



GIPSA News

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

November 2006

OAS Teams Report Out

Jim Link

On October 23, the two Organizational Assessment Survey action teams presented to GIPSA management a number of recommendations to address each team's respective area of focus. Each team's full report and the powerpoint presentation they presented to management are now posted in the Personnel section of inGIPSA.

In a nutshell, the P&SP team addressed Innovation and Use of Resources. The team addressed top challenges facing P&SP as an organization in the area of modernizing internal work processes, including red tape, unnecessary rules, fear of risk-taking, lack of training, and little encouragement for new practices and ways of doing business.

The team recommended that P&SP establish:

1. Formal Training Program
2. Mentoring Program
3. Employee Suggestion Program
4. Capturing Institutional Knowledge
5. Evidentiary Requirements Evaluation Panel

The FGIS team addressed "Supervision," which was defined as "supervisors clearly communicate goals, priorities, and standards, provide constructive feedback and guidance, and give fair performance evaluations." The team recommended that FGIS:

1. Assign one person in each division the responsibility for providing updated information for the inGIPSA Website.
2. Put Suggestion Boxes in offices
3. Hold Monthly Staff Meetings in all FGIS Divisions and Field Offices.
4. Town Hall Meetings with GIPSA Administrators.
5. Town Hall Meeting – Performance Appraisal.
6. Request an HR specialist to conduct an awareness training for headquarters supervisors, field office managers, shift supervisors, and co-lateral duty training officers on their rights and responsibilities during a performance appraisal.
7. Raise the importance of performance appraisals to always be a

major non-compliance item in compliance reviews.

8. Develop and conduct review of IDP's during mid-term performance evaluations.
9. Develop and Implement the Specialized Enhancement Program (former Excel program).
10. Have a Training Assistant at FGIS Lab Sites.

Many thanks to our team members for their tremendous dedication and effort over the past 10 weeks: **Frieda Achtenuch; Brian Burk; Herple Ellis; Catherine Grasso; Mary Heisey; Jason Lopez; Gary May; Julie Shamblin; Janell Smalts** for the P&SP team; and **Clarence Abrom; Susan Fall; Ronald Hill; Mai Ho; Ray Kirkpatrick; Ray Lavine; Idelisse Rodriguez; Angela Roper; and Tandace Scholdberg** for the FGIS Team.

My management team is reviewing the teams' reports. I'll keep you apprised of where we go from here. Keep an eye out for forthcoming improvements!

Names in the News

PERSONNEL

Carl Jackson, New Orleans Field Office, has been selected as an Agricultural Marketing Specialist in the Policies and Procedures Branch effective October 29, 2006. Carl will be working at FGIS headquarters in Washington, DC. **Carl** has a diverse background in the grain inspection program and has worked extensively as the New Orleans Field Office mycotoxin coordinator. **Carl's** knowledge and experience with the end-use testing programs (e.g., aflatoxin, DON, protein, falling number) will strengthen the branch's ability to develop new testing procedures and to respond to questions from FGIS and industry personnel.

Rebecca Riese, Field Management Division, Washington, DC, received a time-off award in recognition of her motivation and willingness to take on new challenges, and overall superior quality of work in fiscal year 2006.

RETIREMENTS



Bruce and his wife Paula enjoy his retirement celebration.

Bruce Boor, (former) Regional Operations Division, enjoyed a retirement celebration on October 2, in Washington, DC. **Bruce** retired with more than 30 years of Federal service, most of which was with GIPSA (and its predecessor agency Packers and Stockyards Administration).

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Employee Assistance Program

Call for confidential help.

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

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



March 1-2, 2007
Arlington, Virginia

Regulatory Info

Tess Butler, Washington, DC

Federal Register Publications

- Clear Title Technical Changes – Published September 27, 2006
- Solicitation of Nominations for Members of the Grain Inspection Advisory Committee – Published October 18, 2006

Issuances

Terri Henry, Washington, D.C.

New Issuances

- GIPSA Directive 2100-1, “Accounting Adjustments,” dated September 29, 2006.
- GIPSA Directive 2140-1, “Unliquidated Obligations,” dated September 29, 2006.
- GIPSA Directive 2170-1, “Review of Financial Reports,” dated September 29, 2006.
- GIPSA Directive 3210-1, “Development and Maintenance of GIPSA Web Sites,” dated October 25, 2006.
- Cancellation of FGIS Directive 9180.77, “Official Criteria Factor for Malting Barley,” will be incorporated into the revised Grain Inspection Handbook, Book II.

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

Travel Bits & Pieces

Peggy Smith, Washington, DC

Travel Purpose Codes. GIPSA recently responded to a request from Senator Tom Coburn asking for very detailed information for all 2006 travel using purpose codes 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 14, and 15. The majority of the codes that applied to this request used by GIPSA were 2 - Information meetings; 3 - Training attendance; 5 - Conference attendance; and 15 - Informal training. When using these codes on your travel voucher, please indicate in the “Remarks” section the name of the meeting, conference, or training, and whether the traveler was a speaker, trainer, technical expert, or participant. There will be more requests like this in the future and responding will be much less time-consuming if this information is included on the voucher.

New FedTraveler Transaction Fees. On November 12, 2006, the following FedTraveler transaction fees will go into effect:

- \$ Online Booking Domestic or International Travel with Air and/or Rail - \$8.18
- \$ Online Booking Domestic or International Travel for Lodging and/or Rental Car only - \$7.24
- \$ Non-Self Service Domestic Travel with Air and/or Rail - \$28.10
- \$ Non-Self Service International Travel with Air and/or Rail - \$32.40
- \$ Non-Self Service Domestic or International Travel for Lodging and/or Rental Car only - \$12.45

2007 GIPSA Leadership Development Program

APPLICATION and SELECTION PROCESS

The Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA) is committed to developing leaders. The GIPSA Leadership Development Program's (LDP) goal is to get potential new leaders ready educationally and experientially for future leadership challenges and opportunities. It is a competency-based program designed to support GIPSA's succession planning by preparing selected high-potential employees for future supervisory, managerial, and senior technician positions within the Agency through building and improving needed skills, as well as applying new approaches to address present and future needs. This program supports the GIPSA Strategic Plan's Management Initiative 1: Human Capital Management, "GIPSA's Human Capital Plan integrates strategic alignment and planning with workforce development tied to succession planning."

The 12-month program focuses on GIPSA Leadership competencies. The program will provide the processes, structure, and opportunity for participants to assess their individual leadership developmental needs; plan learning activities; practice and improve leadership skills; explore the dimensions of leadership with experts and colleagues; learn skills they can use now and in the future; and build networks for future collaboration. GIPSA encourages all employees to be continual learners and take an active role in their own learning and development.

The LDP is designed for those who aspire to leadership positions and open to all **GIPSA full-time, permanent employees GS-09 through GS-13, with a minimum of 3 consecutive years of GIPSA experience.** The LDP is designed to develop and to improve leadership skills needed to succeed as GIPSA mid-level managers.

NOTE: If you have attended a Graduate School, USDA Leadership Development Program within the past 3 years, please do not apply for the LDP Program.

**APPLICATION PACKAGES MUST BE RECEIVED
BY NOVEMBER 13, 2006.**

GIPSA Approves Test Kits

During October 2006, GIPSA approved the following test kits:

- Diagnostix Limited EZ-TOXDON quantitative test kit, Product # 600120-DON, was expanded to include milled rice for official testing of deoxynivalenol (DON);
- Neogen Corporation's ReVeal® for Aflatoxin kit, Product #8015 qualitative lateral flow strip kit, which detects the presence of aflatoxin at a threshold of 20 parts per billion in corn in 3 minutes (test strip development time) using 50 percent ethanol as an extraction solvent;
- Charm Sciences, Inc., ROSA® Zearalenone (Quantitative) lateral flow strip kit, Product # LF-ZEARQ, for official testing of zearalenone; and
- EnviroLogix, Inc. QuickTox™ Kit for Aflatoxin - 10 ppb Bulk Grain, product number #AS 109 BG, qualitative lateral flow strip kit, which detects the presence of aflatoxin at a threshold of 10 parts per billion in corn in 5 minutes (test strip development time) using 50 percent ethanol as an extraction solvent.

For technical information on test kit performance evaluation, contact Lynn Polston, GIPSA Technical Services Division, 816-891-0444.

GIPSA Attends Sunbelt Ag Expo

Creig Stephens, Atlanta

The Sunbelt Agricultural Exposition was established in 1978 and is held yearly at the Spence Field, a former airbase, in Moultrie, Georgia. The Expo is currently the South's largest farm show with on-site row crops and field demonstrations. During the 3-day event, the latest technology from the agricultural industry is displayed. There were approximately 200,000 visitors and 1,200 exhibitors this year. The mission of the Expo is "To produce the premier farm show in the world; one that is conducive to trade and emphasizes information, education and implementation of the latest agricultural technology, research and equipment."

Nilsa Ramos-Taylor, resident agent, and **Kevin Smith**, Business Practices supervisor, set up and managed the GIPSA exhibit at the show. The exhibit contained information about our Agency, including how our

program works, as well as pamphlets such as "Assessment of the Cattle, Hog, and Poultry Industries"; "Prompt Payment Requirements"; "Poultry Trust"; and "Official Grain Inspection and Weighing System." Students gathered information and inquired about job announcements and information for school projects.

Ramos-Taylor and **Smith** alternated staffing the booth to allow them to take part in different events during the week such as: Commissioners of Agriculture cow milking contest; "Advanced Beef Cattle Production, Marketing and Management"; goat and sheep seminars; and touring exhibits to learn about beef breeds and the dairy industry, among other things.

Since poultry is such a vital part of Georgia's agricultural industry, the Georgia Poultry Equipment Company will construct a new 46-foot by 80-foot mini-broiler house with state-of-the-art equipment to be completed by the 2007 Expo. The plans are for the house to have day-old chicks, hatching exhibits, and other stages of live poultry production, and allow visitors to view the latest innovations in poultry high-tech production process.

The exposition was a success because it gave us the opportunity to educate younger generations about GIPSA, and provide information on regulations and requirements. It also gave us the chance to meet industry and State personnel, and the opportunity to listen to concerns from farmers and current registrants.



Nilsa Ramos-Taylor and Kevin Smith representing GIPSA at our booth at the Sunbelt Ag Expo in Moultrie, Georgia.

For Your Health

Mavis Rogers, Washington, DC

Cold or the Flu? Know the Difference. A cold and the flu (also called influenza) are alike in many ways. But the flu can sometimes lead to more serious problems, such as pneumonia. A stuffy nose, sore throat, and sneezing are usually signs of a cold. Tiredness, fever, headache, and major aches and pains probably mean you have the flu. Coughing can be a sign of either a cold or the flu. But a bad cough usually points to the flu.

Know When to Call Your Doctor. You usually do not have to call your doctor right away if you have signs of a cold or flu. But you should call your doctor in these situations:

- ☹ Your symptoms get worse.
- ☹ Your symptoms last a long time.
- ☹ After feeling a little better, you show signs of a more serious problem. Some of these signs are a sick-to-your-stomach feeling, vomiting, high fever, shaking, chills, chest pain, or coughing with thick, yellow-green mucus.

Try to Avoid Getting a Cold.

- 😊 Wash your hands often. You can pick up cold germs easily, even when shaking someone's hand or touching doorknobs or handrails.
- 😊 Avoid people with colds when possible.
- 😊 Sneeze or cough into a tissue and then throw the tissue away.
- 😊 Clean surfaces you touch with a germ-killing disinfectant.
- 😊 Don't touch your nose, eyes, or

mouth. Germs can enter your body easily by these paths.

Try to Avoid Getting the Flu. A flu shot can greatly lower your chance of getting the flu. The best time to get the shot is from the middle of October to the middle of November, because most people get the flu in winter. The shot can't cause the flu. But you may feel sore or weak or have a fever for a few days.

Who Should Get a Flu Shot? Almost all people who want to lower their chance of coming down with the flu can get a flu shot. Flu shots are most important for:

- ✓ people 65 or older
- ✓ nursing home patients
- ✓ infants over 6 months old with health problems, such as asthma, or with long-term diseases, such as HIV or heart disease.
- ✓ children or teenagers who must often take aspirin.
- ✓ people who are often around older people or those with health problems.

Who Might Not Be Able to Get a Flu Shot? Talk to your doctor before you get the shot if you:

- ☞ have certain allergies, especially to eggs.
- ☞ have an illness, such as pneumonia.
- ☞ have a high fever.
- ☞ are pregnant.

Prescription Medicine Can Prevent Flu Too. If you are one of those who should not get the flu shot,

ask your doctor about prescription medicine within the first 48 hours can make your illness less serious.

Do Not Take Antibiotics for a Cold or Flu. Antibiotics won't work against cold and flu germs. And, you should take antibiotics only when really needed.

Help Yourself Feel Better While You Are Sick. A cold usually lasts only a few days to a week. Tiredness from the flu may continue for several weeks. To feel better while you are sick:

- ☑ Drink plenty of fluids.
- ☑ Get plenty of rest.
- ☑ Use a humidifier—an electric device that puts water into the air.
- ☑ Take a cough and cold medicine you buy without a prescription. It may help.

Choose the Right Medicines for Your Symptoms. Make sure the label states that it treats your symptoms.

- ☞ To unclog a stuffy nose → Nasal decongestant
- ☞ To quiet a cough → Cough suppressant
- ☞ To loosen mucus so that you can cough it up → Expectorant
- ☞ To stop runny nose and sneezing → Antihistamine
- ☞ To ease fever, headaches, minor aches and pains → Pain reliever (analgesic)

Courtesy: Food and Drug Administration.

Heart Attack – My Experience

Don Folk, Cedar Rapids

About 4 months ago, I had a heart attack. The day before, I was on the treadmill for 20 minutes, then I switched to the Airdyme bicycle. I experienced no discomfort. After supper, I walked the dog about a mile and experienced slight chest discomfort. I had felt this way before occasionally, so I thought nothing about it. Then, I spent about 20 minutes mowing the back yard. Then I felt more discomfort. I went inside to lay down; I thought it was indigestion. I felt no great pressure on my chest. I felt no discomfort in my arm. I was awake for a while, then I slept until morning. The next day I felt fine and went to work. After some samples were cut down, I decided to walk two blocks to my doctor's and was promptly given an EKG. After some discussion, I was told to drive to the emergency room. Eventually, they tried a stint procedure. Then they transferred me to another hospital where I had a triple bypass. The next day I was walking. The 13 pills I had to take in the morning and 8 in the afternoon destroyed my appetite. They discharged me in 5 days. They put me on an exercise program for one hour three times each week. On about the fourth week, I went back to work with very little strength in my arms. The folks at work were great. Anything I needed lifted, they lifted. The doctor hoped I would be able to lift 2 pounds in 2 months. In 2 more weeks, I was lifting 20 pounds.

I still can't believe I had a heart attack. I have played racquetball for over 30 years and had two artificial knee replacements to show for it. I wrestle a 19-year-old state qualifier regularly.

The doctor said my arteries were blocked 70, 85, and 90 percent. He said some of his colleagues also had heart attacks and didn't recognize the symptoms any better than I had. I just learned yesterday that women have different symptoms than men. They feel pain in their upper back and in their teeth.

My chest still occasionally hurts a little once in a while. I get a sharp, brief pain in my wrist or thumb. Now I take cholesterol medication and an aspirin, as I have for several years. I have read literature on diet and exercise and have given up potato chips. As of this moment, I have lost about 20 pounds and am doing well.

I have always been a champion of tough causes. I will now suggest putting a defibrillator wherever possible. A home version costs about \$1,000 and virtually talks you through the procedure. Not too big a price to pay – especially for those who have been through it.

**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

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

Dana Stewart

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by November 25, 2006!

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