



GIPSA News

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

November 2008

On Our Plate for FY 2009

Randall Jones, Washington, DC



Randall Jones

As I enter the fourth month as part of the FGIS team, I have to say that I continue to be truly impressed by the dedication of the FGIS staff to meeting our mission and providing services to our customers. During my visits to Kansas City, New Orleans, League City, and Portland, I have had the opportunity to meet with many of you. I appreciate the input that you have provided. Early in my career, I spent a number of years working in field offices, and I realize the importance of the insight field personnel have relating to the delivery of our services. Your candor and willingness to share with me your thoughts and suggestions will help make our program stronger. And, for those field offices that I have not visited yet, I plan to schedule time early in the year to make more visits.

We enter a new fiscal year with a full plate of priorities and goals. We'll be addressing everything from our export pilot program to fees to establishing the National Grain Center. And, we will be hosting a Grain Inspection Advisory Committee meeting in Kansas City in December. Here's a taste of what's hot for FGIS in FY 2009:

National Grain Center. We will continue to renovate the Technical Center to become the National Grain Center, which will house FGIS personnel from all divisions. We anticipate completion by early FY 2010.

Contractors at Export Port Locations. We will finalize our pilot projects and issue a report of study findings and recommendations.

Farmgate and Export Quality Assessments. We will continue our sorghum and soybean farmgate quality assessments and expand the soybean assessment to include an analysis of export soybeans for the traditional grading factors and additional quality and phytosanitary attributes, including foreign material composition, oil, protein, weed seeds, and pesticide residues.

Quality Management Program (QMP). We, in conjunction with our official agency partners, will pilot test and begin implementing a program that will incorporate modern quality management practices and principles to streamline our oversight of the official inspection and weighing system. Our target for full QMP implementation is by the end of calendar year 2009.

Export Grain Regulations. We will prepare proposed regulations to better regulate export container shipments and enhance information received in load orders for cargo shipments.

Fumigation Procedures. We will modify the fumigation handbook to implement procedures to improve the in-transit fumigation process for vessels.

*Continued, see **Priorities** on page 4.*

Names in the News

PERSONNEL

Joshua Liang, physical scientist, a former BASU intern, joined the Technical Services Division's (TSD) Wheat Functionality Laboratory.

Amber McDonald, office automation assistant, joined the Information Technology Staff (ITS) in Washington, DC. **Amber** comes to GIPSA from the USDA Jump Start Project.

Darryl Perryman, equipment liaison, joined TSD's Equipment Checktesting Program. He transferred from Texas where he worked for another agency.

Andrew Ping, grain marketing specialist, joined the Office of International Affairs. **Andrew** is from Mulberry, Indiana, and has a master's degree in Agriculture from Murray State University, and a Bachelor's degree in AgriBusiness Management from Purdue University.

In This Issue

Names in the News	2
Pitchford's Honor Award	3
Personnel Matters	4
Hurricane Ike	5
Word 2007 Tip	6
In Appreciation	7
FOM Vacancies	7
National Grain Center	7
Forgotten Security	11
Issuances	12
Regulatory Info	12
FGIS Withdraws ANPRs	12
For Your Health	13
Travel Bits & Pieces	14

AWARDS

Frieda Achtentuch, Washington, DC, received an extra effort award for her superior leadership and many accomplishments in carrying out the day-to-day operations of ITS.

William Arce, Des Moines, received a spot award for his contribution during the second phase of PSAS project in the Midwestern Regional Office (MRO).

Donna Ash, Washington, DC, received a time-off award for providing support for the P&SP 2008 National Conference.

C.J. Barrett, Washington, DC, received an extra effort award for sustained, dedicated quality support provided to GIPSA customers and for Agency's video teleconferencing system.

Eugene Bass, Washington, DC, received an extra effort award for his superior leadership and many accomplishments in carrying out the day-to-day operations of the Civil Rights Staff.

Matthew Bass, Des Moines, received a spot award for his contribution during the second phase of PSAS project in the MRO.

Wade Berteau, Roy Shepherd, Jim Brown, Joanne Matherne, Angela Roper, Yohanna Lorio, Erin Dubroc, Lane LeJeune, Carla Cambre, Rose Fremin, Dana Mitchell, Danny Williams, Harold Chiasson, Wally Martin, Willie Washington, Pam Bourque, and **Regina Landry**, New Orleans, received spot awards for providing exemplary and timely service to our customers and the Agency in the

aftermath of Hurricane Gustav.

Ron Beukema, Washington, DC, received an extra effort award for his tireless support of the CuSum program, which lead to a nearly perfect system availability status.

Ralph Bierlen, Des Moines, received a spot award for his contribution during the second phase of PSAS project in the MRO.

Kaye Burnep, Toledo, received an extra effort award for sustained, dedicated quality support provided to GIPSA ITS customers.

Michelle Caldwell, Des Moines, received a spot award for her effort to develop a new audit program for the financial unit of a large packer, which required professional knowledge and skills to construct a superb audit program.

Desmond Coker, Birmingham, received a spot award for outstanding dedication in pursuing action against an auction market that resulted in a recovery of \$195,000.

Karen Collins, Atlanta, received a spot award for outstanding dedication in pursuing an action against an auction market that resulted in a recovery of \$195,000.

Karen Collins, Cary Ainsworth, James Cannon, Michael Meadows, Onetisha Anderson, Susan Kleinman, and Twala Samuels, Atlanta, received spot awards for extra effort in entering and reviewing data for the PSAS while conducting regular assigned duties.

Continued, see Names on page 3.

Names, from page 2.

John Pitchford Receives Secretary's Honor Award

Albert Conerly, Washington, DC, received an extra effort award for his superior leadership and many accomplishments in carrying out the day-to-day operations of the Management Support Staff.

Hal Crocker, Russellville, received a spot award for the successful investigation of a poultry company, which influenced the company to voluntarily send additional payments to 32 growers.

William Crutchfield, Washington, DC, received an extra effort award for breaking down organizational barriers and bringing people together to improve P&SP.

Margaret Cummings, Kansas City, received an extra effort award for sustained, dedicated quality support provided to GIPSA ITS customers, and for extra effort in the desktop rollout.

Arlan Deblieck, Des Moines, received a spot award for his contribution during the second phase of PSAS project in the MRO.

Mark Dickson, Washington, DC, received an extra effort award for continued outstanding support to FGIS by investigating and resolving report discrepancies between GIPSA and other agencies.

Tina Dillard, Washington, DC, received a spot award for help entering and processing data received from the industry annual reports.

Herple Ellis, Atlanta, received a spot award for the successful investigation of a poultry company, the results of which influenced the company to voluntarily send additional payments to 32 growers.

Herple Ellis, Nancy Chasse, Steven Mason, and Jeffrey Dudensing, Atlanta, received spot



John Pitchford

John Pitchford, director, Office of International Affairs, received a 2008 Secretary's Honor Award on October 22, 2008, for his work on the Foreign Agricultural Service's (FAS) interagency **Biotech Rice Group**. **John** was recognized for his exceptional leadership, extraordinary dedication, and sustained effort in responding to the disruption of U.S. rice exports by an unapproved biotechnology event, Liberty Link 601(LL601).

At the peak of the 2006 U.S. rice harvest, valued at nearly \$2 billion, it was discovered that an unapproved biotechnology event, Liberty Link 601 (LL601), had inadvertently found its way into the U.S. rice supply. While safety was not a critical issue, significant marketing disruptions for both commercial and food aid export shipments were a certainty.

This team led overall USDA efforts to maintain U.S. rice exports in the face of this potentially disastrous circumstance. Export markets valued at around \$1 billion were in jeopardy. The team provided critical policy and market information to the Department.

Team members spent countless hours at all times of day – weekdays and weekends – from August through December 2006, in extensive consultation with FAS overseas staff, industry representatives, and experts in other USDA and Federal agencies in gathering information that would prove critical in keeping international markets open to U.S. rice.

Other team members included individuals from FAS, APHIS, the Food and Drug Administration, the U.S. Trade Representative, and the State Department.

Congratulations to **John** on this, his third, USDA Honor Award!

awards for entering and reviewing data for the PSAS while conducting regular assigned duties.

Angela Emrich, Washington, DC, received an extra effort award for outstanding organization and maintenance of GIPSA's telecommunications billing and servicing.

Adam Fast, Des Moines, received a spot award for his contribution during the second phase of PSAS project in the MRO.

Agnes Flinn, Des Moines, re-

ceived a spot award for her significant contribution during the second phase of PSAS project in the MRO.

Marilynn Gallagher, Atlanta, received a time-off award for demonstrating a positive attitude, enthusiasm, and excellent work ethics in the performance of the duties of the new market inspector position.

*Continued, see **More Names** on page 8.*

Priorities, from page 1.

China Cargo Monitoring. In conjunction with our counterparts in China, we will monitor the quality of a soybean shipment between U.S. and Chinese ports with the goal of addressing China's quality concerns, and building positive relationships between FGIS and Chinese inspection and quarantine officials.

U.S. Wheat to Iraq. We plan to expand our cadre of FGIS inspectors equipped to work with Iraqi Grain Board officials overseas to facilitate their acceptance of U.S. wheat shipments to Iraq.

Odor Line Validation. We will validate the sorghum odor lines for musty and sour. We'll be traveling across the country to share sorghum samples with verified aromas, including musty and sour, with end users in dairy and beef cattle feeding, hog feeding, ethanol production, and sorghum flour milling industries to assess current odor lines. We'll determine what is needed to validate the odor line based on these visits.

Rice Milling Standardization in the South. We plan to implement new rice millers in our southern region and ensure that they are standardized to our reference method at the National Grain Center.

Contract Review Program. We will initiate a program to review randomly selected export grain shipments to assess consistency between contract specifications and the shipper's instructions to official personnel on the type of sampling plan to be used for official inspection purposes. The program will continue through at least the end of FY 2010.

Distance Learning Project. We will complete the GIPSA official inspection distance learning project with the Grain Elevator and Processing Society and Kansas State University. The course will provide orientation training to GIPSA and official agency personnel, and educate customers in the United States and around the globe.

Fee Assessments. We will complete an assessment of the commodity inspection fees and determine whether this new fee analysis model can be used for other funds.

We'll be doing all of this AND we will continue to provide the exceptional inspection and weighing services for which we're known across the nation and around the world. I look forward to a productive and positive year!

Employee Assistance Program

Call for confidential help.

Washington, DC personnel, call...
1-800-222-0364

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

Personnel Matters

Monica Alexander
Washington, DC

2008 Health Benefits Open Season November 10 - December 8

This is your annual opportunity to review and change your enrollment in the Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) program, the Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP), and to enroll in the Federal Flexible Spending Accounts (FSAFEDS) for health care and/or dependent care for 2009. Watch for more information to come. The Benefits Team provides advice and guidance to employees on Federal employee retirement and insurance benefits programs; processes all retirement and insurance election forms; determines creditable service for retirement, provides retirement calculations and individual counseling to employees; provides retirement and benefits seminars for agency employee meetings; and provides assistance to beneficiaries on filing retirement and insurance claims when an employee dies.

For information concerning your benefits, contact the GIPSA Employee Benefits Specialist, **Sharon Hudoba** at 612-336-3365 or Sharon.a.hudoba@aphis.usda.gov.

Hurricane Ike: Did They Say a Category 2?

Dave Grady, League City

Hurricane Ike wreaked havoc on the Texas coast, shredding buildings, flooding streets, and putting nearly 3 million people in the dark due to downed power lines in the Houston/Galveston area. Although, many evacuated to safer ground, there were many who decided to ride the storm out. A storm of this magnitude hadn't hit the area since Hurricane Alicia in 1983. Since that time, many new families have moved into the area. They weren't quite prepared for the type of destruction a hurricane could bring and cost.

Hurricane Ike formed in the Atlantic Ocean as a tropical depression on September 1, 2008, becoming one of three named tropical storms coming toward the United States concurrently. Forecasters were predicting that Ike was the one to watch. As Texans listened to the weather forecast, no one could imagine that Ike had the Houston/Galveston area in its sights.

As it neared the United States, Ike was a Category 4 storm heading first for Cuba, where it brought destruction to everything in its path. The storm weakened over land but still held together for the next stop on the map. On September 7, 2008, the storm made landfall on the Caribbean Island's eastern shore as a Category 3 storm destroying parts of the Island. The storm again weakened and 2 days later made a second trip to Cuba, this time over the Western tip as a Category 1 storm and then entered into the Gulf of Mexico.

At this time, Ike was not a front-page story in Houston, but should have been. We all had the miscon-

ception that Ike would be just like Rita and Edouard, storms that had made eastern turns and spared the Houston/Galveston area.

Now the thought was beginning to take shape that this may be the one that stays the course. Forecasters were then predicting that the storm was continuing on a western path towards the Corpus Christi area. On September 10, 2008, officials made the call to evacuate the Corpus Christi area and prepare for the storm to hit on September 12, 2008.

Late on September 11, 2008, Ike took a northern turn that raised concern for the Victoria and Freeport area and began to put Corpus Christi on the good side of the storm. By noon, the rising tide began to fill some low-lying streets in Galveston. At that time, it was decided to close the Galveston duty point and allow employees time to prepare. All work at the elevators in the Houston and Beaumont areas was suspended by evening. On that same day, Galveston issued a mandatory evacuation. Some forecasters were still predicting that the storm would eventually go west, but that idea soon faded.

On September 12, 2008, the storm shifted, putting it on course for a direct hit on Galveston. Those who had ignored the mandatory evacuation on the island were starting to feel tropical storm force winds around noon, and realized that this was the real deal. Many of the over 140,000 residents who decided to stay were



ACT Robert Waller shows the water level mark at ADM's mycotoxin lab in Galveston, Texas, after Hurricane Ike.

now second guessing themselves. All of GIPSA's employees decided to evacuate. As the day proceeded, winds began to pick up in the Houston area but there was still no real sense in the city of what the storm would bring.

My wife and I decided to weather the storm in Houston, 35 miles north of Galveston. By nightfall, we were thinking maybe that wasn't a good idea and begin to feel, as the late great Sam Cooke said, that "a change was about to come." Seeing that things were still calm, we decided to get some sleep around 9:00 p.m., even though electricity by this time was a thing of the past. Sleep didn't last long because the wind started to really pick up. The first surge passed around 1:30 a.m. Initially, I thought this would be all we would see for the night since we were in Houston, until I turned on my portable TV and learned that forecasters were saying that the eye of the storm was just beginning to come ashore in Galveston. This was actually the beginning of the storm in Houston! About 30 minutes later, the wind began to pick up much higher.

*Continued, see **Ike**
on page 6.*

Ike, from page 5.

At one point, the house began to shake and I told my wife, “**Did they say this was a Category 2?**”, because it sure didn’t feel like it. It was at that moment that I told her we will never experience another Category 2 Hurricane again. The storm moved inland about 10 miles an hour, the average speed for a hurricane. Even though Galveston was hit hard, a last minute turn by Ike spared Galveston from an expected 25-foot storm surge. Still this was one of the most destructive storms in U.S. history, ranking third just behind Katrina and Andrew, leaving much of Galveston destroyed.

Ike happened to hit on the weekend which allowed us time to access our damage and prepare to provide services the following Monday. Even though most of GIPSA’s employees had either evacuated or had no electricity, we still had some employees show up on Monday ready to work. The field office was still without power so myself and some of the administrative staff met at my home to process T&As to make sure that the employees would get paid as scheduled during such a tough time. On Wednesday, the field office still had no electricity and we communicated to our applicants that they could contact us by calling us at Louis Dreyfus or at my home number. By Thursday, September 19, 2008, we had employees ready to go at both Louis Dreyfus and Cargill. The lights at the field office finally came on Friday and most of the employees responded and reported by that afternoon. We made a trip to Galveston Island on Friday morning to visit the lab at ADM. It was during that time we realized the power of water; the lab at the ADM office was still standing but all of the office supplies were destroyed. The office received approximately 3 feet of water.

By Monday all of the elevators in the surrounding Beaumont and Houston area were receiving services, with the exception of ADM in Galveston. One of the things that really stood out during this time was that people started working together and helping each other. This same cooperation started spreading into the workforce with one elevator deciding to stop early to allow employees to make their curfews. Another elevator manager called to suggest a later starting time to allow employees more time to get to work.

The thing we learned from this is that if we do work together we can achieve great results.



Hurricane Ike's aftermath at ADM's FGIS grain lab. Corrosive damage covers the dockage tester as a result of the high salt water surge.

Word 2007 Tip

Since GIPSA converted to Word 2007, we have received feedback from those who receive Word 2007 files as email attachments. Many cannot read the files because they are still using an older version of Word. To remedy this situation, you can set your machine to save new documents in the Word 2003 format.

If you frequently save Microsoft Office Word 2007 documents (.docx) as Word 2003-97 (.doc) files, you can change the settings so that Word saves documents in that file format by default.

1. Click the **Microsoft Office Button** , and then click **Word Options**.
2. Click **Save**.
3. Under **Save documents**, next to **Save files in this format**, select **Word 2003-97 Document (*.doc)**.

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

In Appreciation

During fiscal year 2008, the **Grand Forks Field Office** donated 34,521 pounds of dry edible peas, beans, and lentils to the Great Plains Food Bank, Lutheran Social Services of North Dakota, Fargo. That means that the Grand Forks Field Office donated 2,877 pounds per month, or 96 pounds per day, to receiving families/individuals.

Letter from the Great Plains Food Bank
to the Grand Forks Field Office

September 22, 2008

Dear Tom,

Thank you for your recent donation to the Great Plains Food Bank. It will truly be a blessing for those we serve.

This year, one out of every twelve people in our community and state will turn to emergency feeding programs supplied by the Great Plains Food Bank for help. Thanks to caring and concerned people like you, none will be turned away empty-handed.

With your help, the Great Plains Food Bank will distribute almost 6 million pounds of donated food and grocery items for hunger relief efforts this year. Currently 240 food shelves, homeless shelters, soup kitchens and other charitable feeding programs in Fargo-Moorhead and almost eighty other North Dakota communities depend on the food bank for some or all of their food supplies.

And what a tremendous difference your contributions make in so many lives — children having enough to eat so they can learn to their full potential at school — seniors on fixed incomes not having to make the difficult choice between paying for rising medicine costs or food—working moms and dads having enough food to put on the table for their families when an emergency shatters an already tightly-stretched budget.

I have always wished there was some way to express how much this food means to someone who is hungry, homeless, or wondering how they will pay for groceries in the days ahead—but I don't think adequate words exist. So again, thank you for being an important partner in our fight against hunger. Your support provides real help and much-needed hope at a critical time for our many neighbors in need.

Thanks so much!

Sincerely,
Steve Sellent
Program Director

FOM Vacancies

Three field office manager (FOM) positions are currently being advertised in FGIS. All vacancy announcements close on November 10, 2008.

1. Supervisory Agricultural Commodity Grader (Grain), GS-1980-14 **Stuttgart, Arkansas**
2. Supervisory Agricultural Commodity Grader (Grain), GS-1980-14 **Portland, Oregon**
3. Supervisory Agricultural Commodity Grader (Grain), GS-1980-14 **League City, Texas**

For complete information, go to [inGIPSA/Jobs and Opportunities](#) and click on GIPSA vacancies.

National Grain Center

The construction continues on FGIS' National Grain Center in Kansas City, Missouri.



More Names, *from page 3.*

Tracy Gerke, Kansas City, received an extra effort award for quick responsiveness and customer service that was instrumental in ensuring business needs were met.

Dave Grady, League City, received an extra effort award for his outstanding leadership in the immediate recovery of the export grain market in the League City, Texas, area following Hurricane Ike.

Catherine Grasso, Washington, DC, received an extra effort award for her outstanding effort in managing stockyard posting and information collection.

Bruce Griffith, Washington, DC, received an extra effort award for his knowledge of networking and telecommunications, ability to train and mentor, and leadership on Departmental initiatives.

Karen Guagliardo, Washington, DC, received an award for outstanding performance as a program manager of the FGISonline initiative.

Rita Hansberry, Washington, DC, received a spot award for her economic analysis of industry cost functions and risk analysis of industry participants.

Tim Hansen, Washington, DC, received an extra effort award for his work in leading the employee guide team.

Jeana Harbison, Washington, DC, received a spot award for her effort in planning the P&SP Farm Bill town hall meetings.

Tanika Harris, Washington, DC, received an extra effort award for sustained, dedicated quality support provided to GIPSA ITS customers.

Ross Heiman, Kansas City, received an award for sustained superior performance that added value to

the work of the Market and Program Analysis Staff (MPAS), and contributed to FGIS fulfilling its mission.

Mary Heisey, Lancaster, PA, received a spot award for sustained exemplary effort contributing to the increased effectiveness and efficiency of PSP.

Ronald Hill, Mack Hall, Troy Kramer, Gerald Thibodeaux, Shelton Buckley, Carl Beckwith, Amanda Roussell, Randy Cooks, Alonzo Craighton, Henry Fallon and **Walter Harness**, New Orleans, received spot awards for providing superior service to our customers.

Mai Ho, Washington, DC, received an extra effort award for dedication to providing outstanding customer service and a quality product.

James Holmes, New Orleans, received an extra effort award for his superior performance directly contributing to the rapid redeployment of the New Orleans Field Office following Hurricane Gustav.

Lawrence Houston, Atlanta, received a time-off award for covering additional geographic territory in support of P&SP's Strategic Business Plan.

Brian Hughes, Washington, DC, received a spot award for his knowledge of industry policies, security technical skills, and understanding of best practices.

Adel Ibrahim, League City, received an extra effort award for sustained, dedicated quality support of GIPSA ITS customers, and support of the CuSum project.

Eric Jabs, Kansas City, received an award for sustained outstanding performance that added value to the work of the MPAS and contributed to

FGIS fulfilling its mission.

Frank Jackson, New Orleans, received an extra effort award for his superior performance directly contributing to the rapid redeployment of the New Orleans Field Office following Hurricane Gustav.

Peter Jackson, Washington, DC, received an extra effort award for his involvement in representing PLD in various committee/task force meetings over the year.

Morris Johnson, Washington, DC, received an extra effort award for his outstanding personal commitment, technical skills, and teamwork on Agency telecommunications, the FFIS project, and remote location support.

Khristan Kaufman, Des Moines, received a spot award for her effort to develop a new audit program for the financial unit of a large packer, which required professional knowledge and skills to construct a superb audit program.

Robert Kayne, Washington, DC, received an extra effort award for his relentless, positive attitude, eagerness to develop reports for all applications, and willingness to lead the Swine Contract Library system re-engineering effort.

William Kelly, Washington, DC, received an extra effort award for his outstanding personal commitment, technical skills, and teamwork on supporting the GIPSA network and electronic mail modernization.

Continued, see Even More Names on page 9.

Even More Names, *from page 8.*

Rodney Kent, Washington, DC, received an extra effort award for his superior project management skills, ability to design and communicate application design and development, and train and mentor staff.

James Lambert, Kansas City, received an extra effort award for his enthusiasm for learning new technologies, which aids progress on the Swine Contract Library re-engineering project by providing insight using newer tools and technologies.

Glenda Lasseigne, New Orleans, received an extra effort award for her superior performance directly contributing to the rapid redeployment of the New Orleans Field Office following Hurricane Gustav.

Tammi Lindsey, Washington, DC, received a spot award for her dedication and outstanding budgetary support given to P&SP offices.

Ashley Linton, Dwan Scott, Mavi Chambliss, Brent Jeansonne, and Gerald Raymond, Jr., New Orleans, received spot awards for providing service to our customers under poor conditions in the aftermath of Hurricane Gustav.

Yohanna Lorio, New Orleans, received an extra effort award for sustained dedicated quality support provided to GIPSA ITS customers, and for the FY 08 Desktop rollout.

Marsha Love, Portland, received an extra effort award for sustained, dedicated quality support provided to GIPSA ITS customers.

Tyhisa Luckey, Washington, DC, received an extra effort award for planning, coordinating, and working on the 2008 P&SP National Meeting.

Tanisha Mapes, Des Moines, received a spot award for her contribution during the second phase of PSAS

project in the MRO.

Gary May, Des Moines, received a spot award for his contribution during the second phase of PSAS project in the MRO.

Gary McBryde, Washington, DC, received an extra effort award for working with internal and external stakeholders to streamline the P&SP Annual Report.

Cara McCarthy, Washington, DC, received a spot award for her effort in planning the P&SP Farm Bill town hall meetings.

Patrick McCluskey, Kansas City, received an award for contributions that promoted the efficiency and effectiveness of the official system, while maintaining outstanding performance of his routine duties.

Mary McCoy, Washington, DC, received an extra effort award for coordinating all 2008 P&SP lodging and meeting arrangements.

Barbara McDougal, Washington, DC, received a spot award for her help entering and processing data received from the industry annual reports.

Robert Merritt, Des Moines, received a spot award for volunteering to prepare packers and packer buyers for input during the second phase of PSAS project in the MRO.

Melvin McLaurin, New Orleans, received a spot award for identifying an WOCL problem and making an accurate determination which led to corrective actions at interior barge loading points.

Robby Obiekwe and Onetisha Anderson, received a spot award for support of the USDA Strategic Plan by reducing the layers of government between citizens and decision-makers, while giving front-line

service delivery.

Thomas O'Connor, Washington, DC, received an award for outstanding leadership of the Compliance Division.

Patricia Ogunyale, Washington, DC, received an extra effort award for coordinating and organizing payroll, training, meeting notes, travel, and folder maintenance for the ITS.

Irene Omade, Washington, DC, received an extra effort award for maintaining and coordinating payroll, budget and human resource activities for the ITS.

Ruth Ortiz, Washington, DC, received a spot award for her dedication and outstanding budgetary support given to P&SP offices.

Steve Pappaducas, Des Moines, received a spot award for his contribution during the second phase of PSAS project in the MRO.

Tracey Paugh, Washington, DC, received an extra effort award for her dedication to the development of *FGISonline* and USDA's e-Gov initiative.

Gordon Peters, Nashville, received a spot award for demonstrating a positive attitude, enthusiasm, and excellent work ethics in the performance of the duties of a resident agent.

Kerry Petit, New Orleans, received an extra effort award for providing outstanding leadership for the immediate and rapid recovery of the export grain market along the Mississippi River during the aftermath of Hurricane Gustav in the New Orleans, Louisiana, area.

Continued, see A Few More Names on page 10.

A Few More Names, from page 9.

Kristen Pirtle, Des Moines, received an extra effort award for her significant contribution in planning, coordinating, and overseeing the second phase of the PSAS project in the MRO.

John Pitchford, Washington, DC, received an award for outstanding leadership of FGIS' international program and contributing materially to FGIS fulfilling its mission.

Wanda Pittman and **Melba Babin**, New Orleans, received time-off awards for providing high quality service to the New Orleans Field Office Training Program.

Marianne Plaus, Washington, DC, received an award for performing at an outstanding level, and demonstrating tremendous technical competence and exceptional managerial skills that contributed significantly to the mission of GIPSA.

Glenda Plautz, Des Moines, received a spot award for her significant contribution during the second phase of PSAS project in the MRO.

Glenn Plumley, Des Moines, received a spot award for his willingness to prepare the packers and packer buyers for input during the second phase of PSAS project in the MRO.

Gayle Pounds Barnett, Des Moines, received an extra effort award for her contribution to planning, coordinating, and overseeing the second phase of the PSAS project in the MRO, and a spot award for resourcefulness and IT assistance in support of the MRO.

Nilsa Ramos Taylor, Tallahassee, received a spot award for sustained exemplary work efforts

contributing to the increased effectiveness and efficiency of PSP.

Diane Reeves, Washington, DC, received an extra effort award for sustained, dedicated quality support provided to GIPSA ITS customers, and for establishing and maintaining the agency's desktop and laptop inventory.

Steven Rigden, Washington, DC, received an extra effort award for outstanding personal commitment, technical skills, and teamwork on the Agency application modernization.

Idelisse Rodriguez, Washington, DC, received an award for sustained superior performance that added value to the work products of MPAS and benefitted the Agency at large.

John Rollins, Atlanta, received a spot award for his resourcefulness and IT assistance in support of the Eastern Regional Office (ERO).

Robin Rother, Kansas City, received an extra effort award for sustained, dedicated quality support provided to GIPSA ITS customers.

Terry Ryno, Des Moines, received a spot award for her willingness to volunteer to prepare the packers and packer buyers for input during the second phase of PSAS project in the MRO.

Gilbert Sanchez, Washington, DC, received an extra effort award for sustained dedicated quality support provided to GIPSA ITS customers, and for leading greater support through use of Altiris.

Luis Sosa, Des Moines, received a spot award for his contribution during the second phase of PSAS project in the MRO.

Emily Staudacher, Des Moines, received a spot award for her contribution during the second phase of PSAS project in the MRO.

Creig Stephens, Des Moines, received a spot award for his leadership, commitment and overall direction on the PSAS project in the ERO.

Katie Stout, Des Moines, received a spot award for her significant contribution during the second phase of PSAS project in the MRO.

Roger Schneider, Washington, DC, received an extra effort award for his work in the 2008 Farm Bill analysis and assessment reporting.

Dana Stewart, Washington, DC, received an award for performing at an outstanding level in providing critical support to FGIS and GIPSA.

Frank Stuart, Des Moines, received a spot award for participating in and inputting PSAS data during the second phase of PSAS project in the MRO.

Ladondra Taylor, Des Moines, received an extra effort award for completing and verifying over 1,500 entries in the second phase of the PSAS project in the MRO.

Dennis Thalacker, Washington, DC, received an extra effort award for outstanding personal commitment, technical skills, and teamwork in support of GIPSA's network.

Patricia Tolle, Denver, received a spot award for her resourcefulness and IT assistance in support of the Western Regional Office (WRO).

Continued, see Final Names on page 11.

Final Names, from page 10.

Charles Trevillion, James Woodard, Sarah Welch-Hill, Melvin McLaurin, James Magee, Rhondalyn Edwards, Kathleen Celestine, Robert Medley, Roy Landry, Jr., Earl Bradford, Wannay Carter, Ron Glass, Lewis Newman, Kenneth Dempster, Terrell Bailey, Stephen Michel, Joel Jolly, and Chuck Guidry, New Orleans, received spot awards for providing service to our customers under poor conditions in the aftermath of Hurricane Gustav.

Amanda Tucker, Washington, DC, received an extra effort award for planning, coordinating, and working on the 2008 P&SP National Meeting.

Gretchen Vanwalbeek, Des Moines, received a spot award for her contribution during the second phase of PSAS project in the MRO.

Haijiang (Henry) Wang, Washington, DC, received an extra effort award for conducting the econometric analysis related to industry cost functions and risk analysis of industry participants, contribution to the indemnity fund analysis, and data entry.

Bryce Wilke, Des Moines, received a spot award for participating in and inputting PSAS data during the second phase of PSAS project in the MRO.

Regina Ware, Washington, DC, received a spot award for her effort in coordinating the QPIC team and refining program standard operating procedures.

Beverly Whalen, Kansas City, received an award for contributions which promoted the efficiency and effectiveness of the official system, while maintaining outstanding performance of her routine duties.

Regina Willis, Atlanta, received a spot award for coordinating the 2008 CFC Campaign and continued outstanding administrative support that greatly contributes to the efficiency and effectiveness of the ERO.

Regina Willis, Angela Fore, Carla Thomas, Robby Obiekwe, Barbara McKee, and Johnetta Robinson, Atlanta, received spot awards for entering and reviewing data for the PSAS while conducting regular assigned duties.

Jaime Ziern, Atlanta, received a time-off award for demonstrating a positive attitude, enthusiasm and excellent work ethics in the performance of the duties of the new market inspector position.

An Often-Forgotten Form of Security

*Brian Hughes
Washington, DC*

We all do a good job of locking our keyboards when we step away from our desk. We all follow the rules of changing our passwords and making sure they're complex enough to be secure. Even with all the other safeguards in place, there's one form of security that is often forgotten: physical security.

Physical security can take many forms. In addition to the guards at the building entrance and locks on office doors, there are still things that we can do to make information more secure, such as:

- If you see someone you don't recognize who is unaccompanied, challenge them. Not in any kind of confrontational way, but ask them "May I help you?"
- If you transport a notebook computer between office and home and have to stop somewhere between, make sure to secure the notebook in your trunk.
- In addition to locking your keyboard when stepping away from your desk, secure portable media such as PDAs and thumb drives.
- Don't leave any documents that contain PII unsecured in your workspace.
- Be conscious of your work at home environment as well. Don't leave portable media unattended if service personnel are in your home.

Issuances

Terri Henry, Washington, D.C.

- FGIS Policy Memorandum Reference No. 217, "Reporting Sunflower Seed Foreign Material," dated October 6, 2008
- FGIS Directive 9180.40, "Pesticide Residue Testing for Grain," dated October 20, 2008
- FGIS Issuance Change No. 109 to the Grain Inspection Handbook, Book III, Chapter 1, "Inspection of Shiplots, Unit Trains, and Lash Barges," dated November 3, 2008

Regulatory Info

Tess Butler, Washington, DC

Federal Register Publications

- Opportunity for Designation in Texas, published September 29, 2008
- Solicitation of Nominations for Members of the Grain Inspection Advisory Committee, published September 26, 2008
- Request for Extension and Revision of a Currently Approved Information Collection, published October 2, 2008
- Implementation of Farm Bill Amendments to the Packers and Stockyards; Notice of Town Hall Meetings, published October 3, 2008
- USDA's Role in Differentiating Grain Inputs for Ethanol Production and Standardizing Testing of Co-Products of Ethanol Production, published October 21, 2008
- United States Standards for Soybeans, published October 21, 2008
- Swine Contractors, published October 21, 2008

FGIS Withdraws Two ANPRs

FGIS recently withdrew two advance notices of proposed rulemaking (ANPR).

The first addressed the government's appropriate role in differentiating grain attributes for ethanol conversion, and standardizing the testing of co-products of ethanol production. FGIS published an ANPR seeking comments on these issues on July 20, 2007; the extended comment period closed December 4, 2007. GIPSA received 29 comments from individuals and organizations across the marketing chain. Commenters overwhelmingly concurred that FGIS should not play a role in standardizing the testing of ethanol inputs and outputs. Accordingly, we will not initiate any rulemaking action at this time related to the matters presented in the ANPR.

FGIS also withdrew notice of a soybean standards review. The ANPR sought public comment on the effectiveness of the soybean standards, and was part of FGIS' review of the soybean standards to assess their effectiveness and responsiveness to current grain industry needs. FGIS received 17 comments from producers, handlers, international associations and companies, and academia. Comments did not indicate a consensus concerning changes to the standards, so GIPSA will not proceed with rulemaking in this matter.

For Your Health

Mavis Rogers, Washington, DC

Hidden Stressors at Work. It may not be part of the job description, but workplace stress is a part of every job. A recent CareerBuilder.com survey indicated that 78 percent of employees feel stressed and burned out at work. There are some obvious factors that add to stress, such as increased workloads, intense deadlines, or a demanding boss. But there are other stress triggers that may be less obvious. These “hidden” triggers add to an employee’s negative experience at work and eventually lead to burnout.

Measuring Your Stress Level. In his new book on workplace stress, “Overworked, Overwhelmed, and Underpaid,” author Louis Barajas identifies several signs you may be nearing burnout.

- You frequently work more than 40 hours a week
- You have seriously considered quitting your job or finding a new job at least once in the last month.
- You have missed at least one major work deadline in the last six months.
- You postpone visits to the doctor because you have neither time nor money to go
- You feel more stress and less security about finances than you do five years ago.

Hidden Stress Triggers. Some hidden factors that contribute to stress are not so obvious to co-workers or managers as, say, having a tower of untouched files on your desk. But these unseen elements have just as much of an impact on your stress level. Barajas has identified some

“secret” stress instigators that may have a negative impact on your work.

- Taking work problems home and letting them affect your personal life. You may struggle with defining the boundary between work and home. When work gets more hectic, your professional responsibilities can bleed into your personal life. If that lack of balance spills back over into your work environment, it can become a vicious cycle.

- Not having time to take a vacation or working while on vacation. If you cannot completely disconnect from work, you are unable to reap the benefits of rest and relaxation. And if your company has weathered a consolidation or downsizing, your workload may not permit you to take a vacation.

- Office competition and gossip. It can be challenging enough to meet the goals and deadlines for your job, but if you have a competitive work environment, you must also keep an eye on your coworkers. If you are the target of office rumors or in the center of a power struggle, your stress level can soar through the roof.

- Feeling underappreciated. Many workers simply do not feel that they are appreciated for the work they do. Sure, compensation and benefits are considered recognition for work performed, but a simple “thank you” or personal display of appreciation is often missing, which makes workers feel their efforts are futile.

Managing Stress Triggers. Managing the demands of your work day and home life may seem impossible when you are in the burnout zone, but

it is important to restore balance in your professional and personal life. Barajas talks about people who have a “dual centric outlook.” These people assign the same priority to their work and home lives, and, according to a 2002 survey from the Families and Work Institute, they experience less stress. Barajas suggests four strategies to help workers strike the “dual centric” balance.

1. Set strict boundaries between work and the rest of your life. It is important to define where the line is between home and work. When dual centric people are at work, they focus on work. When they leave the workplace, they leave it behind completely. They rarely take work home in the evenings and they do not make themselves available for work questions or communication outside of work hours.
2. Focus on what you are doing in the moment. Being physically present does little good unless you are mentally and emotionally present as well. When you put your full attention on whatever you are doing, and are physically, mentally, and emotionally present, you will find that you can give and gain the most from the task or relationship.

*Continued, see **Health**
on page 14.*

Travel Bits & Pieces

Monica Alexander, Washington, DC

3. Take time for rest and recovery. It is great to be able to meet or exceed goals at work, but it is important to remember that, in the long term, taking care of yourself is an investment that pays off professionally as well as personally. Workers should create an atmosphere when this can happen. Give yourself permission to spend time doing whatever helps you renew your energy, even if it means doing nothing at all.
4. Be clear about your priorities. When you feel overwhelmed, the reality is that you have lost track of your priorities. You must get clear what is important to you. One of the best ways to do so is to create a life blueprint of your goals, roles, values, and key relationships. When you create a blueprint and live with it to the best of your ability, you will feel less stress and more fulfillment—not just on the job but your life as a whole.

Courtesy: Patrick Erwin of CareerBuilder.Com. He researches and writes about job search strategies, career management, hiring trends, and workplace issues.

SmartPayII Updates. GIPSA travel card holders have been receiving new, U.S. Bank travel cards that will be active for use on December 1, 2008. Several questions regarding the new travel cards have been brought to the attention of the Agency's travel card coordinator. The following Q&A's will assist with some of these questions:

Q: The name on my card is misspelled. What should I do?

A: Notify your administrative point of contact immediately and a new card will be issued to you later.

Q: The USDA Agency on the card does not read "GIPSA". Should I return the card?

A: In most cases, this error is not a problem, however we are asking employees that do not have USDA GIPSA or USDA on their card to notify their administrative point of contact. The agency's travel card coordinator will submit a list to the Bank after all cards are distributed and request to have new cards printed. This process may take some time, however it should not impact the traveler's use of the card.

Q: When will the online training be available?

A: The online training was recently added to the U.S. Bank website and is available at: <https://wbt.access.usbank.com/>. You must register before you take the training. A training completion form will be distributed to all card holders to complete and return to the GIPSA Training Office. Training will need to be completed by December 31, 2008.

Q: I didn't receive my card and was a BOA travel card holder.

A: Notify your administrative point of contact and your inquiry will be researched with US Bank.

Q: I am a new employee and will need to travel soon. When can I apply for a U.S. Bank card?

A: Applications for U.S. Bank travel cards will be available on or after November 15, 2008. New employees that need to travel on official government business will need to use travel advances to conduct travel.

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
USDA, GIPSA, Stop 3614
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-3614

Phone (202) 720-5091
FAX (202) 690-2333
dana.b.stewart@usda.gov

by November 25, 2008!

Retiring? To be included on our email distribution list after you retire from GIPSA, please send your email address to dana.b.stewart@usda.gov.

OFFICE OF THE ADMINISTRATOR
USDA, GRAIN INSPECTION, PACKERS
AND STOCKYARDS ADMINISTRATION
STOP 3601
1400 INDEPENDENCE AVENUE, SW
WASHINGTON, DC 20250-3601
