



GIPSA News

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

December 2006

From the Administrator

Jim Link

The holidays are once again right around the corner, and it's hard to believe I already have a full year under my belt. With this experience, I'm now better able to assess both the needs and accomplishments of the organization. I've been extremely impressed with the caliber of GIPSA employees, and I want to thank you each of you for your hard work these past 12 months. As an organization, we've made some substantial progress this year, and it only makes me more excited for the year to come. It has been quite a busy year!

In October 2006, GIPSA employees received Secretary's Honor Awards. Vernet Knight was recognized for his work to open Iraqi markets to U.S. grain, and the GIPSA Hurricane Response team was recognized for their heroic efforts to facilitate trade immediately following Hurricane Katrina. The team, along with several headquarters folks, also received the Secretary's Heroism and Emergency Response award for their work following the Hurricane. Congratulations again to our recipients.

After receiving the results from



Administrator Jim Link

the Organizational Assessment Survey earlier this year, we identified key organizational strengths and weaknesses. Two Action Teams have completed their work and presented their findings to the management team. We have begun work on implementing many of their recommendations.

The Packers and Stockyards Program has undertaken a Business Process Re-engineering project in the last few months. So far, the Program

has identified how each business process is carried out. The next step will be to determine best practices and make them our Agency standards. I thank all involved employees for their time and candidness with the Paradigm contractors to make this project a success.

The Federal Grain Inspection Service became very busy in August (and continues to be) with the announcement by the Department that LL601 Rice was found in long grain rice in commercial markets. I know that many employees from local offices, the Technical Services Division, and Headquarters worked many long hours and weekends to help maintain open markets for U.S. rice. Thanks to each of you for a professional and thorough job. Your quality work has been recognized by both the Department and the rice industry.

Continued, see Administrator
on page 3.

Names in the News

RETIREMENTS

Robert (Bob) Fitzgerald, Budget and Planning Staff, Office of the Administrator, celebrated 35 years of military and civil service during his retirement party held on November 16. **Bob** worked for the USDA for 26 years, 14 of which were with GIPSA (and its predecessor agency Federal Grain Inspection Service). We wish **Bob** all the best in his retirement.



Bob Fitzgerald, center, is joined at his farewell reception by Pat Donohue-Galvin and deputy administrator Dave Shipman.

AWARDS

Paul Hadyka, Field Management Division, Washington, DC, received a spot award in recognition of his significant effort in updating and publishing the NIRT Handbook and the Inspecting Grain—Practical Procedures for Grain Handlers guide and for developing the Cross-Utilization of Equipment directive which contributed to the increased efficiency and effectiveness of the Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration.

Jason Vanfossan, physical scientist, Technical Services Division, received a Spot Award in recognition for making a high-quality contribution involving an important assignment and for displaying special initiative and skill in completing the assignment.

In This Issue

Names in the News	2	Advisory Committee to Meet ..	5
Issuances	3	Training Notes	5
Crowley Hosts		MRO Auction Outreach	6
Liberty Link Discussion	4	Leadership Development	7
Travel Bits & Pieces	4	League City	8
Export Contracting Update	5	For Your Health	9

35-YEAR SERVICE AWARDS

Martin Davis, New Orleans, LA
 Robert Fitzgerald, Washington, DC
 Albert Nelson, New Orleans, LA
 Vincent Volpe, New Orleans, LA

30-YEAR SERVICE AWARDS

Larry Freese, Kansas City, MO
 John McCann, New Orleans, LA
 William Strickland, Jonesboro, AR

25 -YEAR SERVICE AWARD

Lee Cooper, League City, TX

20-YEAR SERVICE AWARDS

Terrell Bailey, New Orleans, LA
 Eddie Clark, Kansas City, MO
 Luccile Clark, Kansas City, MO
 Janine Goodson, Kansas City, MO
 Troy Kramer, New Orleans, LA
 Barbara McKee, Atlanta, GA
 Mark Reimer, New Orleans, LA
 Arthur Williams, New Orleans, LA

10-YEAR SERVICE AWARDS

Mary Knutson, Grand Forks, ND
 Jason Vanfossan, Kansas City, MO

Administrator, from page 1.

Last spring, GIPSA contracted with the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) to assess the Agency's organizational structure and functions, and offer recommendations to improve the efficiency of support services and lower our operating costs. As a result, PSP was reorganized at headquarters to align the structure with current program operations. The Executive Resources Staff was renamed the "Budget and Planning Staff" and will carry out financial management, budget development and execution, and strategic planning and performance measurement. And, finally, a Management Support Staff (MSS), comprised of those who provide "shared services" agencywide, was established under the Office of the Administrator.

MSS houses training, labor relations, outsourcing, human capital management, administrative support, safety and health, issuance and regulatory management, Continuity of Operations Planning, and FOIA. The new MSS Director will be named shortly.

The New Year will bring with it a new Congress. This will provide some challenges to the Agency as we may become involved with more hearings and briefings. However, I believe that because of the changes made this past year, we will be better prepared to address any Congressional concerns.

In closing, I thank you again for your hard work over the past 12 months to improve our Agency. Special thanks to Amanda Taylor, Dave Shipman, and Alan Christian for all of their help and professional guidance. The past year has been educational, challenging, and rewarding to me. Their dedication and help has been essential in the progress we are making.

I look forward to 2007 and the accomplishments we will continue to make. Make sure to take time to enjoy your friends and family over the coming weeks. Happy Holidays!



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

Issuances

Terri Henry, Washington, D.C.

- FGIS Policy Memorandum Reference No. 211, "CuSum "Average" Grade Interpretation," dated November 1, 2006.
- MRP 4500.1, "Recruitment and Retention Incentives," dated November 1, 2006.
- FGIS Program Directive 9180.59, "Composite Sample Analysis for Combined Land Carrier Inspections," dated November 20, 2006.
- FGIS Program Directive 9180.68, "Cross Utilization of Equipment," dated November 27, 2006.
- FGIS Program Notice 07-01, "National Corn Sample Collection Plan for the Pesticide Residue Program," dated November 6, 2006.
- FGIS Program Notice 07-02, "Pesticide Residue Letterhead Statement for Export Wheat Cargoes," dated November 27, 2006.
- Delete Policy Bulletin #210, incorporated into FGIS Program Directive 9180.59, "Composite Sample Analysis for Combined Land Carrier Inspections," dated November 20, 2006.
- Delete FGIS Program Notice 06-08 dated 7-10-06, superseded by FGIS Program Notice 07-02.

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.

Crowley Hosts Liberty Link Discussion

Regina Landry, Crowley

The Crowley Suboffice hosted a luncheon November 2, 2006, that was attended by Administrator James Link, Deputy Administrator David Shipman, New Orleans Field Office Manager Kerry Petit, and 20 people from the local rice industry. Mr. Link, Mr. Shipman, and Mr. Petit toured a local rice mill and then enjoyed a chicken gumbo with the other attendees. After lunch, Mr. Shipman led a discussion about genetically modified rice. The attendees found the discussion very informative and appreciated Mr. Link and Mr. Shipman taking the time to meet with them.

While in Crowley, Mr. Link and Mr. Shipman presented Officer in Charge **Wayne Melvin**, **Pamela Bourque**, and **Regina Landry** with the USDA Group Honor Award for Excellence and the USDA Employee Recognition and Remembrance Award.

William Spitzer, State Plant Health Director, APHIS, presented **Lindell Smith**, **Wayne** and **Regina** with letters of thanks, Certificates of Appreciation, and engraved Buck knives for helping APHIS obtain consistent and unified samples of foundation seed rice tested for genetic modification.



Crowley's Award Recipients, from left to right, Lindell Smith, Regina Landry, Pamela Bourque, and Wayne Melvin.

Travel Bits & Pieces

Peggy Smith, Washington, DC

Passport Information. In January 2007, all persons, including U.S. citizens, traveling by **air** between the United States and Canada, Mexico, Central and South America, the Caribbean, and Bermuda will be required to present a valid passport.

As early as January 1, 2008, all persons, including U.S. citizens, traveling between the United States and Canada, Mexico, Central and South America, the Caribbean, and Bermuda by **land or sea** (including ferries), may be required to present a valid passport or other documents as determined by the Department of Homeland Security. While recent legislative changes permit a later dead-

line, the Departments of State and Homeland Security are working to meet all requirements as soon as possible.

Transit Subsidy. Effective January 1, 2007, the Internal Revenue Service will increase the monthly limit on transit subsidy benefits payable to eligible employees from \$105 to \$110 and the monthly limit on qualified pre-tax parking expenses from \$205 to \$215. As a reminder, to qualify for pre-tax parking you must pay to park in a metro parking lot, commercial lot, privately owned parking lot, parking garage, parking meter, or employer provided parking **AND** take mass transportation, or ride in a

vanpool, or in a carpool of two or more persons from the parking location to work. You must complete an AD-1185 to apply for pre-tax parking benefits.

For those who qualify for the transit subsidy benefits, have submitted their AD-1147 for recertification, and qualify for the increased benefits, you do not need to do anything else to receive the increase.

For those who still need to recertify, please submit your application to my office no later than November 28, 2006.

An AD-1147, it is available at <http://www.usda.gov/da/shmd/wlforms.htm>.

Contracting Update

Henry "C" Greenwood, Washington, DC

The following is an update on the pilot program for contracting inspection and weighing services:

CORPUS CHRISTI (NON-EXPORT). On October 26, 2006, GIPSA recommended to APHIS that they award Intercontinental Grain Inspection Services, Inc. the contract to provide all non-export inspection and weighing services in the areas serviced by the Corpus Christi, Texas, Suboffice. These areas include, but are not limited to, Corpus Christi, Brownsville, and Victoria Texas. APHIS awarded the contract on October 31, 2006, and it became effective immediately.

TOLEDO (Toledo, Ohio, Huron Ohio, and Albany, New York). On November 1, 2006, GIPSA recommended that APHIS award three companies a contract to provide inspection and weighing services in Toledo and Huron, Ohio, and Albany, New York. GIPSA will place these three companies on the Official Service Providers' List. The companies include Intercontinental Grain Inspections, Inc.; Michigan Grain Inspection Services, Inc.; and International Cargo Services, Inc. Under this contract, all three companies must compete to provide service by negotiating a service contract with export elevators. All three companies are responsible for providing service, when requested, at all locations. GIPSA will provide direct oversight of the companies' performance. This multi-award contract becomes effective January 1, 2007.

CHICAGO (Chicago, Illinois, and Portage, Indiana). Also, on November 1, 2006, GIPSA recommended that APHIS award a contract to provide inspection and weighing services in Chicago, Illinois, and Portage, Indiana, to Intercontinental Grain Inspections, Inc., the only respondent to the solicitation. This company is responsible for providing service, when requested, at all locations. GIPSA will provide direct oversight of the company's performance. This contract becomes effective January 1, 2007.

CORPUS CHRISTI (LABOR ASSIST). On November 20, 2006, GIPSA decided to forego the second contract in the Corpus Christi area because of unacceptable proposals by the only respondent to the solicitation. This contract would have required the contractor to provide to GIPSA, on request, with weighers, samplers, and technicians for an hourly fee to assist the Corpus Christi suboffice with providing export inspection and weighing services.

To date, we have in place five contracts involving these companies: 1) California Agri Inspection Company, Ltd. (California Contract); 2) Champaign-Danville Grain Inspection Departments, Inc. and 3) Eastern Iowa Grain Inspection and Weighing Service (Milwaukee Contract); 4) Intercontinental Grain Inspections, Inc. (Corpus Christi Contract); Intercontinental Grain Inspections, Inc., Michigan Grain Inspection Services, Inc., and International Cargo Services, Inc. (Toledo Contract); and Intercontinental Grain Inspections, Inc. (Chicago Contract). Intercontinental Grain Inspections, Inc., is involved in three contracts (Toledo, Chicago, and Corpus Christi).

Advisory Committee to Meet

The Grain Inspection Advisory Committee will meet December 12-13, 2006, in Washington, DC. The meeting will be held at the Marriott at Metro Center, 775 12th Street NW, Washington, DC 20005.

The purpose of the Advisory Committee is to provide advice to the Administrator of the Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration with respect to the implementation of the U.S. Grain Standards Act (7 U.S.C. 71 et seq.). Relevant information about the Advisory Committee is available on the GIPSA Web site. Go to <http://www.gipsa.usda.gov> and under the section "I Want To", click on "Learn about the Advisory Committee."

The agenda will include an update on the Agency's finances, update on Agency succession planning, use of third-party contracting, central monitoring, international activities, impact of ethanol industry on Agency operations, and Liberty Link rice.

For further information, contact Terri Henry at (202) 205-8281.

Training Notes

- ★ Dec 8: Applications for SES Candidate Development Program closes.
- ★ Dec 17: No FEAR Act training to be completed.
- ★ Dec. 31: Ethics (all 3 modules) to be completed.

P&SP Midwestern Regional Office Auction Market Outreach Program

Stuart Frank, Des Moines

P&SP's Midwestern Regional Office (MRO), in Des Moines, Iowa, is responsible for enforcing the P&S Act and regulations in a 12-state region (North and South Dakota, Nebraska, Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, and Kentucky). Auditors, marketing specialists, economists, and legal specialists work out of the Des Moines office. The MRO also has 10 resident agent positions (7 on staff and 3 unfilled positions) spread across its region. Within the MRO's geographic area are the following types and number of regulated entities:

1,664 livestock dealers	109 livestock packers
1,024 livestock packer buyers	36 poultry operations
542 livestock auction markets	2 brand inspection agencies

Investigators routinely conduct compliance reviews and investigations of livestock auction markets. Investigators examine the market's custodial account, livestock scales, and application of the commission rates and charges. The custodial account is a separate bank account maintained by the market and designated as "Custodial Account for Shippers' Proceeds." The market must deposit all funds from livestock sold on a commission (SOC) basis into the custodial account. Likewise, all checks issued to consigners of sold livestock must be from the market's custodial account.

To conduct auction market reviews, investigators need access to the market's key personnel and records. Therefore, investigators typically conduct their reviews on non-sale days when key personnel are available. While market reviews are vitally important to maintaining financial integrity in the livestock marketing system, most often, investigators only meet with auction market personnel, not livestock producers who use the market.

As part of P&SP's Business Plan and a means of fulfilling P&SP's mission "To protect and promote fair trade practices and competitive markets for livestock, meat, and poultry," GIPSA Administrator James Link requested that P&SP initiate a livestock auction market outreach program. The emphasis of the market outreach program is for P&SP investigators to attend and be introduced during sale days at auction markets throughout the year. The program's two principal objectives are to increase P&SP's personal interactions with livestock producers and enhance investigators' knowledge of the industry.

When an investigator attends sales and their presence is announced by the market, this affords livestock producers, buyers, and sellers, who may not be aware of P&SP or have not had an opportunity to meet, a greater opportunity to personally interact with P&SP. Meeting personally with livestock producers (a significant segment of the livestock industry the Act was intended to protect) not only increases P&SP's visibility, but also its credibility.

While all of the MRO's investigators participate in the program, resident agents conduct the vast majority of the outreach activity. The market outreach program provides the investigator an opportunity to put a "name to a face" regarding the many livestock dealers and consigners present at auction sales. They are also able to interact with livestock industry participants "outside" of a formal investigation, which can sometimes be confrontational, providing a more informal, open exchange. Attending and observing auction market sales increases the investigator's industry knowledge, especially newer investigators. Finally, the market outreach program will also be a source of market and industry intelligence for P&SP.

As of the beginning of December, the MRO has conducted sixteen auction market outreach activities. The types of livestock sold at these sales included feeder cattle, feeder pigs, fed cattle, dairy cows, and sheep. Overall, the benefits to the livestock industry and P&SP are many.

Leadership Development

Patricia Ogunyale, Washington, DC

The New Leader Program (NLP) is an intensive 6-month developmental program designed to develop future public service leaders through providing assessment, experiential learning, and individual activities and opportunities. I joined the NLP program in March and graduated in September. The NLP program has been a great asset for me because it has allowed me to grow personally and professionally.

I benefited from the different assessments (360) that were geared towards personal and peer feedback to help me to understand my leadership potential. This information helped me to develop my Personal Action Development Plan (PDAP) which I used as a map to guide me through the 6 months of training. I focused my assignments on my developmental needs so that I would be able to grow in my current and future positions. The 3 weeks of residential training included training in: Team Building I and II, Conflict Management, Decision-making and Problem-solving, Leadership in the 21st Century, and Diversity in the Workplace.

The NLP program required that we do a final team project to cover what we had learned as a team and analyze how we came together to form our team through the stages of team formation. The team project focused on our developmental needs as a team. The team received positive feedback at the debriefing.

A major accomplishment for me in the NLP program is that I exceeded the requirement for management book reviews. One of the requirements was to read two management book reviews: I read six and completed write ups on five.

The NLP program also helped me focus on my personal and professional vision and align it with the GIPSA mission. I would recommend the NLP program or any leadership development program to those who aspire to grow personally and professionally.

My thanks to GIPSA senior management for the opportunity and their time and support; thanks also to those who served as my mentors while I was in the program. It was a challenging, but extremely beneficial six months. **Vernett Knight** of New Orleans also graduated in my NLP class.

GIPSA Verifies Performance of Test Kit to Detect Cry3Bb in Corn

GIPSA evaluated the EnviroLogix, Inc. QuickStix Kit for YieldGard® Rootworm Corn Bulk Grain Test, Product #AS 015 BG, and verified this qualitative lateral flow strip kit can detect the presence of one kernel of Cry3Bb corn in 200 kernels in 5 minutes.

The Cry3Bb proteins are found in genetically engineered corn designed to control corn rootworms.

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

League City Field Office

Lynn Cain, League City

On November 6, 2006, Administrator Jim Link and FGIS Deputy Administrator Dave Shipman came to the League City Field Office. They visited with staff and presented several awards to our personnel.

They presented awards to League City's **GIPSA Hurricane Response Team** members in appreciation for their hard work and dedication. Those recognized were:

Charles Brown;
Dannye Cameron;

Robert Campbell;
Lee Cooper;
Robert Daniel;
Deborah Edwards;
Sabri Gerguis;
Adel Ibrahim;
Raymond Lavine;
Ana Trujillo; and
J.C. Wooley.

Cheryl A. Taylor was recognized for winning the OAS Slogan Contest, and was taken out to dinner by **Mr. Link** and **Mr. Shipman**.

In addition, Spot Awards were given to the following individuals for jobs well done:

Clarence Abrom;
Lee Cooper;
Donald Ellis;
Emad Ibrahim;
Amy Newman;
Clemmie Smith;
Alan Wadyko;
Pham Tieu;
Ana Trujillo; and
James Woodman.



League City award recipients are joined by Administrator Jim Link and FGIS Deputy Administrator Dave Shipman. Back row: Administrator Link, J.C. Wooley, Jim Woodman, Cheryl Taylor, Ana Trujillo, Clarence Abrom, Tiew Pham, Amy Newman, Raymond Lavine, Charles Brown, and Dave Shipman. Front Row: Emad Ibrahim, Adel Ibrahim, and field office manager Dannye Cameron

For Your Health

Mavis Rogers, Washington, DC

Winter Holiday Safety Tips. This holiday season, don't let the spirit of giving lull you into giving burglars, muggers, and pickpockets a better chance to do their dirty work. Crooks love the holidays as much as everyone else, especially because it is an opportune time for crime.

Homes jam-packed with glittering gifts. Stores, malls, and downtown streets teeming with unsuspecting shoppers. People rushing around, stressed out and careless, looking for last minute gifts, and trying to get everything done. It is enough to make a crook giddy with holiday joy.

Here are some tips on how to celebrate safely this holiday season:

If You Are Traveling

- Get an automatic timer for your lights.
- Ask a neighbor to watch your home, shovel snow, and park in the driveway from time to time.
- Don't forget to have mail and newspaper delivery stopped. If it piles up, it is a sure sign you are gone.

If You Are Out for the Evening

- Turn on the lights and a radio or TV so it looks like someone is home.
- Be extra cautious about locking doors and windows when you leave, even if it is just for a few minutes
- Don't display gifts where they can be seen from outside.

If You Are Shopping

- Stay alert and be aware of what is going on around you.
- Park in a well-lighted space, and be sure to lock the car, close the windows, and hide shopping bags and gifts in the trunk.
- Avoid carrying large amounts of cash; pay with a check or credit card whenever possible.
- Deter pickpockets and purse-snatchers. Don't overburden yourselves with packages. Be extra careful with purses and wallets. Carry a purse close to your body, not dangling by the straps. Put a wallet in an inside coat or front pants pocket.
- Shopping with kids? Teach them to go to a store clerk or security guard if you get separated.

Protect Your Vehicle. Packages left out in the open in the car are a likely target for thieves. Remember the old cliché "Out of sight, out of mind." Always lock your vehicle and store all items out of sight. Anything left in plain view — from your holiday gifts to spare change, sunglasses, CDs, cell phones or briefcases—may tempt a thief.

Help prevent your vehicle from being stolen by always locking your car and using anti-theft devices. And although it is cold, never leave your vehicle running while you run inside your home or a store even if it is only for a minute or two.

Celebrate Responsibly. The holiday season is a time of celebration and revelry. Drinking and driving is a danger to anyone on the road. Remember the risk isn't worth it. If you choose to drink alcohol at a party, don't drive. Take a cab, use public transportation or a designated driver. Have fun but remember to celebrate responsibly.

Have Fun! Last but not least, don't let holiday stress get the best of your holiday spirit. Make time to get together with family, friends, and neighbors. And, think about reaching out in the spirit of the season and helping someone who is less fortunate or lonely. Do your part to make the holidays a safe and happy time for everybody except criminals.

Courtesy: Metropolitan Police Department

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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by January 25, 2007!

OFFICE OF THE ADMINISTRATOR
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