **Donna Brown-Hardnett**, legal specialist, Atlanta regional office.

The Compliance Division's Review Branch thanks the following field-based people who are scheduled to assist Branch team coordina-

tors in conducting official agency reviews during the first quarter of the new fiscal year. **Terrell Bailey**, agricultural commodity grader, New Orleans Field Office, will help us evaluate a State agency, the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce, located within the New Orleans circuit. **Dave Fulks**, shift supervisor, Portland Field Office, will help us evaluate two private agencies, Frankfort Grain Inspection, Inc., and Indianapolis Grain Inspection & Weighing Service, Inc., in the Toledo Field Office circuit. **Jim Tullous**, assistant field office manager, Grand Forks Field Office, will help us evaluate two private agencies, Detroit Grain Inspection Service, Inc., and Michigan Grain Inspection Services, Inc., located in the Toledo Field Office circuit. **Don Wray**, agricultural commodity grader, Portland Field Office, will help us evaluate a State agency, the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. A big thanks go to these employees for helping contribute towards the success of the review program.

AWARDS

Bill Ashley, Executive Resources Staff, Washington, DC, received an extra effort award from the Compliance Division for continuing contributions to the evaluation of official

agency financial operations and field office financial programs.

Amelia Gautreau, **Joanne Matherne**, **Joanna LeBlanc** and **Dana Mitchell**, New Orleans, received time-off awards for providing timely service to our external customers during a heavy workload period while most of the clerical staff was absent.

Donna Hillard, Toledo, Ohio, received a performance award for outstanding performance exceeding all established elements of her position description.

Bob Krouse, Compliance Division, Kansas City, MO, received a performance bonus award for sustained superior contributions to accomplishing the mission of the Review Branch.

Patrick McCluskey and **Jay Mitchell**, Market Analysis and Standards Branch, received time-off awards for their commitment to producing work products of the highest quality, benefiting the Market Analysis and Standards Branch, Field Management Division, and FGIS.

Gerald Raymond, ACG, New Orleans, received a spot award in recognition of his performance contributing to the increased effectiveness and efficiency of the field office.

Linda Remondet, ACT, New Orleans, received a time-off award for providing exceptional and efficient service to our external customer.

Regulatory Management Info

Tess Butler, Washington, DC

Federal Register Publications

- United States Standards for Milled Rice, published September 30, 2002
- Correction; United States Standards for Milled Rice, published October 7, 2002
- Advisory Committee Meeting, published October 17, 2002
- Notice of Extension of comment Period for Review Inspection Requirements, published October 23, 2002

Issuance Info

Fred Kelley, Washington, DC

New Issuances

- GIPSA 3010.1**, Issuance Management System, dated September 18, 2002. (Distribution: GIPSA)

Cancellations

- GIPSA 3010.1**, Issuance Management System, dated September 2, 1997.

Please call 202-720-0259, fax to 202-690-2755, or send e-mail to Fred.H.Kelley@usda.gov if you have any concerns or suggestions.

Seeking Nominations for 57th Annual Honor Awards

The Department has invited all USDA agencies to submit nominations for USDA's 57th Secretary's Annual Honor Awards, the most prestigious awards given by USDA. The awards recognize the outstanding contributions of USDA employees and private citizens in support of USDA's mission. This year, the Honor Awards categories reflect USDA's strategic goals and Human Capital Plan: expanding economic and trade opportunities for United States agricultural producers; promoting health by providing access to safe, affordable, and nutritious food; maintaining and enhancing the Nation's natural resources and environment; enhancing the capacity of all rural residents, communities, and businesses to prosper; and, operating an efficient, effective, and discrimination-free organization.

GIPSA is seeking nominations from all segments of the workforce. Nominations are due by December 9, 2002, to Dawn Cowan, GIPSA Civil Rights Staff, Room 0623-S.

For more information on Honor Awards, see the AD-495, Honor Award Nomination Form (dated 9/00), which includes instructions and nominating criteria. Forms can be obtained from: Beltsville Service Center, Consolidated Forms and Publications Distribution Center, 6351 Ammendale Road, Beltsville, Maryland 20705; at www.ocio.net.usda.gov/ocio/irm/forms/ocio_forms.html, or from Dawn Cowan or Eugene Bass at 202-720-0218, or via e-mail to Dawn.M.Cowan@usda.gov or Eugene.Bass@usda.gov.

DC Relocation Update

Jan Hart, Washington, DC

The USDA South Building in Washington, DC, is being renovated for modernization and space efficiency. Currently, GIPSA employees are housed in a number of locations throughout the building. Beginning in January 2003, we will begin a relocation that will consolidate all DC GIPSA employees into one location in the building.

Field Management Division (FMD), the Information Technology Staff (ITS), and the Office of Policy/Litigation Support (OPLS) will move into the entire second floor of the fourth wing (2400 wing). ITS will move first, followed by FMD and OPLS a few weeks later.

The Department's continuing renovation in 2003 will affect employees located in the third floor headhouse offices. Employees who will be displaced by the renovations, including the P&S Office of the Deputy Administrator and Economic and Statistical Support Staff, will move into FMD's vacated offices in the first floor sixth wing (1600 wing).

When the 2400 wing project is finished, we will be one step closer to housing all of GIPSA together in very nice renovated space.

For Your Health

Mavis Rogers, Washington, DC

Living with Diabetes. Type 2 diabetes is reaching epidemic proportions in America. But with the right treatment, life can still be sweet. Almost 15 million Americans have Type 2 diabetes. Millions more have it but don't know it. Experts attribute the epidemic to the growing number of older Americans and to an increase in obesity and sedentary lifestyles. While the statistics are alarming, research into diabetes and its management continues to evolve to provide sufferers with the best possible quality of life.

There is no cure for diabetes, only management strategies to control blood sugar levels. Those with Type 1 diabetes can't produce any insulin on their own so daily insulin shots are a must. People with Type 2 diabetes don't produce enough insulin or their cells are resistant to it or unable to process it. Without insulin, which moves sugar to the cells, sugar builds up in the blood and the cells become starved for energy. High blood sugar levels can damage eyes, kidneys, nerves, and the heart.

Lifestyle changes have often been the first lines of defense for Type 2 diabetes. Studies show that losing weight, following a meal plan, reducing stress, and being active can help lower blood sugar levels to a healthier range. Such lifestyle changes can even prevent the onset of Type 2 diabetes.

*Continued, see **Health**
on page 5.*

The Big Load Returns!

Paul Hadyka, Washington, DC



Since 1983, GIPSA Field Management Division has voluntarily participated in the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) State Laboratory Metrology Program.

During October, Policies and Procedures Branch sent two 10,000-pound cast iron mass standards from the Master Scale Depot in Chicago to NIST in Gaithersburg, Maryland, so they could be retested, assigned a precise weight value, and then returned. They took the same trip about

7 years ago. Industrial Specialists **Cary Brown** and **Al Rupert** use the large weights to check the thirty 10,000-pound test weights in GIPSA's railway track scale testing program. They also can be used to test weights owned by industry.

The testing at NIST was done on a 60,000-pound platform scale that was pre-loaded with some extra blocks and covered with a plastic draft shield to improve the results. All the work is considered traceable back to NIST.

Each of the two standard weights is accurate to 0.045 pound (for you grain pickers, that's about 20 grams). That's about as good as it gets!

**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



On Graduating from 2002 New Leader Program

John Calvin McCann, New Orleans



*New Leader Program
Graduate John McCann*

Being selected to participate in such a professional course as the New Leader Program meant a lot to me because I believe in quality performance in my profession. This participation gave me the opportunity to move to a new level in the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and abilities. With the approval and support of my supervisory personnel and dedicated assistance throughout the program from Janet Walton, training specialist, I mastered the challenge.

The 2-months training covered many significant components of leadership, including effective presentations and communication, including selecting appropriate visual aids, rehearsing, presenting, and tips on overcoming fear of public speaking. I attended an orientation on international assignments that covered employee responsibilities, Embassy protocol, USDA cooperators, types of assignments and potential travel, personal security, quality weight discrepancies, communicating across cultures, and changes in the marketplace. I also helped plan activities for a visiting Romanian team.

I visited USDA and GIPSA sites where I learned about exporting of grain, grain marketing, software applications, educating farmers, and standards for grading products. I attended technical workgroups and meetings to discuss various issues and reports. I encountered the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program that focused on advancing farming and ranching systems that are profitable, environmentally sound, and good for families and communities.

The daily agenda for the training was very inclusive and the reading list was most impressive. The instructors, consultants, speakers, and other participants were all great. The experiences were most valuable.

The New Leader Program enabled me to be more effective on the job, and to make a positive connection between work and family life. The culminating activity, graduation, was a grand occasion. I was accompanied by out-of-state family members and a special guest from the Washington, DC, office to help celebrate it. My guests applauded as I received my certificate of completion. My commitment to the program was worth the investment, and my rewards were most deserved.

I want to express my appreciation to all who were involved in making it possible for me to participate in and successfully complete the 2002 New Leader Program. As a program graduate, I am an employee who will make an even greater contribution to the field of agriculture and the world. I would advise anyone affiliated with this career area to become a participant in such a leadership program as this one. It was an overwhelming experience that I will forever remember.

Health, *from page 4.*

But, for some, lifestyle changes aren't enough because they are not sustained, or the disease has progressed beyond what they alone can remedy. In fact, one study found that behavior modification couldn't achieve target blood glucose levels. Diabetes pill, insulin shots, or both were needed. Today almost one-third of Type 2 diabetes patients use insulin, and most doctors no longer view it as a treatment of last resort. Instead Type 2 diabetes may be treated aggressively with a multiplatform assault that includes lifestyle changes, closely monitored blood glucose testing, insulin, and other drug therapies.

For more information, contact the American Diabetes Association, 1701 North Beauregard Street, Alexandria, VA 22311, 1-800-DIABETES, www.diabetes.org. The American Diabetes Association is the nation's leading nonprofit health organization providing diabetes research, information, and advocacy. It publishes scientific findings, provides information and other services to people with diabetes, their families, healthcare professionals, and the public.

Information is also available from the National Institute of Diabetes & Digestive & Kidney Diseases, www.niddk.nih.gov. Here you'll find useful explanations and research about Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes and other digestive and metabolic conditions. It links to a variety of health publications.

*Courtesy: Health Brief from the
Publishers of Health Magazine*

GIPSA Builds Curriculum for Chicago Ag High School

Henry Greenwood, Washington, DC

GIPSA is helping the Chicago High School for Agricultural Sciences develop a course related to grain quality. The course will cover practical procedures for grain handlers, the official U.S. Standards for grain, and grain grading.

GIPSA is providing instructional material and professional input about the agricultural marketplace to help train students in rudimentary grain grading. The class will help students identify competencies needed by grain grading professionals, and analyze the benefits of grain grading to the domestic agricultural marketplace and how official services facilitate exports of U.S. agricultural products.

The Chicago Board of Education created the Chicago High School for Agricultural Sciences in July 1984, and in September 1985, the school opened its doors, attracting highly motivated students from all parts of the city. The school, the only one of its kind in the Midwest, offers urban students talented in science and mathematics the unique opportunity to study agribusiness, and plant and animal sciences. The school is a national model not only for its innovative curriculum, but also for dropout prevention and exceptional student motivation.

Through its agriculture curriculum, Chicago High School seeks to provide an opportunity for students from across the city to study agriculture; provide students with all the courses required for college entrance and the opportunity to earn college credit while in high school; produce graduates

who are technologically proficient and certified in basic agricultural industry competencies, and who are able to function on the cutting edge of science and technology; emphasize career awareness, internships, supervised agriculture experience and opportunity to receive college credit; provide students with marketable employment skills, basic hands-on training, industry-based entry level skills, and the opportunity to practice leadership skills.

Agriculture in an urban school? Why not? Agriculture education is no longer just for educating future farmers. Today, the focus is on preparing students for high-tech careers in agriculture-related business and industries. Chicago is ideal for agriculture education because it is the home of the Chicago Board of Trade, Chicago Mercantile Exchange, Quaker Oats, Nidera Inc., Kraft Foods, and General Foods. The U.S. Department of Agriculture also has a significant presence there.

Get Online and Learn!

*Rosemary Mayne,
Washington, DC*

Traditional classroom instruction is familiar to us. Web-enabled e-Learning is not so familiar.

E-learning provides increased learning opportunities. Web technology enables learning to be delivered to any computer workstation "24/7" (24 hours a day, 7 days a week.) The curriculum can be easily changed to reflect changes in business, there is no travel cost, and timing can be managed to fit around the employee's workload are added positive factors. Web-based learning can help learners locate just the piece of instruction they need at a specific point in their job. Presently, GIPSA employees have two opportunities to access on-line training courses.

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

Travel Bits & Pieces

Peggy Smith, Washington, DC

Filing Your Travel Vouchers in a Timely Manner. Travel vouchers must be submitted within 5 working days after your complete your trip or period of travel. The Agency must reimburse you within 30 calendar days after you submit a proper travel voucher to your designated approving office.

FFIS and Travel. Now that travel is interfacing with FFIS, it is taking longer than the usual 3-5 days to receive electronic payment once your TDY voucher has been electronically entered into the travel system. On the average, it is taking 7-10 days to receive payment **after** FFIS schedules your voucher payment with Treasury.

Users' 10 Most Common Security Mistakes

Carol Remmers, Washington, DC

The following list was adapted from a compilation of mistakes identified by security experts as those most commonly made, often unknowingly, by employees that put their organization's information assets at risk. The list originally came from the Human Firewall initiative and is based on an article by Alan Horowitz in *Computerworld* magazine and a press release from the @stake European office, May 1, 2001. Compare this list here with your own behavior. Have you made any of these mistakes?

1. **Passwords on sticky notes.** Leaving a note with your valid password written on it posted near your computer monitor is the most frequent violation of information security policy. It's too easy for someone to copy it down and gain legitimate access with your systems with your password. Toss those notes into the shredder and change your password *now*.
2. **Leaving your computer on, unattended.** Too many people simply leave their computers on and walk away to do other things. This can leave it vulnerable to anything a passerby wants to do with it – in your name.
3. **Carelessly opening e-mail attachments.** Whether from strangers or from someone you know, being careless with e-mail attachments is a quick path to trouble. Many writers of computer viruses and other malicious software rely on the trust of others and human curiosity to wreak their damage. Don't fall for their traps.
4. **Poor password etiquette.** Be creative and make up your own combination of letters, numbers, and special characters. Just make sure that it isn't something trivial (like "aaaaaa" or "123456"), of personal significance (such as a personal name or favorite hobby), or easily guessed (such as your favorite sports team). Avoid any dictionary word.
5. **Laptops on the loose.** We're not only concerned with the intrinsic value of the machine but also with the loss of sensitive data on it. Laptop theft often happens while traveling (stolen at airports or from plain view in rental cars) but they can also be taken from your office. Laptops HAVE been stolen right out of GIPSA employee's offices! (*If you are entrusted with a GIPSA laptop computer, be sure to read "Notebook Computers-Best Practices" on the inGIPSA page.*)
6. **Blabber mouths.** Talking about your passwords or about confidential information over lunch, in the break room, after work in a public drinking spot, or at the gym only increases the risk of someone gaining access to information they are not authorized to know.
7. **Plug-and-Play without protection.** In the rush to get things going too many folks plug modems straight into servers, plug servers straight into the Internet, or create publicly-accessible web pages. These acts bypass security controls established elsewhere in our IT structure. Be sure to check with GIPSA's CIO or ISSPM BEFORE you plug and play.
8. **Not taking action on security violations.** GIPSA managers need to enforce GIPSA's security policies.
9. **Always behind the times (the patch procrastinator).** One of the biggest vulnerabilities of any system is the failure to install updates and patches for deployed software. Updates often close any loopholes that may exist. Ignoring them or putting them off for another day could cost dearly.
10. **Not being watchful inside the organization.** While most managers believe an information security breach will come from an outside intruder, they are wrong. Statistics indicate that the biggest risk comes from within. Disgruntled employees, laid-off employees, a less-than-ethical contractor or cooperator, or even simple ignorance and errors can cause great harm. Every employee has to be responsible for themselves and the behavior they observe in others.

Remember to visit inGIPSA for more information to GIPSA security policies.

2002 Oregon State Fair

Richard Freudenthal, Portland

The Portland Field Office recently completed its seventh year of running a booth at the Oregon State Fair. The fair ran 12 days, from August 22 to September 2. Thousands of people visited the booth during the fair, and they had just about as many questions.

Many thanks to the volunteers who staffed the booth during 24 shifts. They included ACGs **Lynn Bolte**, **Rickie Klopp**, **Jim Ledoux**, **Donnell Keith**, and **Cleve Ellis**; shift supervisor **David Fulks** and OAS/shift supervisor **Jerry Kuseck**; ACT “**Diamond**” **Jim Gardner**, **Chuck Rasmusan**, and clerk **Ferriel Gregory**. Special thanks to **Lynn Bolte** and his wife **Jeanette** whose expertise gave us a professional quality display. Also, thanks to **Dawn Cowan**, Washington, for supplying us with trinkets and goodies to give away.

We at the Portland Field Office are looking forward to next year’s run!



Jim Gardner, Portland, takes a break after setting up the FGIS booth and before the crowds start dropping by.

GIPSA Records Management Handbook Update

Jan Hart, Washington, DC

A major project was undertaken this past year to consolidate the grain and packers programs’ file management and disposition records.

The team established to write a completely new handbook addressing GIPSA’s current business practices first met in January 2002. The team’s rough draft handbook was forwarded to the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), our servicing agency. After several meetings with APHIS, we had a first draft for team members’ review. A number of changes were made and the Handbook went back to APHIS for rewrites. We then had a second draft for division and staff directors’ review. Again, a number of changes were made and the Handbook went back to APHIS for additional rewrites. We now have a final draft of the Handbook, which is going through the formal clearance process, to be cleared by both deputy administrators and then approved by the Administrator.

After any final changes, APHIS will forward the Handbook to the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) for their approval of disposition time frames. We expect to have NARA approval early Summer 2003. At that time, APHIS will make enough copies of the approved Handbook for all GIPSA offices to use as their master guide in how to maintain and dispose of official records.

The writing, editing, and approval of the Handbook has been a lengthy process, but we believe that we will have a product that captures our business processes and gives us good guidance in records management.

Employee Assistance Program

For confidential assistance, call...

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

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



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.

Suggestor

Suggestion

Mark Dickson, Washington, DC

Make GIPSA Activity Reports Available Through the *inGIPSA* Web Site

Gayle Barnett, Des Moines, IA

Include Microsoft Project and Visio in the Microsoft Office Suite

GIPSA Hotline Ideas Accepted and Approved for Implementation During October 2002

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.



Notify Respondents When P&SP Complaints Are Finalized and Ready to Be Issued

Keep those ideas coming in! Send your ideas to the GIPSA Idea Hotline via e-mail: gipsa-ideas@gipsadc.usda.gov; FAX to 202-720-1015; or telephone 800-455-3447 or 202-720-1013. **We encourage you to send ideas via fax or e-mail to reduce the possibility of transcription errors; however, ideas will be accepted regardless of the method you choose to use.**

GIPSA 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, Editor

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dana.b.stewart@usda.gov

by November 25, 2002!

Learn, from page 6.

SkillSoft. SkillSoft has been available since 2001 to GIPSA employees and has generated positive feedback. In addition to learning, it offers performance support tools (e.g. job aids) for the learner. SkillSoft offers a large catalog of individual courses, which average 2 to 3 hours in length. The courses cover such topics as management, leadership, communication, project management, customer service, etc.

A password and ID are needed to use SkillSoft. Call Mary McCoy (202-720-1734) to initiate the request for them.

GOV Online Learning Center.

OPM has launched a site for free online training courses for government personnel. Course categories include communication, human resources, Microsoft 2000, and more, with additional courses to come. Knowledge resources are also available at this site. Again, it is available "24/7" from any computer with Web capability. Check this out by registering at <http://golearn.gov>.

On-line learning is a great tool with specific advantages, such as time flexibility, money savings, and updated curricula. While Web-learning will not be the choice for all training, it does play a vital role in today's learning environment and offers enrichment opportunities for anyone with Web access.

Get online and learn!

OFFICE OF THE ADMINISTRATOR
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AND STOCKYARDS ADMINISTRATION
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