



GIPSA News

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

November 2005

From the Administrator

James Link



*GIPSA Administrator
James Link*

Greetings to all GIPSA employees! I'm delighted to introduce myself today via the newsletter, and will, in the coming months, visit with many of you in person, here in headquarters and in the field.

To give you an idea of my background, I was born in the Flint Hills of Kansas. I attended Kansas State University, but graduated from Emporia State University. I received both an MBA and a Certificate of Ranch Management from Texas Christian University, although I remain a Wildcat at heart. I have been a rancher my entire life and have worked with the Texas Christian University Ranch Management Program

since 1979. I've been a member of the National Cattleman's Beef Association and the Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raiser's Association, and have been involved with the State Fair of Texas, Tarrant County Farm Bureau, and the Southwestern Exposition and Livestock show.

That being said, my passion has always been the agricultural industry. I am honored to be a part of this outstanding agency that is such a crucial piece of this industry.

While I am still "technically" the new kid on the block, I already have many ideas and goals for the future of GIPSA. We provide a critical service to our stakeholders in both assuring quality of agricultural products and protecting industry practices. While it is important that our services are provided both effectively and efficiently, I also want our employees to enjoy their jobs and feel as though they make a valuable contribution to the organization.

First and foremost, my hope is that the Packers and Stockyards Programs and the Federal Grain Inspection Service will continue to act as one agency. This can be accomplished by sharing and utilizing the same resources, maintaining open lines of communication, and developing agency-wide goals for service to our stakeholders.

As you know, Congress has empowered us through the U.S. Grain Standards Act and the Packers and Stockyards Act to regulate and set policy for the grain and livestock industries. This is no small task. We must do this effectively and efficiently – that is, we must make good use of the taxpayers' dollars.

I look forward to both meeting and working with each of you. As an agency we have much work to do, and by working together we can make it an enjoyable and rewarding experience.

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Names in the News

PERSONNEL

Herple Ellis is the new Trade Practices Unit Supervisor in the Atlanta Regional Office. **Herple**, his wife, and two sets of twins transferred from Washington, DC, where he had worked with the Agricultural Marketing Service.

Amanda Taylor has joined the office of the Administrator as assistant to the administrator. **Amanda** is a recent graduate of the University of Iowa Law School.

RETIREMENTS

Pat Smith, office support clerk, Wichita, retired on October 29, 2005. **Pat** was a valuable asset of the office and the official inspection system for past 20 years. She will be sorely missed by her co-workers, but her grandkids will be happy to get more of her attention.

AWARDS

Crystal Akins, resident agent, Greensboro, NC; **Timothy Brennan**, resident agent, Greenville, MS; **Hal Crocker**, resident agent, Russellville, AR; **Mary Heisey**, resident agent, Lancaster, PA; and **Nilsa Ramos Taylor**, resident agent, Tallahassee, FL, received time off awards for actively and successfully collecting delinquent annual reports in addition to carrying out all other resident agent responsibilities.

Rose Alexander, program analyst, Office of Program Services; **Brian Burk**, auditor, Midwestern Regional Office, **Carol Carter**, administrative assistant, Western Regional Office; **Desmond Coker**, program analyst, Regional Operations Division; **Jackie Crull**, supervisory legal instruments examiner, Midwestern Regional Office; **Bart DiGiovanni**, agricultural marketing specialist, Eastern Regional Office; **Elizabeth Hughes**, resident agent, Portland, OR; **Barbara McKee**, administrative assistant, Eastern Regional Office; **Roger Schneider**, economist, Industry Analysis Division; **Anna Smith**, economist, Eastern Regional Office; **LaDondra Taylor**, legal instruments examiner, Midwestern Regional Office; and **Henry Wang**, economist, Industry Analysis Division; received time off awards for outstanding contribution and dedication to the Performance Standards Committee during the revision of performance plans for all P&SP employees.

William Ashley, deputy director, Regional Operations Division, received an extra effort award for serving as acting director while developing the Regional Operation's compliance program, along with assisting with the oversight of a regional office.

Teddi Baird, agricultural marketing specialist, Western Regional Office, received a spot award for her outstanding work in reorganizing the scales and weighing filing systems.

*Continued, see Names
on page 6.*

Reauthorization Update

*Dave Shipman,
Washington, DC*

On September 30, President George Bush signed into law S. 1752, which reauthorizes the U.S. Grain Standards Act, without amendment, through September 20, 2015. This action was in keeping with USDA's proposed reauthorization language that was submitted to Congress on March 22, 2005.

Based on an industry proposal, during the reauthorization process, both the House and the Senate had seriously considered two identical bills that would have reauthorized the Act for 5 years, and provided GIPSA with new authority to use private entities to perform official export inspections under direct Federal oversight. The industry concept essentially called for expanding the model we use to authorize private entities in the domestic market to the export market.

While Congress ultimately reauthorized the Act for 10 years with no privatization provisions, the Congressional Record cited the industry proposal to privatize at export as well as expected GIPSA attrition, and asked GIPSA to explore the existing authority we already have under the Act to contract with private persons (defined as any individual, partnership, corporation, association, or other business entity) to perform inspection and weighing services at export port locations.

*Continued, see Reauthorization
on page 4.*

Changing Organizational Culture – Breaking Down Stovepipes

JoAnn Waterfield, Washington, DC

The Packers and Stockyards Programs (P&SP) is responsible for regulating the dynamic meatpacking, livestock, and poultry industries. P&SP is breaking down longstanding organizational stovepipes and accomplishing landmark organizational change.

In 1998, to more effectively regulate the four primary species for which P&SP has responsibility, the program consolidated 11 field offices in 1998 to 3 regional offices orga-

nized in the western (cattle and lamb), midwestern (hogs), and eastern (poultry) regions of the country. P&SP now has 30 resident agents stationed strategically throughout the country, working out of their homes, to respond quickly to P&SP stakeholders. The resident agents report to a regional office and operate as P&SP's "eyes and ears" in the field.

Headquarters is charged with interpreting Departmental policy and Congressional directives, and providing national agency policy. The regional offices are charged with applying policy at the regional level. Regional managers are responsible for determining which firms to investigate and the priority of these investi-

gations. Senior management in headquarters provides general oversight of complex and competition investigations because of the amount of resources involved, the novelty of the issues, the size of the firms involved, and the frequent use of cross-re-

the Industry Analysis Division, and the Office of Policy and Litigation Support (OPLS) is now the Policy and Litigation Division. The competition branch, previously located in OPLS was dissolved, and activities and personnel were relocated to the

Industry Analysis Division to centralize economic resources and improve communications between headquarters and regional offices. Finally, the Policy and Litigation Division reorganized internally to create two new branches, the Litigation Branch led

by **Jim Adams**, and the Policy Branch led by **Gale Mason**.

P&SP's philosophy of operating in a performance-based culture continues to advance. All P&SP employees are currently evaluating their Performance Plans to ensure that they accurately reflect current responsibilities in light of the President's Management Agenda. In addition, headquarters position descriptions are being reworked to better align positions with the reorganization and to emphasize performance based standards.

As P&SP moves forward and adapts to organizational change, we look forward to better serving our customers.

P&SP Reorganization

Old Name

Office of Policy/Litigation Support
Office of Field Operations
Economic and Statistical Support
Trade Practices Branch
Financial Branch
Competition Branch (dissolved)
Atlanta Regional Office
Des Moines Regional Office
Denver Regional Office

New Name and Acronym

Policy and Litigation Division (PLD)
Regional Operations Division (ROD)
Industry Analysis Division (IAD)
Policy Branch (PB)
Litigation Branch (LB)

Eastern Regional Office (ERO)
Midwestern Regional Office (MRO)
Western Regional Office (WRO)

gional personnel resources. P&SP also recently developed and implemented a compliance program to ensure uniformity of national policy across regions.

The program recently reorganized headquarters to more accurately reflect organizational philosophy and better reflect functions. First, each field office was renamed to reflect the respective geographic region each office covers. Next, Economic and Statistical Support was changed to a division to better align managerial titles with functionality. Then each headquarters office was renamed: Office of Field Operations is now the Regional Operations Division, Economic and Statistical Support is now

Reauthorization,

from page 2.

Technical Services Division

Sharon Lathrop, Technical Center

The Chairman of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry said, in the Congressional Record, "I fully expect USDA to use this [contracting] authority in a manner that improves competitiveness of the U.S. grain industry, that maintains the integrity of the Federal grain inspection system, and that provides benefits to employees who may be impacted."

GIPSA is developing a potential framework for contracting with a person, as defined above, to provide mandatory export inspection and weighing service. In keeping with its succession and workforce plans, GIPSA would explore using the existing contracting authority under the Act to service export operations relinquished by delegated States (e.g., California, Minnesota, and Wisconsin), and to address future workforce attrition. Program effectiveness and cost efficiency would be drivers of any use of contracting authority.

As of October 1, 2005, the Technical Services Division has reorganized. The new structure is designed to provide emphasis to methods development by separating it from ongoing activities. The new organization is also designed to streamline the Division, gaining operational efficiencies, especially for sample handling and tracking. This streamlining positions the Technical Services Division to handle increased sample volumes expected in the future. To clarify the new structure, each unit within TSD is briefly described below, along with key contact information.

Office of the Director: The Office of the Director includes all administrative services personnel, budget/financial personnel, and the assistant to the Director. This group provides the executive leadership, all secretarial services, time and attendance, travel, mail/shipping services, scheduling, billing and certification, budget and finance reporting, procurement, quality assurance, emergency planning, and international visitor coordination for the division.

Quality Systems and Services Unit: The Quality Systems and Services Unit provides all ongoing analyses (including reference analysis), pesticide analyses, check samples, test kit evaluations, monitoring, equipment check-testing, sample preparation, subjective analyses, and Board Appeals. The group also includes all outreach/education materials production and inspector calibration materials, methods. As centralized monitoring is implemented, this unit will absorb the work. Key contact: Don Kendall, Deputy Director.

Methods Development Unit: The Methods Development Unit focuses on research, developing new methods/calibrations, updating methods and calibrations, and meeting the new market needs of the grain industry. This includes both analytical and instrumental methods development. All biotechnology, National Type Evaluation Program, and wheat functionality efforts currently fall into this area. This group is not involved in production/monitoring, allowing it to focus on methods development. Key contact: Dave Funk, Associate Director.

The key research area at this time is end-use differentiation. Plant breeders are creating more designer grains targeted for specific end-uses. To effectively market these value-added traits, it is important to have fast, accurate test methods. For wheat, corn, and soybean, researchers are working to either create or evaluate methods to effectively differentiate intrinsic characteristics that impact on end-use. TSD expects to introduce an NIRT calibration for wheat during FY 2006 designed to correlate to wet gluten content.

A contact point listing with phone numbers and email is available on the GIPSA home page at http://www.gipsa.usda.gov/aboutus/about_us.htm.

Help when you need it.

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

Rhodes Receives AOCS Honorable Mention

Jim Rhodes, Technical Services Division, attained an “Honorable Mention” and second place finish in the 2004-05 American Oil Chemists' Society (AOCS) Aflatoxin Proficiency Program.

Established in 1915, the AOCS Laboratory Proficiency Program (LPP) is the world's most extensive collaborative proficiency program for oil- and fat-related commodities, oilseeds, oilseed meals, and edible fats. The program is designed to help organizations achieve and maintain peak performance of laboratory staff and equipment.

In the 2004-2005 program, 20 worldwide laboratories participated in a series of HPLC aflatoxin runs using adulterated corn meal over the course of the year.

Jim came in second overall, was awarded a framed certificate, and was mentioned in the October issue of AOCS' “Inform” magazine (<http://www.aocs.org/tech/lppwinners.asp>).

Issuances

Terri Henry, Washington, D.C.

New Issuances

- FGIS Directive 9180.74, “Service Fees and Billing Codes,” dated October 1, 2005 (Distribution: A, C, E, F, H, T, X).
- FGIS Program Notice PN-05-09, “National Soybean Sample Collection Plan for the Pesticide Residue Program,” dated September 19, 2005 (Distribution: A, C).
- FGIS Program Notice PN-05-10, “National Wheat Sample Collection Plan for the Pesticide Residue Program,” dated September 26, 2005 (Distribution: A, C).
- FGIS Program Directive 9180.70, “Inspection of Cracked Corn,” dated October 17, 2005 (Distribution: A, C, E).

Please call me at (202) 205-8281, fax to (202) 690-2755, or e-mail to Terri.L.Henry@usda.gov if you have concerns or suggestions.

Regulatory Info

Tess Butler, Washington, DC

Federal Register Publications

- Opportunity to Comment on the Applicants for the Minnesota Area – Published October 3, 2005
- Solicitation of Nominations for Members of the Grain Inspection Advisory Committee – Published October 7, 2005
- Advisory Committee Meeting – Published October 26, 2005

Travel Bits & Pieces

Peggy Smith, Washington, DC

Training and Conference Registration. This is a reminder that you cannot use your Government-issued travel card to pay for training or conference registration. Training must be paid through an SF-182 or a VISA Purchase Card and conference registration must be paid through a VISA purchase card.

Reimbursement for Postage to Mail Your Travel Card Payment. You cannot claim postage to mail your travel card payment to Bank of America. Postage is included in the incidentals when you receive M&IE. If you want to avoid the use of postage, you can pay your Bank of America payment online at www.MyEasyPayment.com.

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Cindy Bertoli, resident agent, Syracuse, NY, received a spot award for successfully completing several formal investigative files, maintaining active communication and involvement with all units in the Eastern Regional Office, and enthusiastically carrying out the Agency's mission.

Bruce Boor, assistant to the Director of the Regional Operations Division, received an extra effort award for articulating and communicating Agency goals so that the Division was able to meet its objectives and complete numerous FOIA requests.

David Bowen, assistant P&SP Business Manager received a spot award for outstanding contribution to the GIPSA Application Modernization Project as the Project Manager for BFI.

Desmond Coker, program analyst, Regional Operations Division, received a cash award for the development and implementation of MOUs for the Union and management.

Karen Collins, auditor, Eastern Regional Office, received a spot award for excellent and timely reporting in response to the rapid response packer trust investigation of GP Monroe Provision, Inc.

William Crutchfield, Director, Regional Operations Division, received an extra effort award for dedication and commitment in ensuring that the regional offices and the Office of the Deputy Administrator met the goals of its mission.

Chad Curry, resident agent, Lubbock, TX, received a spot award for hard work and diligence in conducting the Colorado City Livestock Market investigation.

Steve Dow and Kraig Roesch,

legal specialists, Eastern and Western Regional Offices, received extra effort awards for outstanding dedication to PS&P while serving as the Acting Supervisory Legal Specialist.

Bart DiGiovanni, agricultural marketing specialist, Eastern Regional Office, received a time off award for displaying initiative and dedication in planning and conducting investigations.

Thomas Duggan, Competition Unit Supervisor, Western Regional Office, received a time off award for outstanding leadership in managing the Competition Task Force response to the June 2005 BSE announcement.

James Elswick, legal instruments examiner, Western Regional Office, received a spot award for dedication and service in performing work above and beyond normal assignments and duties and for fulfilling additional workload in an efficient and professional manner.

Barbara Fielder, secretary, Office of the Administrator, received an extra effort award for providing outstanding support to the Office of the Deputy Administrator, P&SP.

Angela Fore, legal instruments examiner, Eastern Regional Office, received a spot award for extra effort and hard work in taking on additional duties related to Legal Instruments Examiner task forces, and also completing annual reports and custodial accounts in a timely manner.

Stuart Frank, Resident Agent Supervisor, received a spot award for exemplary dedication to P&SP by embracing and implementing the Human Capital Component of the President's Management Agenda.

Leslie Frazer, secretary, Office of the Deputy Administrator, PS&P,

received an extra effort award for outstanding dedication, extra effort, and commitment to the Office of the Deputy Administrator and P&SP.

Bruce Gardner, Financial Unit Supervisor, Midwestern Regional Office, received a spot award for exemplary leadership in the development of P&SP's financial risk assessment model of meat packers and livestock market agencies.

Robin Gecan, administrative assistant, Eastern Regional Office, received a spot award for consistently volunteering for assignments and providing exceptional service to internal customers.

Karen Guagliardo, Shana Love, and Eric Jabs, Field Management Division, Washington, D.C., received time-off awards for their dedication and willingness to take on new challenges, and overall outstanding quality of work in fiscal year 2005.

Sarah Hagan, auditor, Midwestern Regional Office, received a spot award for excellent dedication and professional work product in performing a comprehensive financial analysis of the various subsidiaries of Smithfield Foods.

Lawrence Haller, economist, Industry Analysis Division, received an extra effort award for his significant effort to complete the 2003 Annual Statistical Report earlier than any past Statistical Report.

Milt Hansen, Trade Practices Unit Supervisor, Western Regional Office, received a time off award for professionalism and extra effort in supporting GIPSA and the Western

Continued, see More Names on page 7.

More Names, *from page 6.*

Regional Office as supervisor of the Resident Agent and Trade Practices Units.

Fouad Harraqi, economist, Eastern Regional Office, received a time off award for recognition of the extra effort made in expediting the competition of major SMRP approved competition investigation.

Beth Hayden, Field Management Division, Washington, D.C., received a performance award for outstanding performance in the leadership and management of the Agency's Process Verification Program, thus contributing to the increased effectiveness and efficiency of the Division and GIPSA.

Deirdre Holder, regulatory analyst, **Raymond Minks**, agricultural marketing specialist, and **Amy Blechinger**, auditor, Policy and Litigation Division; **Nancy Chasse** and **Angela Fore**, legal instruments examiners, **Steve Mason**, supervisory legal instruments examiner, and **Donna Brown-Hardnett**, legal specialist, Eastern Regional Office; **Patti Tolle**, supervisory legal instruments examiner, and **Myron Simmons**, legal instruments examiner, Western Regional Office; and **Jackie Crull**, supervisory legal instruments examiner, and **Kristi Pirtle**, legal instruments examiner, Midwestern Regional Office; received spot awards for superior service as a member of the P&SP Regulated Entity and Registration and Bonds & Financial Instrument Projects.

Becky Janssen, legal specialist, Midwestern Regional Office, received a spot award for sustained dedication, commitment, and leadership while performing the duties as a legal specialist for the Midwestern

Regional Office.

Weylin Lucius, economist, Western Regional Office, received a spot award for his outstanding work on the Cow and Bull Market Investigation Program.

Gale Mason, Deputy Director, Policy and Litigation Division, received an extra effort award for outstanding effort and dedication to the Policy and Litigation Division's mission in implementing procedures for effective enforcement of the P&S Act.

Gary May, economist, Midwestern Regional Office, received a spot award for exemplary dedication to P&SP by facilitating the flow of critical information between the Midwestern Regional Office and the Industry Analysis Division.

Gary McBryde, Director, Industry Analysis Division, received an extra effort award for outstanding dedication, extra effort, and commitment to the Industry Analysis Division and to PS&P.

Patrick McCluskey, Field Management Division, Washington, D.C., received a performance award for outstanding performance contributing to the increased effectiveness and efficiency of the Market Analysis and Standards Branch, Field Management Division, and GIPSA.

Jamie McDougal, resident agent, Fort Worth, TX, received a spot award for participation in the Strube Packing Co. rapid response investigation that resulted in payments to unpaid livestock sellers totaling \$180,000.

Barbara McKee, administrative assistant, Eastern Regional Office, received a spot award for consistently volunteering for assignments and providing exceptional service to

our internal customers.

Joseph Moore, agricultural marketing specialist, Eastern Regional Office, received a time off award for displaying commitment and dedication while serving as the acting Trade Practices Supervisor.

John Mott and **Stephen Pollock**, economists, Western Regional Office, received spot awards for outstanding work preparing daily and weekly Price Monitoring reports following the 2005 BSE event.

Mavis Rogers, safety and occupational health specialist, received a time off award for outstanding commitment to the GIPSA Safety and Health Program by performing the annual office safety inspection for the P&SP headquarters offices.

Roger Schneider, economist, Industry Analysis Division, received an extra effort award for significant extra effort to provide oversight management on the Livestock and Meat Marketing Study.

Sharon Setzer, administrative officer, Western Regional Office, received a time off award for outstanding contributions to the Regional Office as administrative officer.

Myron Simmons, legal instruments examiner, Western Regional Officer, received a time off award for extra effort in performing duties of GSA vehicle maintenance in addition to his duties as legal instruments examiner.

Anna Smith, economist, Eastern Regional Office, received a time off award in recognition of the extra effort made in expediting the completion of a major SMRP approved competition investigation.

Continued, see More on page 8.

Veterans' Day

More, from page 7.

November 11, is the anniversary of the Armistice signed in the Forest of Compiègne by the Allies and the Germans in 1918, ending World War I after 4 years of conflict.

November 11, 1918, began with the laying down of arms, blowing of whistles, impromptu parades, closing of places of business. All over the globe there were many demonstrations; no doubt the world had never before witnessed such rejoicing.

In November 1919, President Woodrow Wilson issued an Armistice Day proclamation stating:

To us in America, the reflections of Armistice Day will be filled with solemn pride in the heroism of those who died in the country's service and with gratitude for the victory, both because of the thing from which it has freed us and because of the opportunity it has given America to show her sympathy with peace and justice in the councils of the nation.

In 1927, Congress asked President Calvin Coolidge to issue a proclamation calling upon officials to display the U.S. flag on all government buildings on November 11, and invite the people to observe the day in schools and churches. It was not until 1938 that Congress passed a bill making each November 11 a day "dedicated to the cause of world peace and ...hereafter celebrated and known as Armistice Day."

That same year, President Franklin D. Roosevelt made the day a legal holiday in the District of Columbia. For 16 years the United States formally observed Armistice Day, with

Nancy Speer, auditor, Western Regional Office, received a spot award for hard work and diligence in conducting the Colorado City Livestock Market investigation.

Creig Stephens, Resident Agent Supervisor, Eastern Regional Office, received a time off award for displaying commitment and dedication while serving as the Acting Trade Practices Supervisor.

Carla Thomas, legal instruments examiner, Eastern Regional Office, received a spot award for extra effort and hard work in taking on additional duties related to legal instruments examiner task forces, and also completing annual reports and custodial reports in a timely manner.

James Vanderwielen, business manager, Des Moines, IA, received an extra effort award for outstanding dedication and commitment to GAM, PART, and to the Office of the Deputy Administrator, PS&P.

John VerLinden, auditor, Western Regional Office, received a spot award for extra effort in getting the consignors of Donald Jordan, Inc., paid \$185,727 without resorting to the bond claim process.

Henry Wang, economist, Industry Analysis Division, received an extra effort for significant extra effort to extend the analytical capability in P&SP in several areas.

Stephen Warrilow, resident agent, Nashville, TN, received a spot award for extra effort, teamwork and dedication in the work completed related to the Tyson Foods, Inc. investigation.

Regina Willis, administrative assistant, Eastern Regional Office, received a spot award for consistently volunteering for assignments and providing exceptional service to internal customers.

impressive ceremonies at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, where the Chief Executive or his representative placed a wreath.

After World War II, there were many new veterans who had little or no association with World War I. The word "armistice" means simply a truce; and with time, the significance of the name of the holiday changed. Leaders of Veterans' groups decided to try to make November 11 the time to honor all who had fought in various American wars, not just in World War I.

In Emporia, Kansas, on November 11, 1953, instead of an Armistice Day program, there was a Veterans' Day

observance. Ed Rees of Emporia introduced a bill into the House to change the name to Veterans' Day. After it passed, Mr. Rees wrote to all state governors asking them to observe the changed holiday.

The name was changed to Veterans' Day by Congress on May 24, 1954. In October of that year, President Eisenhower called on all citizens to observe the day by remembering the sacrifices of all those who fought so gallantly, and through rededication to the task of promoting an enduring peace. The President referred to the change of name to Veterans' Day in honor of the service men and women of all America's wars.

For Your Health

Mavis Rogers, Washington, DC

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a poisonous, invisible, odorless, and colorless gas created by the incomplete combustion of fossil fuels, such as gasoline, wood, coal, propane, oil, and methane. CO is an asphyxiant when inhaled into the lungs. In the blood stream, carbon monoxide combines with hemoglobin to form carboxyhemoglobin, which interferes with the oxygen carrying capacity of blood, thereby reducing oxygen delivery to the body's organs and tissues. At low concentrations, symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning are flu-like, progressing from mild to severe headache and nausea. At high concentrations, symptoms include impaired vision and coordination, and dizziness. More severe effects include difficulty breathing, unconsciousness, and death.

Sources of carbon monoxide include unvented kerosene and gas space heaters, leaking chimneys and furnaces, back-drafting from furnaces, gas water heaters, wood stoves, and fireplaces, gas stoves, automobile exhaust from attached garages, and environmental tobacco smoke.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Association (EPA) recommends that you take these steps to reduce exposure:

- ✓ Keep gas appliances properly adjusted.
- ✓ Consider purchasing a vented space heater to replace an unvented one.
- ✓ Use proper fuel in kerosene space heaters.
- ✓ Install and use an exhaust fan that vents to the outdoors for a kitchen with a gas stove.
- ✓ Open flues when fireplace are in use.
- ✓ Choose properly sized wood stoves that are certified to meet EPA emission standards - make certain that doors on all wood stoves fit tightly.
- ✓ Have a trained professional inspect, clean, and tune-up your central heating system (furnace, flues, and chimneys) annually – repair any leaks promptly.
- ✓ Do not idle the car inside the garage.

The National Fire Protection Association suggests installing carbon monoxide (CO) alarms inside your home to provide early warning of accumulating CO. However, the best defenses against CO poisoning are the safe use of vehicles and the proper installation, use, venting and maintenance of household cooking and heating equipment.

Sources: The U.S. Environmental Protection Association and the National Fire Protection Association.

Aflatoxin Kit Verified

GIPSA has approved Neogen Corporation's Veratox® Quantitative Aflatoxin Test kit, Product #8030, for official testing of aflatoxin in the national grain inspection system. The test kit is approved to determine total aflatoxin levels in corn.

Aflatoxins are a toxin produced by a mold and can be present in corn, sorghum, and other grains. Approval of this test kit expands the choice of aflatoxin test kits available to the national inspection system.

For technical information, contact: Lynn Polston, GIPSA Technical Services Division, 816-891-0444, or by email at Lynn.A.Polston@usda.gov.

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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FAX (202) 690-2333
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by November 25, 2005!

OFFICE OF THE ADMINISTRATOR
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