



GIPSA News

The newsletter of the employees of the Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration

December 2009

Season's Greetings

J. Dudley Butler, Washington, DC



Administrator J. Dudley Butler

Another year is drawing to a close, and what a year it has been. A year of change, challenge, and opportunity.

This year, we saw the new Administration come in with unprecedented support for the work that GIPSA does. This support along with the dedication and hard work of GIPSA employees has enabled it to achieve many accomplishments. With that support, we are moving forward with changes that will vastly improve our efforts to oversee those we regulate, safeguard those we protect, and serve those who rely on us.

I have been fortunate to meet many of you during my travels since arriving at GIPSA. If I've missed you, I'll be coming out your way next year! I have been exceptionally impressed by the commitment and energy of the GIPSA staff members. In all of our offices and in the field, I find in each of you a commendable and impressive dedication to our mission and our work. I thank each of you for your contributions to our accomplishments to date, and for your commitment to continuous improvement into the future.

Someone recently asked me my plan for GIPSA's future. I responded that "through rain, snow or dead of night, we will bring fairness and integrity to the American agricultural marketplace." That's my plan, and I am sticking to it.

For the upcoming weeks, please join with me in enjoying time with colleagues, friends, and family, and giving thanks for our many blessings. I wish you and yours a joyful holiday season and a happy new year.

Names in the News

PERSONNEL

Jason Corey is the new resident agent in Corning, New York. **Jason** has a Bachelor's Degree in Animal Science from the University of Arkansas. He comes to GIPSA from the Agricultural Marketing Service, where he worked as an agricultural commodity grader for the past 3½ years.

Rob Praytor is the WRO's new market inspector in Waco, Texas.

LaDondra Taylor, MRO, welcomed son **Asa** on October 27. He weighed in at 7 pounds 15 ounces, and was 20 inches long.

RETIREMENTS

Virginia Roseberry is retiring on January 2, 2010, after more than 32 years with FGIS/GIPSA. She was born and raised in Arizona, graduating from Northern Arizona University in 1976, with a double major in botany and plant science. She worked briefly for the Arizona Department of Agriculture and Horticulture as a plant quarantine officer. **Virginia** started with FGIS in July 1977 in Litcher, Louisiana, and met her future husband, **Eddie Roseberry**, the first day on the job. **Virginia** worked 15 years as an agricultural commodity

grader before accepting a promotion to a compliance officer in headquarters in October 1992. The position has been a good fit – she enjoys traveling to official agencies and field offices, and has contributed to many projects that advanced GIPSA's mission. Although **Virginia** will miss all her colleagues and friends in the USDA and the official inspection system, she is excited about moving to a new phase of her life, devoting more time to travel, boating, reading, and volunteer work.

AWARDS

Donald Akers, Texas, received an award for contributing to the increased effectiveness and efficiency of the San Antonio Satellite Office and FGIS.

Morgan Arvaneh, Washington, DC, received a spot award for work in developing procedures to access PSAS data using ad hoc queries in the Hyperion web client software.

William Ashley, Washington, DC, received an award for contributing to the effectiveness and efficiency of the Compliance Division and FGIS.

Diane Blunt, Washington, DC, received an award for contributing to achievement of the goals of the Compliance Division and FGIS.

Earl Bradford, New Orleans, received a spot award for providing superior service to our customers.

Tammy Chang, Washington, DC, received an extra effort award for providing budget support in the absence of a budget director.

Harold Crook, Cedar Rapids, received an award for contributing to the increased effectiveness and efficiency of the Cedar Rapids Satellite Office and FGIS.

Tina Dillard, Washington, DC, received a spot award for her work in developing the Employee Library web pages on the *inGIPSA* site and in particular the maps that display each Resident Agent's district.

Scott Flanary, Washington, DC, received a spot award for assisting with the development of costs and benefits associated with the various provisions of the Farm Bill regulations.

Rita Hansberry, Washington, DC, received a spot award for revising the economic and statistical analysis for the hog market price monitoring model and in updating the poultry annual report data and its analysis.

Candace Hildreth, Washington, DC, received an award for contributing to the increased effectiveness and efficiency of the Compliance Division's Regulatory Program.

Bob Krouse, Kansas City, received an award for contributions to the Agency, including leadership in the development and implementation of GIPSA's Quality Management Program.

*Continued, see Names
on page 3.*

Names, from page 2.

Tammi Lindsey, Washington, DC, received an extra effort award for providing budget support in the absence of a budget director.

Rosemary Mayne, Washington, DC, received an award for adding value to the work products produced by Management and Budget Services, which benefitted the Agency at large.

Gary McBryde, Washington, DC, received an extra effort award for his work on the Farm Bill regulations.

Barbara McDougal, Washington, DC, received a spot award for assistance to the BEAD staff in training office staff in the correct use of the new GovTrip and WebTA software programs.

Stephen Michel, New Orleans, received a spot award for his creative efforts and outstanding contributions to the mission of the New Orleans Field Office.

Robinson Obiekwe, ERO, received an extra effort award for outstanding service in providing training to two new members of the financial unit.

Brett Offutt, Washington, DC, received an extra effort award for his work on the Farm Bill regulations.

Ruth Ortiz, Washington, DC, received an extra effort award for providing budget support in the absence of a budget director.

Glenn Plumley, MRO, received a spot award for outstanding performance as a resident agent related to conducting non-routine investigations.

Ted Respet, Duluth, received an award for contributing to the increased effectiveness and efficiency of the Compliance Division's Regulatory Program and FGIS.

Virginia Roseberry, Washington, DC, received an award for managing the designations database, for evaluating a limited liability corporation, and her many contributions to FGIS.

Terry Ryno, MRO, received a spot award for outstanding performance as a resident agent related to training other MRO resident agents.

Roger Schneider, Washington, DC, received an extra effort award for effort made in developing data queries that linked legacy R&I log data files to the new PSAS data for reporting purposes.

Dana Stewart, Washington, DC, received an extra effort award for serving as acting chief of staff for GIPSA.

Caroline Thorpe, Washington, DC, received an award for the training and development of GIPSA's employees and value added to the GIPSA training program.

Gregory Tomas, Washington, DC, received an award for contributing to increased effectiveness and efficiency of the Kansas City Satellite Office and FGIS.

Ceneda Trufant, New Orleans, received a spot award for her exceptional work ethic contributing greatly to the mission of the Agency.

Amanda Tucker, Washington, DC, received an extra effort award for support of the acting administrator.

Luis Valdes, Washington, DC, received an award for contributing to the increased effectiveness and efficiency of the Compliance Division's Regulatory Program and FGIS.

Henry Wang, Washington, DC, received an extra effort award for conducting the cost function and risk analysis of industry participants, contribution to the hog market price monitoring model development and analysis, and in development of statistical approaches to sample design.

Regina Ware, Washington, DC, received an extra effort award for her leadership as the PSAS System Administrator while working with the Change Control Work Group, for her work with the PSAS developers, and for providing PSAS training P&SP staff regionally and in headquarters.

Mark Wooden, Kansas City, received an award for contributing to the increased effectiveness and efficiency of the Kansas City Satellite Office and FGIS.

Mohsen Younes, Michigan, received an award for contributing to the increased effectiveness and efficiency of the Compliance Division's Regulatory Program and FGIS.

PSP 2010 Business Plan

Alan Christian, Washington, DC

P&SP recently released and posted on inGIPSA our 2010 P&SP Strategic Business Plan. The plan continues to focus on increasing voluntary compliance with the Packers and Stockyards Act and regulations. The Business Plan also includes a significant number of regulatory initiatives in accordance with the Administration's focus on ensuring our regulations are up to date and provide the protections they were intended to when originally promulgated.

The regulatory initiatives we are planning include following through on the current Farm Bill regulations as well as implementing changes that resulted from the management team's cover-to-cover review of our regulations booklet at our recent meeting. Also included are the recommended changes that have come through our Change Control Working Group. I encourage all P&SP employees to look over the list of proposals and send any comments you may have regarding any of the initiatives to Brett Offutt in PLD.

The 2010 plan also includes completion of the remaining modules in PSAS for scale tests and tariffs, and developing the reporting tools that we need to easily retrieve data from the system. To that end, we are holding a managers' meeting in January to discuss performance management and identify the information we need from PSAS to better track organizational performance at all levels.

We also plan to hold two additional investigator training sessions for new and seasoned agents in February and May 2010 with the Association of Certified Fraud Examiners. The decision to offer these valuable courses again in 2010 was based on the excellent feedback we received from the participants at the courses held last year.

Please take a look at the revised plan and let me know if you have any feedback for the management team. I look forward to your support as we continue our efforts to improve the delivery of our regulatory program.

Issuances

Terri Henry, Washington, DC

- ◇ GIPSA Directive 1470-2 "Privacy Act Program," dated October 28, 2009
- ◇ FGIS Program Notice 10-05, Ridascreen RIDA® Quick Aflatoxin Test Method, dated October 30, 2009
- ◇ FGIS Program Notice 10-04, Charm Sciences ROSA® FAST Test Method, dated October 30, 2009
- ◇ FGIS Directive 9180.56, "Testing Corn Gluten Feed for Starch, Fat, and Protein," dated November 23, 2009

inGIPSA

Dana Stewart and Doug Lacefield, Washington, DC



The new inGIPSA web site is up and running. Thanks to all who provided input about what the new site should look like and the content it should contain.

inGIPSA is designed to house all of the information GIPSA employees need to be connected, informed, and current on any and all issues pertaining to our careers.

In an ongoing effort to keep the GIPSA network safe, access to inGIPSA was recently restricted to allow only those who are connected to the GIPSA network, in the office or via VPN, to see the site. The inGIPSA web site is no longer accessible via the Internet. Use the following URL to navigate to the newly configured inGIPSA Intranet web site: <http://ingipsa/>

As always, we welcome your feedback and ideas for how we can make the new site better meet your needs. Please send your comments and suggestions to gipsa-webmaster@usda.gov.



Help GIPSA Adopt a Family

Jeana Harbison, Washington, DC

In his inaugural speech, President John F. Kennedy called upon the American people not only to ask what their country can do for them but also how people can assist in their own society. Our society

would certainly be a better place if each individual volunteered to do something of a positive nature for his neighbor or his fellow citizens. Today, as our nation continues to face an economic crisis, volunteers are needed more than ever. Many nonprofit organizations are facing both increased demand for services and diminished resources. In response, many are turning more to volunteers who can provide vital support to help them continue to meet growing needs. With his United We Serve project, President Obama is calling on all Americans to participate in our nation's recovery and renewal by serving in our communities. There are many ways to get involved. America's new foundation will be built one community at a time –and it starts with us.

The Washington, DC, Child and Family Service Agency's Adopt-A-Family program matches impoverished families with individual or group sponsors who can provide for the family's tangible needs such as toys, clothing, and household items during this holiday season. Without an adoption, these families would be looking forward to a very grim holiday. This year the GIPSA family is making a difference in another family's life by adopting a family in need.

We ask you to open your hearts to helping this family. A Giving Tree is in the Administrator's office for headquarters personnel. For those in the field who would like to participate, I'll be sending out an email with information on the ages of the kids and some gift suggestions. Monetary donations are welcome and will be used to buy gifts or pay heating and utility bills for our adopted family.

Headquarters personnel should drop gift donations in the Administrator's office, and give monetary donations to me in Room 2410-S. Field personnel can send gift and monetary donations to me: Jeana Harbison, USDA/GIPSA, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, STOP 3646, Washington, DC 20250-3646. **DONATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED BY DECEMBER 22, 2009.** If you have any questions about the program or how to participate, please call me at 202-690-3192.

Everyone and everything counts. Although GIPSA is one of the smaller agencies within USDA, I know that WE can make a BIG difference in someone else's life. I challenge you all to meet the call of our President and the many before him and GIVE this holiday season.

Happy Holidays!

EEOAC Meets

Linda Alston, Washington, DC

The Equal Employment Opportunity Advisory Committee (EEOAC) and the Special Emphasis Program Managers (SEPMs) met in October to address EEOAC and SEPM goals, EEO-related issues, employee concerns, and how to improve the overall civil rights climate in GIPSA. The EEOAC and SEPMs are GIPSA employees of various grades, occupations, and office locations.

It was great for us to meet and share ideas, experiences, issues, and concerns. Before the meeting, the EEOAC, SEPMs and the Civil Rights Staff met with **Administrator Butler, Mr. Christian, and Mr. Jones** to introduce ourselves and give them a summary of our week's agenda, which included speakers from Human Resources, the Office of the Inspector General, and the Office of Workplace Diversity and Inclusion. Special thanks to **Rosemary Mayne and Ruth Ortiz** for speaking with us.

The meeting was very successful. All contributed ideas, and volunteered their time, experience, knowledge, talent, and humor. We presented recommendations to **Mr. Butler, Mr. Christian and Mr. Jones** at the end of the meeting. We look forward to implementing our recommendations along with the suggestions from the administrator and deputies.

All members agreed that it was a great experience, opportunity, and accomplishment, and we are all looking forward to our next face-to-face meeting next year.

FGIS Matters...!

Randall Jones, Washington, DC

Greetings from Washington, DC. I have some exciting updates this month about our Quality Roundtable, the Grain Inspection Advisory Committee, and upcoming travel to share.

As you may have read, FGIS has assembled a team of senior personnel who have been asked to address some very important topics: the most efficient allocation of resources; adequate safeguarding of the entire system's integrity; and collaboration with stakeholders to ensure that we remain accurate and consistent each and every day. This group, the Quality Roundtable, had their initial meeting just a few weeks ago on November 19 and 20. Over the next few weeks, the group will use their face-to-face meeting to create a roadmap for FGIS to consistently deliver quality results and remain a global leader in grain inspection and weighing.

The group's findings and recommendations will be submitted to the Executive Management Team in December. And while I can't predict what the specific recommendations will be, I am confident that our next steps will involve a wide circle of FGIS personnel. Ensuring the integrity of our grain inspection service will not fall upon the shoulders of any one person, one division, or one office. It will take a

concerted effort on the part of graders, management analysts, technicians, chemists, and everyone in between. Though it's a big mission, I know we're up to the task to make sure our system remains second to none.

Also in November, the Grain Inspection Advisory Committee (GIAC) met in Kansas City. As you may know, the GIAC is comprised of 15 members appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture who represent all segments of the grain industry. They include grain producers, processors, merchandisers, handlers, exporters, consumers, grain inspection agencies, and scientists. The Committee meets twice annually to advise GIPSA on the programs and services it delivers under the U.S. Grain Standards Act and the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946.

The Committee's recommendations help us better meet the needs of our customers who operate in a dynamic and changing marketplace. If you'd like to learn more about the GIAC, visit GIPSA's internet side and, under the "I Want To..." section, click on "Learn about the Grain Inspection Advisory Committee." The meeting minutes will be posted soon. Also, I'd like to take this opportunity to extend a sincere thank you to **Terri Henry** of GIPSA's Management and Budget Services. **Ms. Henry**, who manages our GIAC, does an outstanding job to ensure the meetings are a success.

December promises to be a very exciting month for me. On December 6-7, I'll meet with our Union in Texas, and then travel to New Orleans to participate in the USA Rice Outlook Conference. **Under Secretary Ed Avalos** and **Administrator J. Dudley Butler** will also be in New Orleans that week and will tour several local export elevators with field office manager **Kerry Petit** and myself. And I couldn't imagine a trip to New Orleans without some camaraderie and great food – we're all in for a treat on Thursday, December 10, when we'll have lunch at the field office!

As always, thank you for your hard work and commitment to the work you do. Stay safe!



Quality Roundtable participants: seated, L to R: Beverly Whalen, Idelisse Rodriguez, Jim Brown, Vince Volpe, Ed Durgin, Joe Hearn, John Sharpe, Diane Palecek. Back row, L to R: Dave Funk, Randy Dieke, Mark Wooden, Dave Lowe, Mark Fulmer, Ken Critchfield, Dave Mundwiler, Ron Metz, and Mike Eustrom.

Grain Inspection Advisory Committee Meeting

Randall Jones, Washington, DC

As discussed in the *FGISMatters...* article, the Grain Inspection Advisory Committee is charged with providing the agency with advice on its grain inspection and weighing activities. Below are the Committee's resolutions passed on November 18. FGIS will work to address the Committee's recommendations throughout the year and provide updates at the next meeting, which is scheduled for June 2010.

1. The Advisory Committee recommends that GIPSA put together a multi-regional work group to explore market-driven standardization requirements for the rice industry.
2. The Advisory Committee recommends to GIPSA that in order to protect the integrity of U.S. grains and related markets, GIPSA should continue to provide worldwide leadership through financial and institutional support to its Laboratory Biotechnology Proficiency Program with the ongoing objective to improve the consistency and reliability of testing for the presence of genetically engineered traits. In addition, GIPSA should investigate the means of implementing a fee structure related to participation in its Laboratory Biotechnology Proficiency Program.
3. The Advisory Committee recommends that GIPSA evaluate the current moisture calibration for high moisture rough rice for accuracy when compared to the air oven reference.
4. The Advisory Committee commends GIPSA for its work with rail scale testing, and recommends that GIPSA work with the Association of American Railroads (AAR) and their member companies to obtain financial assistance with rail scale test car replacement costs, and to provide a summary document describing the work that GIPSA does as the only governmental agency providing rail scale weighing traceable to National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) standards.
5. The Advisory Committee recognizes that market dynamics are affecting GIPSA's ability to fairly and equitably allocate costs. Therefore, the Committee recommends that GIPSA provide a more complete explanation of how overhead costs (e.g., WDC costs) are allocated to the 520 Program vs. the 530 Program across all field offices.



Grain Inspection Advisory Committee

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

ITS Realignment

Frieda Achtentuch, Washington, DC

As mentioned in the email I distributed on November 2, 2009, I am proud to announce the new alignment of GIPSA's Information Technology Staff (ITS). I would like to affirm that ITS is proud of the quality service they are currently providing to over 700 GIPSA employees, contractors, and partners. Under the realignment, ITS will be able to provide even faster and more efficient service.

On November 1, 2009 the FGIS field support team began reporting directly to their field office managers. This change created a more streamlined reporting approach and allowed field managers to better utilize the skills of the following IT specialists: **Adel Ibrahim** (League City), **Yohanna Lorio** (New Orleans), **Robin Rother** (TSD), **Kaye Burnep** (Toledo), and **Marsha Love** (Portland.) The FGIS field support team is a group of highly trained IT professionals. IT headquarters and field support will continue to support each other as needed.

On November 8, 2009, we combined the Operations Branch with the Network/Telecommunications Branch. The new Network-Telecom/Customer Support Branch (NTCSB) is managed by **Bruce Griffith**. This branch is divided into two units: Network/Telecom, and Customer Support. The merger allows for cross training and will reduce Help Desk resolution times. The employees included in this great, new unit are: **Bruce Griffith** (branch chief), **Angela Emrich**, **William Kelly**, **Morris Johnson**, **Dennis Thalacker**, **CJ Barrett**, **Diane Reeves**, **Tanika Harris**, and **Gilbert Sanchez**.

Also effective on November 8, 2009, the Applications Development Branch (ADB), led by **Rodney Kent**, gained **Steven Rigden** as a new Data Base developer. ADB is excited about the FGISonline applications that they will be acquiring October 2010. The ADB team includes: **Rodney Kent** (branch chief), **Tracey Paugh**, **Tracy Gerke**, **Jim Lambert**, **Mai Ho**, **Mark Dickson**, **Robert Kayne**, and **Steve Rigden**.

Finally, on January 1, 2010, **Irene Omade**, capital planning and budget, will be moving to Management and Budget Services.

With change comes excitement! Conversely, it may also bring a little anxiety. So, as these changes gradually occur, please be assured that we appreciate any comments or observations you may want to contribute. Do feel free to contact us anytime, as we are always inviting useful ways to improve our services. Thank you in advance for your understanding and support of the new ITS realignment.

Employee Assistance Program

Call for confidential help.

1-800-222-0364

GIPSA Idea Hotline Update

*Norma Phelps
Washington, DC*

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

Suggestor/Suggestion

GretchenVan Walbeek, MRO /
Improve WebT&A Record Retention Requirement

Keep those ideas coming in! Send your ideas to the GIPSA Idea Hotline via e-mail: gipsa-ideas@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.



For Your Health

Mavis Rogers, Washington, DC

Help make your holiday season merry and safe.

- ☆ **Decorations.** Wear gloves while decorating with spun glass “angel hair.” It can irritate your eyes and skin. A common substitute is non-flammable cotton. Both angel hair and cotton snow are flame retardant when used alone. But, if artificial snow is sprayed onto them, the dried combination will burn rapidly. When spraying artificial snow on windows or other surfaces, follow directions carefully. The sprays can irritate your lungs if inhaled
- ☆ **Fireplaces.** Do not burn evergreens in the fireplace or wood stove. They are likely to flare out of control and send flames and smoke into the room. And, do not burn wrapping paper in the fireplace as it may contain metallic materials that can be toxic if burned.
- ☆ **Candles.** Never use lighted candles near trees, boughs, curtains/ drapes, or with any potentially flammable item.
- ☆ **Toys and Gifts.** Choose toys for infants and small children carefully. Be sure anything you give them is too big to get caught in the throat, nose, or ears. Avoid toys with small parts that can be pulled or broken off. If you are giving toys to several children in one family, consider their age differences and the chances that younger children will want to play with older kids’ toys.
- ☆ **Older Adults.** Select gifts for older adults that are not too heavy or awkward to handle. For persons with arthritis, be sure the gift does not require assembly and can be easily opened and closed. Choose books with large type for anyone with vision impairment.
- ☆ **Plants.** Small children may think that holiday plants look good enough to eat, but many can cause severe stomach problems. Keep the following plants out of reach of children: mistletoe, holly berries, Jerusalem cherry, and amaryllis.
- ☆ **Food and Cooking.** The holidays often mean preparing large meals for family and friends. Wash hands, utensils, sink, and anything else that comes in contact with raw poultry. Keep in mind that a stuffed bird takes longer to cook. Refrigerate or freeze leftovers in covered shallow containers within 2 hours after cooking. Date the leftovers for future use.
- ☆ **Alcohol, Parties and Driving.** Be sensible about alcoholic drinks. More than half of all traffic fatalities are alcohol-related. Use designated drivers.
- ☆ **Stress.** The holiday season is one of the most stressful times of the year. You can’t avoid stress completely, but you can give yourself some relief. Allow time to shop rather than hurrying through stores and parking lots. Only plan to do a reasonable number of errands. When shopping, make several trips out to the car to drop off packages rather than trying to carry too many items. Take time for yourself. Relax, read, or enjoy your favorite hobby at your own pace.



Seeking Advisory Committee Members

Terri Henry, Washington, DC

GIPSA is seeking 5 members and 8 alternates to serve on the Grain Inspection Advisory Committee. Selectees will begin serving 3-year terms in April 2010.

The Committee meets twice annually to advise GIPSA on the programs and services it delivers under the U.S. Grain Standards Act. The Committee is comprised of 15 members and 15 alternate members appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture who represent all facets of the U.S. grain industry.

GIPSA will consider nominations received by January 11, 2010.

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 December 25, 2009!

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