



# GIPSA *NEWS*

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GRAIN INSPECTION, PACKERS AND STOCKYARDS ADMINISTRATION EMPLOYEES

APRIL 2015

## Highlights from the Administrator

Larry Mitchell, Administrator, Washington, DC

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### Fair Markets and Regulation

April has come and spring seems to have arrived as well. After the winter many of us have endured, I only hope the more moderate weather is not just another April Fools' prank by the pesky groundhog.

Another sign of spring is that farmers are again farming and the last of the farm meetings for the year are over until next fall. Over these past fall and winter months, I was delighted to have been able to visit with many farm organizations across the country and was reminded that I have been able to meet so many farmers from so many places over the last 30 years.



*Larry Mitchell*

In March of 1985, the farmers in my community asked me to represent them at a rally in Washington, D.C. I was farming full time in those days and was reluctant to take time out of my busy schedule to do so, but they were all very persuasive and supportive of my participation. That was my first trip to Washington, but I was asked to do six more in 1985 for a total of seven that year as we worked to improve legislative initiatives to deal with the farm crisis.

I met many farmers from many states in those early trips to Washington. When I wasn't in Washington, I participated in many meetings back home where I also met many farmers for the first time within a three or four county radius of my farm, and then with farmers from across Texas, and then across the nation. Later on I met many farmers from around the world when they came into my office in Washington, or when I travel to many countries to meet them. I have been very blessed to have made so many friends with so many farmers from so many places.

It has been my observation that all farmers, be they from the U.S., North America or any of the other continents, really want two things: 1) they want to make a fair living from a fair marketplace and not from government subsidies, and 2) they want to be left alone to live and work as they please.

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*Administrator from cover page*

One would think that those two things might be easy to accomplish, until we realize that in order to have fair markets, we must also have regulations to ensure fair markets. And in a time when the political winds have blown up a storm of criticism against almost any and all regulations, it can be a real challenge to navigate the squalls of that storm between ensuring fair markets and reducing regulation.

GIPSA is a regulatory agency. The Packers and Stockyards Program works toward ensuring fair and competitive markets for the nation's livestock and poultry farmers. The Federal Grain Inspection Service works to ensure fair markets for grains and oilseed farmers domestically as well as ensuring international markets remain open to their crops by ensuring the grade and weight of the fruits of their labor. We can all remember the challenges of working to find the proper political balance between providing farmers fair markets and reduced regulations during the time we worked on the GIPSA rule.

As I write this article, we are entering a time when a handful of expiring provisions contained with U.S. Grain Standards Act are up for renewal. I wish I could say that we will weather the storm between fair markets and regulation with no negative changes to the official system that ensures the fair and open markets for the nation's grain and oilseed farmers, but finding the balance of fair markets with less regulation will be challenging for Congress. As we move forward, I will do my best to keep you informed on the developments of this critical debate.

### **GIPSA Town Hall Meeting**

I hope you have all marked your calendars for our upcoming GIPSA Town Hall Meeting to be held on Tuesday, April 21, 2015, at noon EDT (although the time is subject to change, so please watch for future information). Should you have any suggestions for what you would like to be discussed, please share your thoughts using the survey link provided by Dexter Thomas <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/HXMHFH8>. After last year's event we surveyed everyone and the issue that received the largest number of comments were related to the quality of the audiovisual connectivity for those of you outside of Washington. We are working very hard to address those issues for this year's meeting and will have further details on how to join the conversation in the very near future.

### **USDA's 2015 Telework Week**

For everyone who is eligible to telework, I extend a personal invitation for you to support and participate in the upcoming **USDA's 2015 Telework Week**, to be held from April 6<sup>th</sup> through the 10<sup>th</sup>. This is an opportunity for employees and supervisors to experience telework for an extended period of time while continuing to remain productive. Remember, teleworking enables USDA to continue performing mission-critical services in the event of inclement weather, natural disasters, or other instances that disrupt normal operations at facilities across the nation. This is a perfect opportunity to test your organization's ability to continue operations.

*Continued, see Administrator on page 3*



### **GIPSA Idea Hotline**

**GIPSA Idea Hotline is open for business.**

**Please send your suggestions or ideas to**

**GIPSA-Ideas@usda.gov; fax them to 202-690-2173; or  
telephone them to 1-800-455-3447 or 202-720-7045.**

**It is best to send them via fax or email to reduce the possibility of transcription errors; however, ideas will be accepted regardless of the method of transmission.**

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Telework eligible employees should work with their supervisor to obtain an approved [Telework Agreement](#), and fully participate in **USDA's 2015 Telework Week** by completing this survey which will remain open until close of business on April 10, 2015, <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2015TeleworkPledgeWeekSurvey>.

Participants may pledge a minimum of one day up to a maximum of five days during this week. (Note: Bargaining Unit employees must follow their collective bargaining agreements and corresponding policy.)

### **Confidential Email Account**

I want to remind everyone that you may send me an anonymous email with your problems, concerns and/or suggestions at any time. There was a recent shutdown of the account, but it has been fully restored. The link can be found on the *InGIPSA* webpage under contacts. To make it easy to use, you can simply use this link - <http://agidcwas3gn1tr1/Gipsaconfidential/>.

### **Administrative Professionals Day**

Also in April, let us not forget all of the professional, committed and courteous women and men who serve tirelessly to make sure everything works in our agency. I am talking about our administrative professionals. Please show them your gratitude and support on Administrative Professionals Day Wednesday, April 22 or anytime during the week or month.

According to the official website, during World War II, there was an increased need for skilled administrative personnel, particularly in the United States. The National Secretaries Association was formed to recognize the contributions of secretaries and other administrative personnel to the economy, to support their personal development and to help attract people to administrative careers in the field. The association's name was changed to Professional Secretaries International in 1981 and, finally, the International Association of Administrative Professionals (IAAP) in 1998.

These changes in name reflected the changing nature of the tasks, qualifications and responsibilities of the members of the organization. IAAP now has an international orientation and continues to provide education and training and set standards of excellence recognized by the business community on a global perspective. The organization's vision is "to inspire and equip all administrative professionals to attain excellence".

The first National Secretaries Week was organized in 1952 in conjunction with the United States Department of Commerce and various office supply and equipment manufacturers. The Wednesday of that week became known as National Secretaries Day. As the organization gained international recognition, the events became known as Professional Secretaries Week® and Professional Secretaries Day®. In 2000, IAAP announced that names of the week and the day were changed to Administrative Professionals Week and Administrative Professionals Day to keep pace with changing job titles and expanding responsibilities of the modern administrative workforce. Many work environments across the world observe this event.

**Enjoy your April and I'll see you on April 21, 2015, at the GIPSA Town Hall Meeting!!!**

## FGIS Matters....!

Randall Jones, Washington, DC

**Centralization of Services and the Quest for Quality.** In order to meet the needs of our stakeholders, we continuously evaluate our Program seeking ways we can improve our services and processes. A long-term primary initiative has been the centralization of services that has led to the creation of the **National Grain Center**, reduction of field offices, the formation of **Domestic Inspection Operations Office (DIOO)** and **Grading Services Lab (GSL)**. **Samantha Simon, Director, Quality Assurance and Compliance Division (QACD)**, led a task force that reviewed all quality assurance functions within the Program and submitted their findings to the **Executive Management Team** for review. The primary role of the review was to ensure that the roles and responsibilities of all quality assurance functions performed by **FGIS** are identified and assigned. I want to publically acknowledge the members of the task force that committed a significant amount of time and energy into this project and was instrumental in its success. Serving on the task force were **Brian Adams, Chair, Board of Appeals and Review (BAR)**; **Cathy Brenner, Chief, Inspection Instrumentation Branch**; **Rob Dorman, Policy, Procedures and Market Analyses Branch (PPMAB)**; **Barry Gomoll, PPMAB**; **Tim Norden, Chief Analytical Chemistry Branch**; **Byron Reilly, Director, Departmental Initiatives and International Affairs**; and **Mary Vick, Office of the Deputy Administrator**. Again, thanks for a job well done.



As a result of the work of this group, some guiding principles were developed as follows:

### DIVISION RESPONSIBILITIES

The primary functions of the **Divisions** are generally characterized as follows.

**Departmental Initiatives and International Affairs (DIIA)** - Coordinates and conducts all departmental initiatives and international activities.

**Field Management Division (FMD)** – Functions as the service delivery arm of the Program and plans, develops, administers and manages all grain inspection and weighing activities under the U.S. Grain Standards Act (USGSA) and the Agricultural Marketing Act Of 1946 (AMA). Through a network of **seven (7) Field Offices and a Federal/State Office**, provides direct service as well as, manages the **Delegated States and Designated Agencies** that provide services on behalf of the Program. As part of **FMD**, the **DIOO** serves as the **Field Office** responsible for the supervision and monitoring of all **Designated Agencies** who perform domestic grain inspection and weighing services. The **GSL** will be aligned under **DIOO** and serve as the quality assurance body for **DIOO** in the same manner the quality assurance specialists serve in other field offices.

**Technology and Science Division (TSD)** – Responsible for the technology and science utilized in the delivery of the official USGSA and AMA services. Provides technical leadership, training and support services, inspection methods development, specialized analytical tests, standardized processes, and final appeal inspections for field-based testing services. Located within **TSD** is the **Board of Appeals and Review** which is final arbiter for decisions related to subjective factor analysis. In this role, the **BAR** performs many critical functions including monitoring **FGIS Quality Assurance Specialists** to ensure alignment throughout the Official Inspection System.

**Quality Assurance and Compliance Division (QACD)**- Safeguards the integrity of the national grain inspection and weighing system. **QACD** develops, monitors, audits, analyzes and reports on the quality of the services provided by **FGIS**.

**Next Steps.** **Brian Adam, Chair, BAR**, and **Pat McCluskey, Chief, PPMAB**, have been given the responsibility with leading a transition team that will establish a time table for the roll out of these changes. The **division directors** will work with the **Office of the Deputy Administrator** to allocate proper resources (funds and staffing) to effectuate the implementation of assignment of quality assurance functions and organizational alignment.

**Falling Number Test and Enhancing Quality Assurance.** While on the subject of “quality”, the **TSD Analytical Chemistry Branch** deserves high praise for its development of a falling number monitoring program. The goal of the program is to en-

*Continued, see FGIS on page 5.*

FGIS from page 4

sure that official falling number tests conducted throughout the system are accurate and consistent. It is important that we are monitor our services performed in the field to ensure sure that we are hitting our quality mark and we uphold the **Gold Standard**.

**Reauthorization Update.** Suffice to say that the focus by the industry and Congress is beginning to sharpen and we anticipate that, similar to 2005, interest will be even greater as we move into spring. Be sure to check back next month for an in-depth account of reauthorization and the current happenings.

**FGIS Grain Inspectors Performing at Highest Level.** I will leave you with these final thoughts. **FGIS grain inspectors** are the best in world and are second to none. We know, the U.S. grain industry knows it, and our stakeholders around the world know it. However, events that followed the very poor quality corn crop of 2009 brought to our attention that we lacked data that could be used to prove that, in fact, **FGIS inspectors** are performing at the highest level. The **Executive Management Team** undertook an initiative to correct this and through collaboration with the **Union leadership**, developed a system that now allows us to show the high performance of all of our **FGIS inspectors**. When talking about reauthorization with stakeholders, it is important that we have data to show the quality of our services. Now I can confidently say that we are position well to defend our work when necessary. Currently we have reviewed (insert number to be provided) samples involving (insert number to be provided) factors that have been monitored under the new performance management system with a (insert number to be provided) inspection accuracy. Indeed, **FGIS grain inspectors** are the best in the world!

**Confidentiality Email.** Just a reminder that the confidentiality email boxes for the Administrator and Deputy Administrator can be found on the *InGIPSA* website under directories. This form of communication is completely confidential and anonymous. The goal of this messaging tool is for employees to be able to send suggestions and comments in a protected format.

Until next time, keep up the good work and stay safe!

# Coming Soon!!!



★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

## WHITE HOUSE SUMMIT

on ASIAN AMERICANS and PACIFIC ISLANDERS

**MAY 12, 2015** | **WASHINGTON, DC**

[bit.ly/AAPISummit](http://bit.ly/AAPISummit)

## Names in the News

### New Hire



**Sarah Christian** is the latest addition to the Central Reporting Unit in the Western Regional Office, Denver, Colorado. She graduated from Metropolitan State University with her BA in Hospitality, Tourism and Events Management. Sarah spent five years in the U.S. Army as a Surgical Technician and was stationed in Fairbanks, Alaska, and Fort Polk, Louisiana. Sarah is actually coming back home as she grew up in the Denver metro area.

**John Hatchitt** has joined the IT staff at the National Grain Center. Before he came here he worked in IT support at the engineering firm, Black & Veatch, and before that he worked at Gateway Computers before they closed. He will be assisting Robin Rother and will be the primary helpdesk person for NGC personnel to contact for assistance for password resets, installation of printer drivers and software, etc.



**Dr. Kent Lanclos** has been selected as the Deputy Director, Technology and Science Division. Dr. Lanclos is currently the Director, Strategic Data Acquisition and Analysis for the Risk Management Agency (RMA) of USDA, responsible for the development and support of advanced analytical and technological capabilities and services to support the Agency's mission. Prior to that appointment he served on the staff of the RMA Administrator as a senior policy analyst and advisor, working on a broad variety of crop insurance and farm program issues and initiatives. Kent began his career with RMA in the Agency's Product Management Office, first serving as Senior Economist and later as Senior Underwriter. Before joining RMA, he was the Assistant Director of Economic Services for the National Cotton Council, the primary trade association for the

US cotton industry. Kent received his PhD in Agricultural Economics from Purdue University in 1994. Kent will be relocating from Washington, DC to Kansas City. Dr. Lanclos will be reporting to GIPSA April 6, 2015.

### Temporary Position

**Dr. Tim Norden** has once again assumed the role of Chief Scientist for GIPSA. Tim will be in the position for the next sixty days. Tom Weber will once again be acting as the Chief, Analytical Chemistry Branch during this time.

### New position

**Gary Hinshaw**, who has been GIPSA's Industrial Hygienist, has accepted a position within the Analytical Chemistry Branch. Gary will be serving as a chemist within the Trace Analysis Laboratory and involved in pesticide residue analysis. While the Industrial Hygienist position awaits replacement, Bill Burden will be filling in for Gary.



Dr. Ajit Ghosh has accepted a position within the Analytical Chemistry Branch. Ajit will continue to be involved with the mycotoxin test kit evaluation program.

## Names in the News (cont.)

### New position



**Alan Disch**, who has been detailed to TSD's Inspection Instrumentation Branch (IIB) for the last several months, will be permanently moving to IIB. Ramon Luevano will continue to oversee the Grading Services Lab (GSL) until it transitions to the DIOO.

**Sara Ludwig** has accepted a Program Assistant position within the Office of the Director in which she will be performing a variety of duties in support of all TSD. Prior to returning to TSD, Sara served as Administrative Support Assistant for the Field Management Division's Domestic Inspection Operations Office. Welcome back, Sara!



Rose Fremin was selected to fill the Administrative Officer position in the New Orleans Field Office (NOFO) effective March 22, 2015. Ms. Fremin began her federal career in Convent, LA with the Farmers Home Administration in 1977 and quickly became a valued member of our FGIS team in Destrehan, LA in 1978 as a Clerk Typist. Then she worked as a Secretary for Office Automation for several years and most recently she has been serving as the Management & Program Analyst for the NOFO from September 2006 to present.

## How are Individual Development Plans (IDPs) Managed in GIPSA and Why?

### Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey Request:

Data from the 2014 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey feedback data showed that GIPSA staff and leadership wanted clarification of some of the requirements of the IDP process. As a result GIPSA Training Staff at the request of management put together a briefing of frequently asked questions about IDPs to share with all supervisors, management and employees. The intent of this document is to clarify supervisory and employee responsibilities in developing IDPs and ensure more consistent implementation throughout the agency.

# IDP's

**How to Access the Briefing of FAQs and What it covers:** The briefing titled "**IDP Brief; FAQs on Managing the IDP Process**" is available on the inGIPSA Training website under the heading "Individual Development Plans." This briefing covers frequently asked questions from both new and experienced GIPSA supervisors and managers regarding IDPs. The briefing would also support already existing webinars.

Below are a list of some of the most frequent questions.

- What are the legal requirements for the IDP in GIPSA?**
- What are employee legal responsibilities for their training?**
- Is the IDP related to the Performance Elements and can it be discussed during performance reviews?**
- What are the definitions of different types of development?**
- Why has GIPSA traditionally done the IDP by paper instead of AgLearn?**

Hopefully this document will prove to be a readily accessible resource for employees with commonly asked IDP questions.

# Thanks For the Memories

*Mohsen A. Younes, Saginaw Michigan*

**Mohsen A. Younes** is retiring on April 3, 2015, with 39 years of Federal Services. Mohsen Graduated from Michigan State University with A Master of Science degree and Ph.D. degree; a Fulbright Scholar and worked at the University of Illinois and the United Nations International Programs. Presented scientific papers to International Audiences. Including a Paper on Underground Water underneath the sand of the Great Sahara Desert in Egypt, (1974), that resulted in Reclamation of 3.5 million acres.

What an enjoyable journey guided by ethics and policy of being firm but fair.

To all those I have had the privilege to work with at all levels in FGIS, US Embassies' Staff overseas, Service Providers ,and the Grain Industry; thanks for the memories.

I have participated in many FGIS Programs including:

- ACG in Peoria Field Office
- QAS and Assistant Field Office Manager in Saginaw Field Office for 15 years
- Shift Supervisor in Toledo Field Office for 12 years
- Compliance Division- Investigation/Enforcement for almost 11 years.
- Special Projects for the Office of International Affairs including,
  - Market study and developing Grain Inspection Services Programs in Tunisia sponsored by the Agency for International Development (accepted and implemented by the host Country)
  - Developed Grain Inspection Standards in Bulgaria, sponsored by the USDA, Economic Research Services. (accepted and implemented by the host Country)
  - Investigation in Bangladesh, Singapore and Syria
  - Outreach activities and Grain grading Seminars in Egypt, Syria, Bangladesh, Tunisia, Singapore, Malaysia and more during 15 years period.

Furthermore, I had the privilege of working with others to facilitate/teach the training course "Excellence Through Continuous Improvements" to FGIS Employees and conducted Grain Grading Seminars for Service Providers and Grain Industry Personnel in the Saginaw Field Office and Toledo Field Office circuits (27 years in all).

I also, conducted the FGIS "Contract/Load Order Review Program for several years on Ships, Rail Cars and Containers.

My wife and I are providing financial input into a Scholarship Fund at University of Michigan- Flint to students interested in studying "Environmental Science and/or Environmental Justice." We are planning to expand on that in the future and continue to support and do volunteer work.

Looking forward to retirement years to have more time with the family and to enjoy our Beach House on Lake Huron, along with nature and wild life, do some gardening, travel in the USA and to some countries abroad and spend some winter months in Florida.

I wish all of you future success. Thanks to one and all. Till we meet again-warm regards.

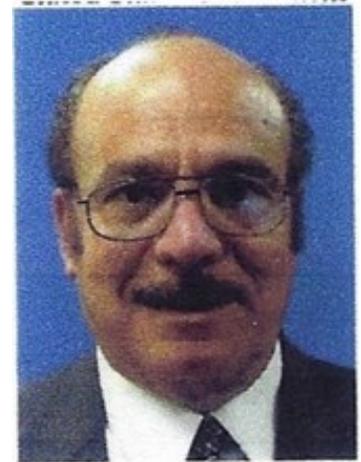
**Mohsen A. Younes**

Quality Assurance and Compliance Division

Investigation and Enforcement

USDA/ GIPSA/FGIS

[Mohsen.a.younes@usda.gov](mailto:Mohsen.a.younes@usda.gov)



*Mohsen A. Younes*

# Thanks for the memories

## April is Jazz Appreciation Month



When you think of Jazz music, does your mind drift to days of old with Dizzy Gillespie, Cab Calloway, or Nina Simone? Maybe you prefer the styles of Chris Botti, Winton Marsalis or even Maynard Ferguson? Perhaps your jazz preference is international; Dominique Di Piazza, Till Bronner or Tony Tixier. Whatever Jazz sound you dig, April is *Jazz Appreciation Month*. Whether you have CD's or albums that are collecting dust in your attic, this is the month to pull out the sleeves and spin that vinyl on the sweet-spot.

This month, show your appreciation of the arts by making them relevant again. Take time to explore and listen to Jazz the fun way...*go see a local Jazz Festival!* Nothing says *Party* like jazz music!

## NEW ORLEANS FIELD OFFICE EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT



February 2014, in an effort to increase GIPSA participation in the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS), there was a call for volunteers to become members of the FEVS Action Team. Several NOFO employees volunteered to serve as facilitators on an action team. Consequently, the NOFO facilitators met with employees on various shifts to conduct "Real Talk Sessions" and to discuss the following topics: talent, leadership and knowledge management, performance culture and job satisfaction. As a result of the input that employees gave during "Real Talk Sessions," a variety of employee concerns and issues were discussed and addressed with NOFO management, including: light duty status, employee and supervisory training, and work conditions. The FEVS survey will benefit the NOFO employees and the agency.

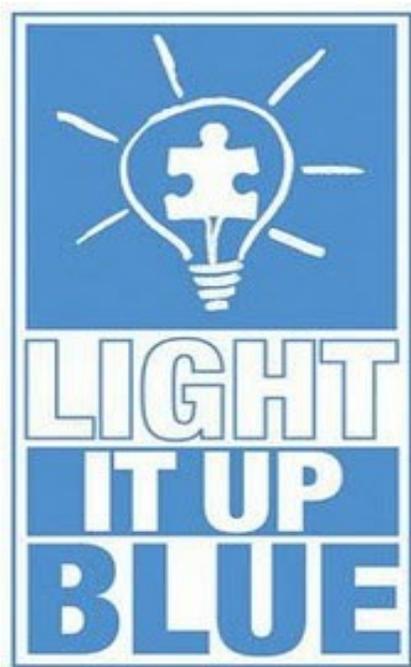
## A Shout-Out Goes to...

"Thank you, Morris, for your ongoing professionalism and attentiveness in meeting our IT needs." -Nancy Speer

"I would like to give a shout out to Edward Chi and Adel Ibrahim who took the lead in the project upgrading the current Network Connect VPN solution to Junos Pulse. The Junos Pulse VPN allows users to make a secure connection to the network from outside of the office. The GIPSA VPN transition to the new Junos Pulse Solution was a success with the help of GIPSA, IT staff who supported this project. A big thank you to Edward, Adel and GIPSA, IT staff for their hard work, late hours and the user guide to make this a smooth transition to Junos Pulse." -Pat Ogunyale

A round of applause and shout out goes to Tony Goodman, Denise Ruggles, FGIS field office managers, and the field offices' billing support staff who met on several occasions to address the concerns that were raised during FGIS' service billing/fee collection internal control risk assessment. These meetings have been significant to better understanding the issues and finding solutions. Discussions focused on developing a billing guide and standard operating procedures to be used by all field offices; updating the billing directive(s); revising the general billing policy and COD policy; improving communications between the billing staff and service providers; and instituting monthly teleconferences where billing concerns can be discussed. Denise, also, has issued her first billing basics quarterly newsletter "FGIS Billing Tidbits," which informs the FGIS billing community of important things to remember when they perform their billing duties. - Joanne Peterson

Congratulations to Annie Trujillo, who was selected as Program Analyst; marking the first-ever of this position within the League City, Texas Field Office. Annie has been with FGIS for a little over 12 years.



*What is Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)?*

*Is my child autistic?*

*What resources are available?*

*How can I give back?*

**APRIL 02, 2015**

**LIGHT IT UP BLUE**

## World Autism Awareness Day

Do you know someone with an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)? I do and I bet you do too. ASD is a group of developmental disabilities that can cause significant social, communication and behavioral challenges. It's also one of the fastest-climbing disorders among adults and children. When left undiagnosed, persons with ASD will struggle their entire lives to simply fit in.

What about the family to autistic children? Before diagnosis, parents wonder what they are doing wrong. *Why doesn't my child act like others?* They are often criticized as being 'bad parents' based on their child's uncontrollable behavior. They raise a child who often, doesn't show affection. What if your toddler rejected your hugs and didn't show excitement to see you? As a mother, I can scarcely imagine.

### *What can you do to help?*



Show your support by wearing BLUE on April 02! Read up on the subject matter using the links provided and recognize the signs. Take part of a Fund Raiser! And the next time you see a disruptive child, consider ASD and extend patience to the parents before judgment. It's a lifelong struggle to cope, so let's all do our part to *help* lighten the burden by sharing the load.

1 in 88 children are diagnosed with an ASD

ASD is almost 5 times more common among boys

The economic cost for a family with ASD can reach up to \$60k a year on average

There is NO medical detection OR cure

You likely know someone who is Autistic...

ResourCES:

[www.ninds.nih.gov](http://www.ninds.nih.gov)

[WWW.AUTISMSPEAKS.ORG](http://WWW.AUTISMSPEAKS.ORG)

[www.autism-society.org](http://www.autism-society.org)

Autism Response Team:

888-288-4762

en espanol

888-722-9050

## Improving GIPSA's Website-Content Submission Process

Jeremy Covington, Kansas City, MO

Over the past several months, the GIPSA website has undergone many changes. These changes are responsible for making the presentation of the site more modern, increased security, and as well as increased overall performance. Since the website is labeled as "mission-critical", we want to make sure that it stays at its peak performance at all times.

Stepping forward, GIPSA's IT team will be introducing a new process for the website's content submission. Team Foundation Server (TFS), a Microsoft product, is the new platform in which content submitters will soon be submitting web requests. The software is already being used with other development projects and now content submissions will be as well. Team Foundation Server is used to manage source code and builds, to plan and track progress using work items, and to collaborate and coordinate individual efforts with other IT team members. It provides the tools needed to effectively manage development projects throughout a project's lifecycle.

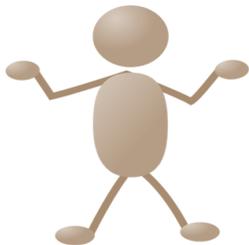


By using Team Foundation Server as the new platform for content submission, many advantages will be gained. For starters, it will help organize all of the web requests that are sent in daily. It also allows the web requests to be stored in the same location as the actual source code, which makes it easier on my part as webmaster. One of the most important advantages of using the new Team Foundation Server process is that it will provide access to an audit trail. This audit trail will ensure that no one's content submission request gets "lost in the shuffle" so to speak and also keeps record of all web requests ever submitted. This is just one of the many changes that the IT team has going on. In the words of Alan Watts, "The only way to make sense out of change is to plunge into it, move with it, and join the dance."

Love. Peace. Happy Browsing

## What Exactly Does "Technical Mandatory" Mean to Me?

### Who me?



Recently, you have heard a lot about "Technical Mandatory" and that GIPSA would be enforcing the HSPD-12 (LincPass) Technical Mandatory on your account to access USDA computers. What you didn't know is that there are two types of technical mandatorys, a "user" technical mandatory and a "machine" technical mandatory. Most of us fall into the "user" technical mandatory.

The user technical mandatory means that you have an attribute checked on your Active Directory account which basically takes away you having to use a password to access the computer. However, if you were to accidentally leave your LincPass at home that day, a call to the help desk telling them that you had forgotten it would solve that problem as they could remove the attribute and for that day you would receive a password to use.

For those of you who do not have a LincPass yet, have to use multiple computers, or are GIPSA mobile phone user, your primary computer will be placed into a "Machine Technical Mandatory" organizational unit in Active Directory that will enable you to log into that machine with your LincPass, but any other machine with a user name and password. The machine technical mandatory will be taking effect in the near future.

As was stated previously, should you have any questions or concerns regarding the technical mandatory initiative can be addressed by contacting the IT helpdesk at (866) 484-4772.

## GIPSA IT Tech Refresh

Phillip W. Thomas — IT Specialist, Destrehan, LA



We, as an agency, have gone thru a lot of changes on the IT front. One of them is a Tech Refresh of all our Laptops and Desktops. In some cases, a machine has been changed out as many as four times in a two year period. This is a good thing as generally we now have machines that are no older than four (4) years. We were at seven (7) years, so we've definitely made some progress.

Whenever I do this, the primary question is "Where will all my documents and data go?" The IT Tech can easily back up a machine with one user, but what about an elevator machine with 200+ users? As a general rule, your data should be on either your H drive, or your department's S drive. That way you can access the data from any GIPSA machine and it's backed up nightly. Data exclusively on your machine may be lost due to a hardware failure.

A few other things you'll need to do if your machine is swapped out, you need to set your default printer, recreate your Outlook Email Signature, and set Outlook to delete the Deleted items folder upon exit if desired.

For Office 2013:

1. To set your default printer, click the Start button, then Device and Printers. Then right click the desired printer and set it as default.
2. To recreate your Outlook signature, find a sent email with the signature you want. Then click File in the upper left corner, then Options, then Mail, then the Signatures button. Click new and give it a name, then click OK. Then paste the copied signature in the body below Edit signature. Click Save, then OK. Click OK again to exit Options.
3. To set Outlook to empty deleted items on exit, click File in the upper left corner, then Options, then Advanced. Under "Outlook start and exit" check the "Empty Deleted Items folder when exiting Outlook" box. Click OK again to exit Options.

Between the new machines, new routers and switches and upgraded data lines, we should experience much quicker access times, making for a better working experience and better service to our customers.

## Change Control Working Group (CCWG) SHOUT OUTS

It is a new year and some new players for the CCWG. The team always wants to give credit where credit is due so we are giving a couple of SHOUT OUTS.

(CR 8008206) The first one goes out to Marilyn Gallagher, RA WRO; Levi Perkins, RA ERO; and Creig Stephens, RA Supervisor ERO for their recommendation that contract review criteria be added to the Poultry Review Sub-process Module and a letter to live poultry dealers be sent regarding arbitration criteria for contract language.

On December 11, 2014, PMT approved the CR!!! Way to go team!!! Kudos all around!

(CR 8028730) The second shout out goes to Marilyn Gallagher, RA WRO; Levi Perkins, RA ERO; Joe Moore, BPU Supervisor ERO; and Wayne Basford, Investigative Attorney ERO as subject matter experts on a final draft of a brochure for live poultry growers. In addition PMT members, Elkin Parker, Susan Keith, and Stuart Frank, were instrumental in making final revisions.

This brochure contains the provisions of the Act and regulations which affect growers under poultry growing arrangements. The Administrator also wanted the brochure published in Spanish and Hmong.

This CR was approved by the CCWG Team on June 14, 2014, and PMT has until September 1, 2015, to approve. Way to go team!!! Kudos! Give yourselves a pat on the back!

These two CR's are two reasons the CCWG does work! Don't have the mindset "aw it's a stupid idea, no one will go for it." There are no stupid ideas! Just brilliant people!! Let the CCWG be the judge of your idea, send them in!!

# The National Grain Center (NGC) Report

## Weaving the Stories of Women's Lives



Valerie Collins coordinated the March 26th Lunch and Learn for Women's History Month at the National Grain Center. A salad bar and fried chicken were provided for those who attend. This year's theme focused on women who have worked in the Technology & Science Division, with presentations by Mary Coffey Alonzo (Director), Darcie Tone-Pah-Hote, Jennifer Helber, and Ruth Goff. In Valerie's words, the program will portray "ordinary women accomplishing extraordinary things." Not only did it highlight NGC women, it also mirrored the theme from February's Black History Month, which recognized the work of African-American men that have built their careers with GIPSA.



## Kansas City Farmer's Market



Rain or shine, the region's largest Farmers' Market can be found at the City Market every Saturday and Sunday year-round. More than 140 vendor stalls burst with bedding plants, fruits, vegetables, meats, herbs, fresh baked goods, and other sweets, cut flowers and crafts made by local artisans.

# The National Grain Center (NGC) Report (cont.)

## Bring Your Child to Work Day

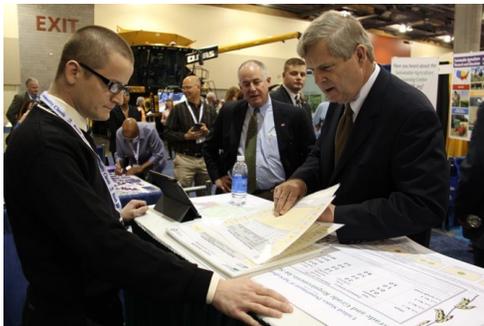
Bring Your Child to Work Day gives parents the opportunity to show their children what they do at work all day. It also gives us an opportunity to show the children the fun side of work and science.

This year, Darcie Tone-Pah-Hote is coordinating several activities at the National Grain Center, aimed to help sons and daughters understand that science is tied to everything. There will be a day of arts/crafts, and experiments. The arts/crafts include tie-dyed butterflies, Galaxy Slime, and Crystal creations.

The children will have the opportunity to perform an “Elephant toothpaste” experiment as well as a “Green Thumb” glove experiment. They will also get to make a cloud in their hands. As in years past, the children will be taken on a short tour of the building to see what their parents do. A short chemical Demo show will also take place. They will see how some of the instruments operate, and maybe even get to push a button or two. The children’s favorite last year was watching the popcorn volume tester, and then eating the popcorn.



## Industry Trade Shows



Rob Dorman represented GIPSA at the 2015 GEAPS Exchange Expo in St. Louis February 21<sup>st</sup> - 24<sup>th</sup> and Barry Gomoll (pictured) represented us at the Commodity Classic in Phoenix February 25<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup>. The Commodity Classic is the annual convention and trade show for the National Corn Growers Association, the American Soybean Association, the National Association of Wheat Growers, and the National Sorghum Producers organization. Secretary Vilsack also attended the Commodity Classic and visited the GIPSA booth.



## FGISonline Meeting

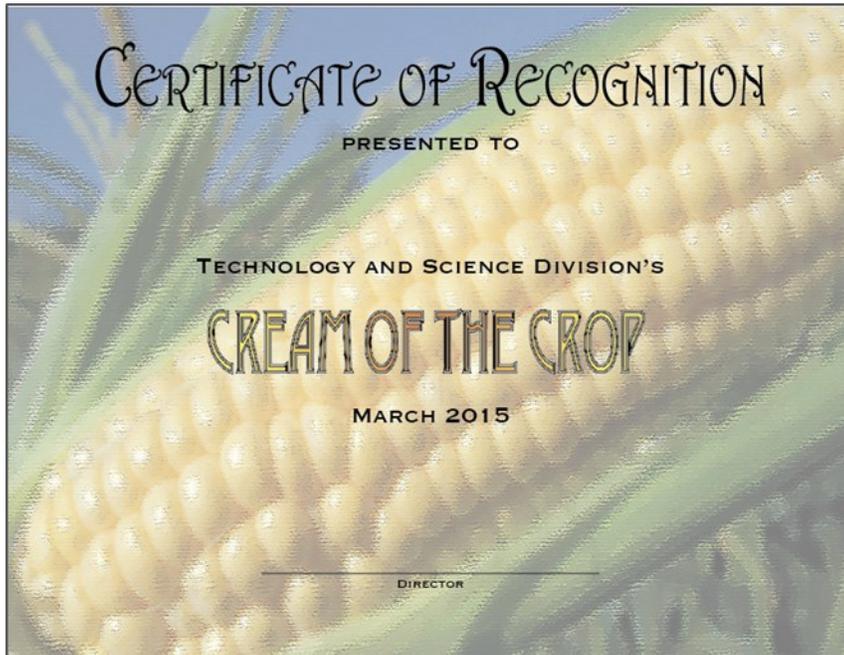
FGIS Service Request/ Portal project team met at the National Grain Center February 23-26, to discuss and document details of the workflow and user experience as well as integration with the existing FGISonline applications.

**Attendees: Wade Berteau, Jeremy Covington, Mary Vick, Janine Goodson, Lee Capper, Sean Messner, Harry Athey, Tracey Paugh, Karen Guagliardo, and Denise Ruggles**



# The National Grain Center (NGC) Report (cont.)

## Recognition: Cream of the Crop



The Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey “Realtalk” listening sessions identified a need for increased recognition for the many terrific things being accomplished by Technology and Science Division employees every day. While everyone values annual performance awards, employees also like to be recognized for day to day accomplishments as well. TSD began recognizing employees who managers have identified as the ‘Cream of the Crop’ in our last Division wide staff meeting. Employees were recognized for going an extra mile for a variety of activities from around the Division –from providing necessary telephone coverage for other offices to keeping up with higher than usual appeals to doggedly sticking with a moisture meter replacement project that took much longer than expected

Pat Emick was recognized for coordinating the DICKEY-john GAC2500 UGMA temperature sensor upgrade without disrupting delivery of official moisture determinations. The upgrade

also caused an increase in the number of moisture check tests needed which increased the work load for reviewing the data.

Steve Burton was recognized for creating, testing and reviewing the additional moisture check test samples prior to shipping to field locations while maintaining the regular number of check test samples and maintaining the 2014 crop moisture calibration data collection.

Ryan Rudder and Rod Van Velsan were recognized for creating and testing the additional moisture check test samples in addition to their normal duties.

Joshua Liang and Rhonda Lyne were recognized for analyzing over 200 original and appeal Falling Number samples while meeting all target dates for the Falling Number Monitoring and Check Sample programs.

Dave Morris was recognized for his efforts in expediting a large number of mycotoxin analyses in support of the Export Cargo Survey Program.

Darryl Bellin was recognized for his continued dedication and professionalism no matter what duties or responsibilities are assigned to him.

Terri Liberty and Marsha Schwartz were recognized for providing telephone coverage for the Washington, DC based GIPSA offices over the last several months in addition to their own tasks.

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 Civil Rights Staff at 202-690-3640



# The National Grain Center (NGC) Report (cont.)

## Employee Spotlight: Jim Krest

Welcome to the latest installment of the "Employee Spotlight" section of the NGC News in the GIPSA Newsletter. Each month we interview a different employee here at the National Grain Center not only to showcase the talented individuals that make up NGC but also to get to know our fellow coworkers. This month we caught up with chemist Jim Krest.



**Q: Where are you from?**

A: Most recently, I was living on my sailboat in Florida after having sailed around Florida and the Bahamas with my wife and my son for the past three years. I didn't always live on a boat, but I have traveled around the country quite a bit. Including Missouri, I've lived in seven states and worked in eight. I'm hoping to be here for a while.

**Q: Where did you attend school? What degree(s) do you have?**

A: I received my B.S. degree in Marine Chemistry at Eckerd College in St. Petersburg, Florida. I then worked for two (2) years at Oregon State and another two (2) years at Univ. of Southern Mississippi as a "Sea-going analytical chemist," analyzing water samples for trace metals, nutrients, and oxygen concentrations. I went to grad school at the University of South Carolina where I earned my M.S. in Marine Science and my Ph.D. in Geology. Just don't ask me to identify any rocks; my specialty was isotope geochemistry.

**Q: What is your position title and duties/responsibilities? How long have you been at the National Grain Center**

A: I am a chemist in the trace analysis lab, working with mycotoxin analyses. I'm still fairly new, so most of my time is spent learning the chemical methods, the equipment, and the software. Once in a while they let me run real samples. Five months; I started in the October 2014.

**Q: What drew you to GIPSA?**

A: After three years on the boat, the sailing funds were running low, and it was time to find a job with some stability and benefits. I found this position on USAJobs, and it looked like a good fit.

**Q: What is the most interesting part of your job and/or what is your favorite part of your job?**

A: I love working in the lab, troubleshooting the equipment and the methods. It's nice when everything runs smoothly, but there's a nice mental challenge when I get to figure out how to make things work better.

**Q: What are your hobbies?**

A: I love being outdoors. I learned to ski this season at Snow Creek, and when the weather warms up I'll be doing some hiking and camping.

**Q: What is the last book you read and/or what book are you currently reading?**

A: I am currently reading "The Ranger's Apprentice" series of books with my son.

**Q: What is your favorite movie? Why?**

A: I think my current favorite movie is "Ip-Man." In addition to some amazing martial arts (and decent acting) by Donnie Yen, it deals with the timeless theme of the common man's struggle against injustice.

**Q: What would you say is your greatest accomplishment?**

A: When I was working at Oregon State University, I participated in a research cruise across the Weddell Sea in Antarctica. The analytical methods I helped to develop for that cruise are still being widely used and continue to be cited in the science literature, almost 25 years later.

**Q: What is your dream vacation?**

A: Sailing through the Bahamas with family and friends. Well, any time spent with family and friends is good, but sailing takes it up a notch, and warm beaches and water with inexpensive rum takes it to a whole new level.

# The National Grain Center (NGC) Report (cont.)

NGC  
Report

If you would like to make a contribution to “The National Grain Center (NGC) Report” please send information to Roger Friedrich, Leader, GIPSA, Digital Media Group [roger.l.friedrich@usda.gov](mailto:roger.l.friedrich@usda.gov)

## Happy Spring

After a long hard year of winter, we finally see Spring approaching. We’ve had a glimpse of it with sunny warm days, nice breezes (that *aren't* described with a “wind chill”), time to open up the windows and blow out the musty dusty air and fill the atmosphere with a refreshing breathe of fresh air, time to plan our gardens, and outdoor activities. FINALLY....time to put away those winter coats and all that’s Winter. It’s also the season that celebrates Easter. Unlike other holidays that have specific dates each year, Easter is celebrated on the first Sunday after the "Paschal full moon" falling on or after the Spring Equinox (March 21), so it can fall anytime between March 21<sup>st</sup> thru April 25<sup>th</sup>.

The word 'Easter' comes from two old pagan spring festivals. The old European pagan festival of 'Ostara' that celebrated new life and Arabian Sun festival of 'Ishtar'. The early Christians took over the festivals and turned the pagan festivals of new life to mean the new life that Jesus gave the world when he rose from the dead. Unlike Christmas, when Jesus's birth is celebrated (although we don't know what time of year Jesus was born!), Easter is celebrated around the same time of year that he was killed. This is because Jesus died at the time of the Jewish Passover festival.

The first Jewish Christians added Easter celebrations to the Passover festival and because Jesus rose from the dead on a Sunday, so Easter Day became the first Sunday after Passover. Over the years, the Christian festival moved in date slightly from the Jewish Passover, so they don't now have the same date, but sometimes they are very close. To make things even more complicated, Orthodox Christians celebrate Easter, like Christmas, on a different day than Catholic and Western Christians!

Bunnies, chicks, ducklings and lambs are often associated with Easter because most babies of the animals are born in the spring around Easter time. In Pagan times, they were signs of good luck and new life. The early Christians associated these signs of new life with Jesus being raised from the dead and having new life.

Likewise eggs are often associated with Easter because, they were signs of fertility and new life. Eggs were used by the ancient Persians and Egyptians to celebrate New Year, which happened for them in spring time. The eggs were colored and eaten during the celebrations. In Europe, colored eggs were used to celebrate Easter as house decorations. In Eastern European countries, such as Hungary and Romania, wooden eggs are beautifully painted in lots of different patterns. The patterns often have special names and meanings and help to tell the Easter Story.

In Russia, during the early years of the 20th century, the former Royal rulers Czar Alexander III and Czar Nicholas II had some very special Easter Eggs made for them by the jeweler Carl Fabergé. The first egg was a gift from Alexander III to his wife, was made of gold and white enamel. Inside the egg was a golden yolk containing a golden hen with ruby eyes. Inside the hen was a tiny golden crown. It was so beautiful that the Czar said that every Easter, Fabergé should make the Czarina (Queen) a special egg. The design of the egg was left up to Fabergé, but each egg had to have a surprise in it. Fabergé made eggs for other members of the Russian royal family, and occasionally for the Czar to present to other monarchs. They are very precious, and are kept in royal collections and museums.

The origins of Easter date back hundreds of years ago, it has and is observed and celebrated in many ways: resurrection of the death of the Savior Jesus Christ; festival of Passover celebrating the Jewish survival of captivity for hundreds of years and rebirth as a people that escaped slavery for a new life; Pagan origin of the Saxon goddess of fertility and spring.

For all beliefs Easter is the time to celebrate the season change, rebirth, and renewal. We can enjoy dyeing eggs, baskets with lots of candy in them, and let’s not forget about the chocolate bunnies.

There are several ways to observe Easter and the freedom to choose how.....HAPPY Spring GIPSA!



## GIPSA's Women's History Month Observance

Through a personal connection, Ebony Broadwater, Civil Rights Staff, GIPSA was able to bring in Brigadier General Tammy Smith, Deputy Chief of Staff, Office of the Chief, Army Reserve to be the keynote speaker for Women's History Month (WHM). The theme for WHM was "*Weaving the Stories of Women's Lives*".

In August 2012, Brigadier General Smith became the first general to serve openly as gay in the U.S. military. In March 2014, Brigadier General Smith assumed duties as the United States Army Reserve, Deputy Chief of Staff. In this role, she is responsible for synchronizing the planning activities of 31 functional Directorates supporting both the Department of the Army Staff and Forces Command (FORSCOM). The Army Reserve is a Federal all-volunteer force with an end strength objective of 205,000 Soldiers.

While proud to be identified as a Citizen-Soldier, the majority of Brigadier General Smith's work history has been as an Active Component officer and member of the Active/Guard and Reserve Program. She and her wife Tracey Hepner are active in volunteer military family support events in the Washington, DC and Northern Virginia areas.

Brigadier General Smith was able to narrate personal stories of how she "accidentally" ended up in the military; how she was told she would not make a good leader because she didn't fit someone else's idea of what a leader should be; shared how she was "invisible", and details of how she decided to tell her commander that she was gay. Brigadier General Smith has served in the military for 27 years.

Words of experience and encouragement from Brigadier Smith:

"It's okay if your path is accidental. It's okay if you don't know what you want to do, just do something."  
 "Sometimes we evaluate people incorrectly. Don't project what your idea of what a leader should be based on what you think. Another person's approach may be different. Don't always look at what they can't do, but look at what they *can* do."  
 "We all have the opportunity to speak up on someone else's behalf."



Brigadier General Smith being presented with a Certificate of Appreciation by Susan Keith.

## Issuance Report

Terri Henry, Washington, DC

FGIS Directive 9180.35, Phytosanitary Inspection, dated March 16, 2015

### EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EAP)

(800) 222-0364

(888) 262-7848 (TTY)

<http://www.FOH4You.com>

Confidential toll-free number 24 hours a day/7 days a week



### Have an idea?



Then fill out your change request available at *inGIPSA* and email it to:  
[FGIS-CCWG@usda.gov](mailto:FGIS-CCWG@usda.gov)

# Training Updates

Caroline Thorpe, Washington, DC

## Mandatory Training Due

Course	Due Date	Trainees
<b>Civil Rights:</b> No Fear Act Comprehensive	Within 30 days of hiring (USDA)	New Employees
<b>Cultural Transformation and Civil Rights:</b> <b>Harassment Prevention for Federal Employees</b>  <b>Sexual Harassment Prevention for Federal Managers</b>	September 30, 2015	All Employees and Managers
<b>Cultural Transformation:</b> <b>Maximizing Employee Engagement</b>	September 30, 2015	All Supervisors, Managers, and Executives
<b>Cultural Transformation:</b> <b>Business of Coaching: Getting Ready to Coach</b>	September 30, 2015	All Hiring Managers, Supervisors and SEPMS
<b>CyberSecurity:</b> <b>FY2015 Informational Security Awareness</b>	March 31, 2015	All Employees (284 complete-441 incomplete)
<b>Ethics Training: To access see instructions below</b>	June 30, 2015	All employees
<p>Click the Curriculum tab (circle) in the lower-right corner of your account            Click "2015 Annual Ethics Training"            Click the small triangle next to the "1 item from item pool"            Choose one of the training options which are:                Acquisition                Leadership            Classroom or Live Option: Only choose classroom training if you know you will be offered this option. The originator of the course will mark you complete (Usually the ethics office).            The Hatch Act (Recommended for all employees who do not do contracting or are not "official leaders")</p>		
<b>LincPass Training:</b>	December 15, 2014 (Past due)	All Employees w/computer access (164 employees are incomplete)
<b>Performance Training:</b> <b>Performance Management in USDA.</b>	<u>Due: May 15, 2015</u>	All Employees whose Performance Training was incomplete for FY2014 due to technical issues.
<b>Safety-New Course: "Active Shooter: What You Can Do."</b> (Either Web-based or PDF version)	<u>April 30, 2015</u>	All Employees

### Training and Development Tools in a Nutshell from USDA and GIPSA

If you're not in an organized development program, what options and tools do you have to move forward in your career? Below is a standard list of ongoing resources employees may use to identify career moves and make sure they take the next step.

**1) Identifying next steps based on job series:** Considering a move in your current government series or to another series. First look at your own Position Description and also find the series on OPM's website for the next grade higher. Carefully review the documents to clearly identify associated competencies and review this with someone in your office on what those skills are. For those in FGIS that do grain grading you may want go to the InGIPSA website at <https://ingipsa.gipsa.usda.gov/training.aspx> and under "steer your career" click on Career Information for ACGs, ACTs, and ACAs.

**2) Goal Setting:** Individual Development Plans (IDPs) - Set developmental and training goals using your IDP and follow through.

Continued, see **Training** on page 20.

**Training** *from page 19*

It is easy to identify activities but often the issue is executing or following-up on those plans. See if you can commit to a trusted friend to verify if you are following up on your developmental or training goals whether they are on your IDP (job related and organizational) or personal goals (financial, health, career or personal (house, family hobby). Further, the Department will be rolling out a coaching program over the next year. Initially this will probably be open to those in leadership training programs. Coaching, is a teaching, training or development process via which an individual is supported while achieving a specific personal or professional result or goal. As a result, the coach often asks a lot of questions to clarify next moves that help the coaches identify their next best moves. This is for usually a short duration less than six months. The object here is to meet to move forward with your goals, ideally to become a more engaged employee.

**3) Mentoring:** Some of you may participate formally and others may opt out of the formal process and do this informally (finding someone with the skills you want and simply talking with them). Either way, this is a great opportunity for you to get information on both the technical skills or soft skills or career development of an employee. Mentoring is defined as an individual who facilitates personal and professional growth by sharing knowledge and insights learned through the years. The assumption is that, unlike coaching, the mentor has some form of information or advice needed by the mentee.

**4) Developmental Opportunities:** With support and assistance of the supervisor, the employee's present job can be restructured or arrangements made to have the employee temporarily transferred to another area to learn firsthand the necessary technical and managerial competencies required for effective performance in that job.

Examples of developmental activities include the following list:

- **Shadowing:** Providing a trainee or learner with the opportunity to observe a well qualified, journeyman level employee perform a particular skill. Immediately after the shadowing period, the learner needs to have the opportunity to perform the same skill and be given feedback on that performance.
- **Detail/Rotational Assignments:** Short-term assignment particularly appropriate for important skills that make up a small portion of an individual's job, but can lead to full-time work in that field.
- **Task Force Assignments:** This is particularly effective if the learner has an opportunity to work with well qualified people who will provide feedback to the learner on his/her performance and participation in the group.

**5) Development of Job Aides:** Requires that the learner develop a product that will assist in the performance of the job, while, at the same time, serving as a vehicle for learning job-related information.

- Cross-Program Assignments
- Special Work Projects
- Coaching Lower Level Employees

**6) Finally, Communication, Communication, Communication:** Studies show that one skill clearly associated with job success and leadership is communication. Consider taking courses on AgLearn to strengthen both written and oral communication. If you want to enter leadership polish your briefing skills by joining Toastmasters, which is only about \$50 per year. See if you can find someone in your office who writes well and may be able to work with you on a basic writing program.

Many of these items are not new, but reviewing what is available now since you completed your IDP may be of value if you feel the need to adjust your activities throughout the year.

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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Jennifer.s.hill@usda.gov  
**By April 13, 2014**



**Retiring?** To be included on our email distribution list after you retire from GIPSA, please send your email address to [Jennifer.s.hill@usda.gov](mailto:Jennifer.s.hill@usda.gov).

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