



# GIPSA News

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

*November 1999*

## Inspection Automation Project

*Dave Shipman, Washington, DC*

On October 21, 1999, the Grain Inspection Advisory Committee visited the ADM Export Grain Elevator in Destrehan, LA, to see an automated grain inspection project. Those working in the New Orleans area are probably familiar with the pilot project to automate various aspects of the export inspection process. Others may have heard of the project, but might want to know more about why it was started and its status. Let's see if I can bring you up to date.

As part of our long term planning efforts in 1997, we explored ways for GIPSA to improve the accuracy and efficiency of the export inspection and weighing process and, at the same time, the efficiency of export operations. We recognized that improving the efficiency of loading export grain would help improve the efficiency of the overall grain marketing system – an essential factor in maintaining a competitive position for the United States in the global marketplace of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

We decided that if technology could be used to determine critical quality factors in a near real-time mode, we could improve both the inspection process and the efficiency of export

operations. Consultations with our customers and stakeholders, including producers, grain handlers, official agency managers, and exporters, confirmed that automating the inspection process was a shared goal.

A team comprised of personnel from Field Management Division headquarters units, the Technical Service Division, and the New Orleans Field Office was assembled to undertake the project. Their job was to automate the export inspection process with minimal impact on the current testing methodology. In other words, could we effectively automate the export process without unnecessarily impacting on the domestic inspection process? We wanted to avoid adopting alternative methods that would necessitate a complete market-wide transition, a very difficult and costly undertaking, to maintain inspection consistency.

During the past 2 years, the team, known as the ASIST – Automation Sampling and Inspection Systems Team, has constructed a prototype system at the ADM facility in Destrehan, LA. The system will provide moisture, dockage, foreign material, test weight, and protein re-

sults every 4 to 5 minutes. This information will be electronically provided to the customer and to the CUSUM software program just recently implemented at the New Orleans export elevators.

You may be thinking, "This project is good for the exporters, but how does it affect my job?" Clearly, the automated system will eliminate the need for GIPSA personnel to physically determine certain factors such as dockage, protein, test weight, and moisture. Does this translate into reduced labor needs?

The answer to this question depends on the configuration and design of each export elevator and the service requests of our customers. Some exporters may choose to have damage and other non-automated factors done on a more frequent basis if they are receiving the automated factors every 4 to 5 minutes. This may increase staffing needs. At other locations, the automation process may have no affect on staffing levels,

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

# Names in the News

## Awards

**Bill Burden**, Technical Center, received an extra effort award for identifying and installing improved temperature controls on the air ovens, increasing the availability of ovens, significantly improving the operational stability of the ovens, and negating the need to purchase new ovens resulting in a significant cost savings to the Government.

**Andrea Giberson**, economist, Washington, DC, received a performance bonus for outstanding contribution to the public understanding of market forces affecting the current pricing structure in today's pork industry.

**Janine Goodson** and **Robin Rother**, Technical Center, received extra effort awards in recognition of outstanding achievement in develop-

ing and implementing an innovative and paperless purchasing and financial accounting system.

**Larry Haller**, economist, Washington, DC, received an extra effort award from the Rural Business-Cooperative Service for his timely and highly professional review of a large number of research proposals under the Research on Rural Cooperative Opportunities and Problems initiative.

**Janina Milaknis**, Montreal, received an award for her outstanding performance which contributed to the effectiveness of the Montreal Field Office and GIPSA by providing superior service to applicants.

**James Morcaldi**, auditor, Denver, received a spot award for extra effort in facilitating the formal opening of the P&S western regional office and in facilitating the hosting of the P&S annual conference.

**Irene Omade**, computer specialist, and **Tanika Harris**, computer assistant, Washington, DC received time off awards for their professionalism and expeditious handling of year-end budget activities for IRM.

**Warren Preston**, economist, Washington, DC, received an extra effort award for superior professional performance in monitoring and promoting competition in the livestock marketplace. His commitment to the P&S Program has raised the integrity of the marketplace.

**Vickie Rivers**, Technical Center, received an extra effort award in recognition for her personal efforts in furthering the mission of the Analytical, Reference, and Testing Services Branch by assuming additional duties within the Division and for her extra

efforts and contributions to furthering the goals and mission of GIPSA. She is also recognized for her professionalism, employee relations, productivity and superior customer service.

**Mavis Rogers**, Safety and Health Staff, Washington, DC, received an extra effort award for providing continuous support and guidance to the GIPSA Safety and Health Program during the absence of a permanent Safety and Occupational Health Manager.

**Denise Ruggles**, Cedar Rapids, was presented a spot award by Field Management Division director **David Orr** for her dedicated efforts in helping headquarters technicians troubleshoot the problems associated with the upgraded PCMS software.

**Stacey Schofield** and **Karen Rhodes**, marketing specialists, Denver, received time off awards for contributing extra time and effort in making preparations for the Denver regional office to host the 1999 P&S annual conference.

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## 25-Year Service Award

John Roush, Technical Center

## 20-Year Service Awards

George Pulwicz, Des Moines  
Ted Sakis, Atlanta

## 15-Year Service Awards

Rose Alexander, Washington, DC  
Sharon Lathrop, Technical Center

# America Recycles Day

*John Giler, Washington, DC*



November 15, 1999, is America Recycles Day and USDA is actively joining this celebration to renew enthusiasm and add momentum to our recycling and waste reduction efforts. I was selected to represent GIPSA as the America Recycles Day coordinator. The USDA theme for this event is **RE-new, RE-cycle, RE-invigorate**.

GIPSA is very active when it comes to recycling. Many offices recycle paper and aluminum cans. However, recycling is more than just collecting paper and cans for the recycle bin. Recycling also includes the donation of excess products such as excess samples of rice, pulses, and other edible

products to local food pantries and non-profit organizations. Also, you can actively recycle by buying recycled products like paper, printer cartridges, and furniture, or using bioproducts like soy ink.

The main USDA recycling initiative this year is a recycling program for used inkjet printer cartridges. The Department has established a program where used inkjet printer cartridges are mailed to a NISH sheltered workshop via postage-paid mailing pouches. The recycled inkjet printer cartridges are then cleaned, refilled, and resold. This program enjoys many benefits: it is at no cost to USDA, it supports jobs for persons with disabilities, and it promotes recycling in America. When the mailing pouches are available, they will be forwarded to GIPSA offices for use.

More America Recycles Day information is on the official web site:

**[www.americarecyclesday.org](http://www.americarecyclesday.org)**

If you have any suggestions for ways GIPSA can improve recycling in your office, share your idea with your supervisor or contact me at telephone 202-720-0252, or via email at [jgiler@gipsadc.usda.gov](mailto:jgiler@gipsadc.usda.gov).

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## EAP 2000

*Mavis Rogers, Washington, DC*

GIPSA has renewed the Employee Assistance Program contract for FY 2000. Here are some of the problems covered by your EAP:

- Stress related issues
- Family, marital and relationship crises
- Mental and emotional distress
- Problems with children
- Legal/financial issues
- Work-related difficulties
- Alcohol and drug use and abuse
- Coping with elderly and infirm relatives
- Child or spouse abuse
- Aids-related issues
- Grief concerns
- Work and family life issues

Federal Occupational Health has added a new service to its standard EAP package. Beginning October 1, 1999 to September 30, 2000, employees can call 1-800-698-8267 any time day or night to receive a depression and/or alcohol screening. Find out if you might be suffering from alcoholism or clinical depression. Only a full medical evaluation can give you a diagnosis -- but the program does tell you if your symptoms are consistent with alcoholism or depression and where you can go for help. Confidentiality and anonymity are guaranteed because you will never be asked any identifying questions.

Off-the-job problems often affect on-the-job performance. So, if you have any of these problems, please call the following numbers for a confidential appointment. For headquarters employees, call (301) 570-3900 or 1-800-222-0364. For field office employees, call 1-800-222-0364.

Please remember that all EAP services are free, voluntary and confidential.

# Designation Renewal Ceremonies

*Jan Hart, Washington, DC*

Administrator **Jim Baker**, Compliance Division director **Neil Porter**, and I recently visited two official agencies whose designations were being renewed under the U.S. Grain Standards Act (USGSA). The purpose of the visit was to make a presentation to Hastings Grain Inspection, Inc. (Hastings), and the Missouri Department of Agriculture (Missouri) for their competitive selection for a 3-year designation as official agencies.

**Ken Critchfield**, Wichita field office manager (FOM), joined the headquarters officials who attended the Hastings designation ceremony on October 5, 1999, at Hastings' specified service point (SSP) in Grand Island, Nebraska. Owner **Ted Hoelck** and his wife **Nadean**, SSP managers **Annabet Hoelck**

**Foster** (Grand Island) and **Greg Hoelck** (Hastings), along with a number of Hastings' employees were present for the celebration. Area television stations and newspapers covered the event.

**Mr. Baker** tallied up the agency's employees' total years of experience. It ended up at 509 years! **Ted Hoelck** led the pack with 52 years of experience, followed by **Vern Hartman** (39 years) and **Pat Willey** (38 years). It's interesting that Hastings still seeks new employees, with **Jennifer Gompert**, **Barbara Phillips**, and **Aaron Tinsman** each having just 1 year of experience.

Hastings has been in operation since 1959, and was first designated under the USGSA in 1978. They have another full-time SSP in Hastings, as well as a mobile laboratory in western Nebraska. Hastings performed 98,629 inspections in fiscal year 1999 placing them at the third highest volume private agency in the country, behind Central Iowa Grain Inspection Service, Inc. (109,389) and Kansas Grain Inspection Service, Inc., (269,762). Hastings also provided 12,744 wheat protein inspections and 3,932 aflatoxin tests last year.

*Continued, see Designations on page 5.*

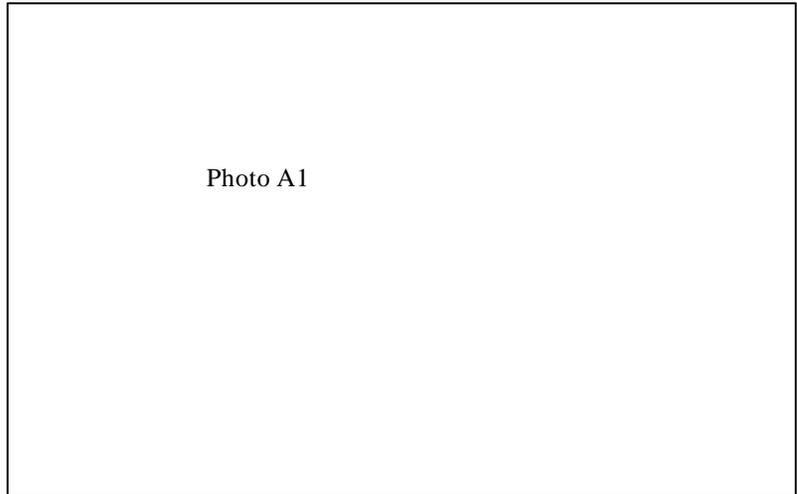


Photo A1

*Ted Hoelck receives his Certificate of Designation from Administrator Jim Baker. Pictured left to right: Jan Hart, Ted Hoelck, Jim Baker, Neil Porter, and Ken Critchfield.*

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## CFC Cookbook!

Do you have a favorite dish? Can you share the recipe with us for a good cause? GIPSA's Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) keyworkers need your yummy, favorite recipe to include in the 1999 annual GIPSA/CFC Cookbook. The proceeds from the

sale of the cookbook will benefit the Combined Federal Campaign.

E-mail your recipe, with your name and office location, to **Terri Henry** at [thenry@gipsadc.usda.gov](mailto:thenry@gipsadc.usda.gov) or fax it to **Jeri Fisher** at 202-690-2755 by **November 17, 1999**. One recipe

per person please!

To order a cookbook for the bargain price of \$3.00 each, get your order and payment to headquarters keyworkers: **Catherine Grasso**, Stop 3641/Room 3039-S or **Jeri Fisher**, Stop 3604/Room 1647-S, by **December 3, 1999**.

## Designations, from page 4.

**Diane Palecek**, Kansas City FOM, and **Clyde Steves**, Stuttgart FOM, also represented GIPSA at Missouri's ceremony, which took place on October 4, 1999, at the State headquarters in Jefferson City. The Missouri Department of Agriculture was represented by **John Saunders**, director; **Charlie Ausfahl**, division director; **Tim Lawrence**, program administrator, Grain Inspection Services Program; **Larry Kitchen**, compliance coordinator; and all six of Missouri's SSP managers from around the State. A special token of recognition was given by **Mr. Ausfahl** to each of the SSP managers to recognize their work over the past year.

Like Hastings, Missouri has been in operation since 1959, and was first designated in 1978. Missouri has full-time SSPs located in Laddonia, Marshall, New Madrid, North Kansas City, St. Joseph, and St. Louis. Missouri performed 23,592 inspections in fiscal year 1999, placing them at the fourth highest volume State agency, behind Wisconsin (65,464), Washington (68,422), and Minnesota (92,727). Missouri also provided 1,742 wheat protein inspections and 371 aflatoxin tests last year.

It was both an opportunity and a pleasure to visit these two official agencies under such auspicious circumstances, and their hospitality was enjoyed by all.

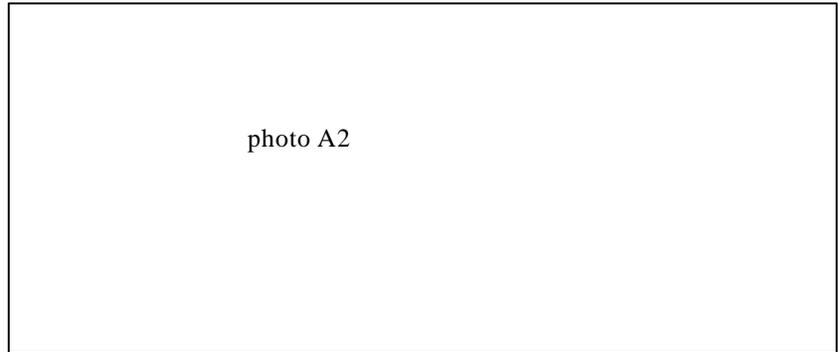


photo A2

*Missouri Receives Its Designation. Pictured, from left to right are: (front row) Tim Lawrence, Rodney Bell, Lionel White, George Harris, Barbara Nunnery, Moses Teel, Diane Palecek, Jan Hart; (back row) Larry Kitchen, Jim Baker, Charlie Ausfahl, Jack Reynolds, Neil Porter, Clyde Steves, and Wallace Bozarth.*

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## Automation, from page 1.

while at still others improved efficiencies may be possible.

We're making good progress toward achieving our goal of improving the efficiency of the export operations. This will require new skills and knowledge on the part of GIPSA employees and a change in the way we do our jobs. Information exchange will increase four-fold yet occur with limited verbal and handwritten intervention. An efficient and cohesive alignment of technology and traditional subjective inspection processes will evolve and further facilitate the marketing of U.S. cereals and oilseeds and contribute to improving the competitiveness of American agriculture.

Thanks for the opportunity to update you on this important program, one of many that are moving GIPSA into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### Someone to turn to...

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

# 1999-2000 Management Conference

*Donna Wolf, Aurora, CO*

The Western Regional Office in Aurora, CO, was pleased to host the 1999-2000 Management Conference for all P&S program managers from the three regional offices and Washington DC. It had been a few months since our Open House Ceremonies here in the Western Regional Office. Our gathering for the annual Management Conference was an excellent chance for the staff to meet with fellow employees and industry guests who were unable to attend the Open House.

Prior to the beginning of the conference each unit of the Western Region presented an overview of their workload and ongoing investigations to **Michael V. Dunn**, Under Secretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs, and GIPSA Administrator **Jim Baker**. They assured us of their commitment to providing the tools necessary for enforcing the Packers and Stockyards Act.

On September 15, the conference began with a warm welcome from **Mr. Baker**, followed by an insightful overview presented by **Under Secretary Dunn**. **Mr. Baker** challenged us to consider:

- Are we regulators or enforcers?
- What do I do that makes a difference in the industry we regulate?
- What can I do that makes a difference in the industry?

Industry concerns were brought to our attention by speakers including **John McNutt**, President National Pork Producers Council, Iowa City, IA; **Andy Gottschalk**, Linco Futures Group, Denver, CO; **Don**

**Ament**, Commissioner of Agriculture, Denver, CO; **Topper Thorpe**, Cattle-Fax, Englewood, CO; **Rich Wertheimer**, Director of Marketing, American Sheep Industry, Englewood, CO; **Ina Young**, Arkansas Poultry Grower's, Poultry Chair, W.I.F.E., Paris, AR; and **Kathleen Kelley**, Rocky Mountain Farmer's Union, VP, and VP, R-Calf, Meeker, CO.

Thursday's workshops began with a presentation on what constitutes evidence by **Mary Hobbie**, Office of General Counsel, Washington, DC, followed by **Tim Blackburn**, Employee and Management Relations, APHIS, Riverdale, MD; **Martha Gravagna**, Human Resources, APHIS, Minneapolis, MN; **John Good**, GIPSA, labor relations specialist, Washington, DC; and **Eugene Bass**, Director, EEO-Civil Rights Staff, Washington, DC.

**Mr. Blackburn** facilitated the 1- and 3- year goals for the three offices and each unit. He and **Ms. Gravagna** recommended we keep these issues in mind when discussing performance and individual goals:

- When we deal in generalities, we shall never succeed.
- When we deal in specifics, we shall rarely have a failure.
- When performance is measured, performance improves.
- When performance is measured and reported, the rate of performance accelerates.

The following were set as our top priorities:

- Recruiting (need to recruit 50 people in the next 100 days to bring P&S to 200).
- Respond to stakeholders
- Training
- A \$20 million budget to carry out the enforcement of the P&S Act
- Conclude pending issues
- Contract for resources/research

**Mr. Baker** advised that we remember the following:

- We are a team and must work to insure there are no barriers between the units.
- We need to keep resident agents informed; they do not get the same type support as office personnel.
- Resident agents need headquarters support and to know someone cares.

The meetings were entertaining, informative, and a welcome chance for all to ask questions and receive answers from our peers and industry professionals.

American  
Indian  
Heritage  
Month



November 1999

# New and Aspiring Leader Programs 2000

*Rosemary Mayne and Peggy Smith, Washington, DC*

## NEW LEADER PROGRAM

The New Leader Program (NLP) is part of the Leadership Development Academy of the USDA Graduate School. It is a 6-month program designed for full-time federal employees at the GS 7-11 levels who have just entered leadership positions or have a high potential for leadership. These positions may include first-line supervisors, team leaders, project managers, and administrative support members of self-directed work teams.

The program provides three separate weeks of residential classroom training reinforced by a 30-day developmental work experience and independent study within their agency. The required residential training is at sites outside the immediate Washington, D.C. area.

FGIS will sponsor five employees for the New Leader Program 2000. Two participants will be selected from New Orleans and one from each of the following groupings: (a) League City and Portland, (b) headquarters and Technical Services Division, and (c) domestic offices, Baltimore, and Toledo. P&S will sponsor one employee for this program.

**Nominating Procedures.** A competitive process will be used to select participants for the NLP. The three requirements for an employee's application package are: an SF-171, OF 612, or Federal Resume, signed and dated (including your home address); a written statement explaining your achievement goals for your participation in the NLP; and a writ-

ten statement from the first-line supervisor assessing the nominee's potential and motivation to complete all requirements and fully participate in all components of the NLP.

## ASPIRING LEADER PROGRAM

The Aspiring Leader Program (ALP) is part of the Leadership Development Academy of USDA's Graduate School. It is a 6-month program designed for full-time GS-5/6/7 federal employees who are self-starters with a career plan that includes leading and working with teams. The ALP prepares employees for positions as team leaders, supervisors, and managers by strengthening basic competencies in managerial skills, such as oral and written communication, problem solving, leadership, self-direction, etc.

The program provides 3 separate weeks of residential classroom training reinforced by a 30-day developmental work experience, readings, and independent study within their agency. The required residential training is at sites outside the immediate Washington, D.C. area. The program requires the participant to be absent from their position for approximately 45 days.

FGIS will select two employees for the Aspiring Leader Program 2000; P&S will sponsor one employee.

**Nominating Procedures.** A competitive process will be used to select participants for the ALP. The three requirements for an employee's application package are: an SF-171,

OF 612, or Federal Resume, signed and dated (including your home address); a written statement explaining your achievement goals for your participation in the ALP; and a written statement from the first-line supervisor assessing the nominee's potential and motivation to complete all requirements and fully participate in all components of the ALP.

## APPLICATIONS

Applications for both programs must be submitted **no later than**

**November 16, 1999.**

FGIS employees should submit application packages to **Mary McCoy**, USDA GIPSA, FGIS, Audiovisual, Regulatory & Training Staff, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Stop 3649, Washington, DC 20250-3649; P&S personnel should submit application packages to **Peggy Smith**, USDA, GIPSA, P&S, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Stop 3542, Washington, DC 20250-3642.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

Additional information on the programs is available on the Graduate School's Leadership Development Academy website at:

<http://www.grad.usda.gov/lda>

or from **Rosemary Mayne** at 202-720-6242 or **Peggy Smith** at 202-720-7045.

# Welcome to the Personnel Forum!

Below you will find answers to frequently asked personnel-related questions. We hope you find the information useful and invite you to e-mail general questions on personnel processes, programs & services to [hrfeedback@usda.gov](mailto:hrfeedback@usda.gov). You should continue to consult with your servicing personnelists on questions that are specific to your situation/circumstances.

Q. When can I enroll in the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP)? How do I sign up, and can I make changes in the future?

A. You can start contributing, or change the way you are already contributing to the TSP, during TSP Open Seasons, which are held twice every year. The next TSP open season is November 15 - January 31, 2000. You can enroll in TSP or change your contribution through the Employee Express system ([www.employeeexpress.gov](http://www.employeeexpress.gov)) or by submitting a TSP-1 form to your servicing personnel office (Minneapolis, Riverdale, or Washington, D.C.) by the last day of open season. During any open season:

- ♦ Eligible employees may begin contributing, change the amount of their TSP contributions, or reallocate their contributions among the three investment funds.
- ♦ FERS employees are strongly urged to participate in this major part of your retirement plan. (New FERS employees must wait until their second Open Season to enroll.) You may contribute up to 10% of basic pay. There is an Agency match dollar for dollar on the first 3%, and 50 cents on the dollar for the next 2% of basic pay that you contribute. Your Agency automatically contributes 1% of your basic pay amount, whether or not you contribute.
- ♦ CSRS employees are encouraged to supplement your retirement by contributing up to 5% of basic pay. There are no Agency matching contributions.
- ♦ You may choose among three investment funds: G Fund (government securities), C Fund (common stock index), and the F Fund (fixed income index). TSP Fund returns are calculated monthly. You can get the most recent returns at [www.tsp.gov](http://www.tsp.gov), or by calling the ThriftLine at (504) 255-8777.

For more information, refer to the TSP Update pamphlet or contact your servicing benefits specialist for copies of the Summary of the Thrift Savings Plan for Federal Employees, Guide to TSP Investments, and TSP Election Form.

# Travel Bits & Pieces

*Peggy Smith, Washington, DC*

**Laundry Expenses.** Effective September 13, 1999, employees traveling on official business in CONUS may claim reimbursement of laundry, dry cleaning, or pressing of clothing expenses as a separate miscellaneous expense when the following conditions are met:

- ♦ Traveler incurs seven or more consecutive nights lodging on official travel.
- ♦ Laundry expenses must be incurred at a TDY site.
- ♦ Laundry expenses may not be incurred on the first or last day of travel.
- ♦ Receipts must accompany the travel voucher to substantiate the claim. If coin-operated laundry facilities are used, travelers must certify on the travel voucher that items were laundered during official travel status and no receipt was obtainable.

Reimbursement is limited to actual expenses, not to exceed \$15 for each seven consecutive nights lodging.

Approving officials may grant exceptions to the above conditions when unusual or unforeseen circumstances occur. A written explanation of the circumstances must accompany the travel voucher and be approved by the traveler's supervisor.

Reimbursement for laundry expenses in CONUS that does not meet the above conditions, and laundry expenses incurred outside CONUS and in foreign areas are still covered as part of the M&IE incidentals portion of the locality per diem rate.



# GIPSA Idea Hotline Update

*Norma Phelps, Washington, DC*



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

*Suggestor*

*Suggestion*

LeRoy Baker, Moscow	Allow Baseline Adjustments to Bring Tecator Analyzers in Line with Standard Instrument
Scott Cooley, Olympia	Prepare a Standardized Y2K Checklist Form for January 1, 2000
John Giler, Washington, DC	Assign One Individual to Distribute Correspondence for Agency Response
	Do Away With Giving Trinkets Under the GIPSA Idea Hotline
Rose Fremin, New Orleans	Investigate the WearGuard "Perfect Fit" Program for Ordering Clothing

October's tee-shirt winner: **John Giler**, Washington, DC

## **GIPSA Hotline Ideas Accepted and Approved for Implementation During October 1999**

This list does not necessarily indicate that the idea was implemented as suggested or that it is currently in place (it could be in the development/implementation stage). To avoid the chance of misinterpretation, please call the Hotline if you have any concerns or questions regarding the following list of ideas.

-  Develop a Formalized Training Course for AQAS's
-  Assign Codes to Samplers and Technicians

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

# Civil Rights Corner

Wanda Jimenez, Washington, DC

The update of the new 29 CFR 1614, Federal Sector Equal Employment Opportunity complaint process will become effective on November 9, 1999. Under the revision, all agencies are required to establish or make available an Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) program for the EEO pre-complaint process (informal complaint process). At the initial counseling session, the complainant may choose between participation in the ADR program and the traditional counseling activities. The ADR process selected by the USDA is mediation.

So what is mediation? Mediation is a fair and efficient process to help the disputing parties to resolve employment disputes and reach an agreement. A neutral mediator will assist in reaching a voluntary, negotiated agreement.

How does mediation work? The decision to mediate is completely voluntary for the charging party and the employer. If both the charging party and employer agree, mediation will be scheduled by an experienced mediator. During mediation, both sides exchange information and express expectations for reaching resolution. The parties work to reach common ground and resolve their differences. An agreement reached in mediation is binding, like any settlement. If an agreement is not reached, the complainant can file a formal EEO complaint. Information disclosed during mediation will not be revealed to anyone, including the EEO counselor.

# Cu-Sum School and Infomercial

Ron Metz, Cedar Rapids

Lincoln Inspection Service hosted a combined Unit Train Cu-Sum School and Official Inspection Outreach Infomercial in Lincoln, NE, on September 14, 1999. The popular event, produced by FGIS' Cedar Rapids Field office for the trade, advertises official services while providing hands-on loading experience. Participants, operating in teams, compete for "thrift bonuses" (e.g, golf balls, mugs, etc.) while learning the Cu-Sum technique. Loading export trains using the Cu-Sum inspection plan is replacing the practice of loading railcars to be graded individually in the interior markets.

photo A3

*Agricultural commodity grader Bob Krouse, Kansas City Field Office, explains the eight commandments for component inspections to students at the Cu-Sum School.*

Agricultural commodity grader **Bob Krouse**, Kansas City, and **Dave Reeder**, assistant manager of Fremont Grain Inspection, helped with the event in Lincoln. Fourteen unit train loaders from Nebraska with five Nebraska licensed inspectors from three agencies attended.

This is the third in a continuing series of combined Cu-Sum Schools and Official Inspection Infomercials. A.V. Tischer & Son Agency in Fort Dodge, Iowa and Sioux City Inspection & Weighing Service in Sioux City, Iowa hosted the first two in August.

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Mediation is fair and neutral... parties have an equal say in the process and the parties, not the mediator, decide the settlement terms. There is no determination of guilt or innocence in the process. It is confidential. All parties sign an agreement of confidentiality at the beginning of the pro-

cess. Mediation promotes a better work environment, reduces costs and works for the employer and the employee.

*Continued, see Civil Rights  
on page 11.*

# Advanced Supervisory Training

*Rosemary Mayne, Washington, DC*

All FGIS field office shift supervisors, assistant managers, and supervisory administrative staff participated in advanced supervisory training. Beginning in June, 1-week sessions were held in New Orleans (2), Houston, Portland, and Toledo. An additional session will be held at the Technical Center in November.

**David Orr** was the kick-off speaker for each field session. He explained current Agency issues and concerns, and conducted an open discussion with the supervisors.

I introduced the supervisors to the use of the 360-degree assessment tool for self-development. The 360 is a methodology for collecting feedback from multiple sources about specific leadership behaviors. In FY 2000, the supervisors will use this multi-source assessment tool in preparing their Individual Development Plan (IDP). In addition, I discussed IDP's: the supervisor's role, the

employee's role, and available training resources.

**John Giler** presented a module on Workplace Violence. His presentation had three components: awareness, the supervisor's role, and the appropriate contacts for reporting workplace violence. Included in his training was a video that received high ratings from the supervisors.

A member of the Civil Rights Staff, either **Raymond Jones** or **Wanda Jimenez**, explained both the complaint process and the grievance process and the differences between them. The EEO/CR segment also included an explanation of the Civil Rights Compliance Reviews and various diversity initiatives, such as Special Emphasis Programs, intern programs, and recruiting efforts. A question and answer period followed.

**Marc A. DeSimone**, Ph.D., provided three days of Advanced Supervisory Skills training. He is affiliated

with the Graduate School, USDA, as well as Johns Hopkins University and the University of Maryland. The topics he explored were communication, motivation, coaching and mentoring, managing employee performance, and conflict management. **Dr. DeSimone's** interesting and effective presentation style was highly interactive, and the participants experienced learning relevant to their role as a supervisor.

The supervisors expressed high approval for the training's content and delivery. They were appreciative of the opportunity to refresh their knowledge and learn. Taking time to discuss current issues in FGIS, assess leadership skills in today's workplace, increase understanding of workplace violence issues and the EEO/CR process and initiatives, and explore self-development and training, benefits both the individual supervisors and the organization.

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## Civil Rights, *from page 10.*

The Civil Rights Staff is working to implement the ADR program. Further details will be available soon. At this time, the Agency has three qualified mediators: **Eugene Bass**, Director, Civil Rights Staff; **Raymond Jones**, formal complaint manager, and myself as the EEO Counselor.

If you have any questions or concerns, please call me at 202-720-9528.

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## October Issuances

*Charlie Turner, Washington, DC*

- ❑ FGIS PN 99-17, Glucosinolate Screen Made Optional, dated 9/30/99.
- ❑ FGIS PN 99-19 - Adjustment Factors for Oleic Type Sunflower Seed, dated 10/18/99.
- ❑ FGIS PN 99-20 - Certification of TCK Smut for Shipments to India, dated 10/13/99.
- ❑ Page Change to The Grain Inspection Handbook, Book III, Chapter 2, Shiplot Inspection, dated 9/15/99.

**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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