

USDA



## INSIDE THIS

## ISSUE:

- ◆ *FGIS Matters*
- ◆ *News You Can Use*
- ◆ *Honoring César Chávez*
- ◆ *New Employees*
- ◆ *Need a Makeover?*
- ◆ *Computer Rules*
- ◆ *Kids Day at USDA*
- ◆ *Science Festival in DC*
- ◆ *WRO's Agents, Auditors*
- ◆ *Got Fun? Got GIPSA?*

GIPSA *NEWS*

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

## League City Field Office Tips Innovation Scales Organization Responds to Changing Conditions in Agriculture

By Alan Wadyko

LEAGUE CITY, Texas—Today's successful companies are driven by leaders who understand that in order to remain relevant and competitive in their industry, they must be willing to grow with the advancement of technology, as it relates to their field. The agriculture industry is no exception. Ms. Brittany Brown, Industrial Scale Specialist (**pictured below**) is the first in our office to transition to an entirely electronic-based operation, and the results couldn't be better.

The advantages of using an electronic tablet are exponential with regard to customer service. The device enables Ms. Brown to operate far more efficiently.

Once scale results are entered into the tablet, the applicant can *approve* the inspection report at the site by simply

using a finger to sign on the line. Ms. Brown then emails it directly to the applicant for his record. Electronic entry eliminates error as well as the costs for supplies. Its mobility permits the scale specialist to make unscheduled stops for applicants who, often on short notice, request our agency's services. More important than savings, is customer confidence in the Federal Grain Inspection Service (FGIS). They are able to see first-hand that FGIS is committed to remaining competitive by keeping up with industry expectations. So far, customer feedback indicates that they are *very happy and satisfied with the technology progress*.

The League City Field Office is striving to fulfill GIPSA's vision: *a dynamic organization that responds effectively to the changing conditions of American agriculture*—technology included.



## News From Around the Horn

Technology and Science Division Showcases Talent at Annual Festival in Washington, D.C.



WASHINGTON—(From left to right) GIPSA Administrator Larry Mitchell visits the Federal Grain Inspection Service exhibit as part of USDA's participation in the 4th annual USA Science & Engineering Festival at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center, in Washington D.C, April 15-17. Mr. Jason Jordan from the Inspection Instrumentation Branch, and Ms. Shayle Williams from the Biotechnology and Analytical Services Branch, represented the Technology and Science Division as exhibitors. Joining them are Deputy Administrator Randall Jones, and GIPSA Chief of Staff Dexter Thomas. Mr. Jordan and Ms. Williams provided hands-on demonstration of equipment to measure DNA. The USA Science & Engineering Festival is a national grassroots effort to advance science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) education and inspire the next generation of scientists and engineers. More than 350,000 spectators attended the event. See page 4 for added coverage.



### GIPSA Idea Hotline

GIPSA Idea Hotline is open for business.  
Please send your suggestions or ideas to  
[GIPSA-Ideas@usda.gov](mailto: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;





## FGIS Matters

By Randall D. Jones, Deputy Administrator



### Stakeholder Input and Federal Register Notices

WASHINGTON—A critical component to successfully meeting our mission is the need to understand and be responsive to the demands of our stakeholders – growers, handlers, marketers and end-users.

We publish notices in the *Federal Register* seeking comments on standards and proposed rules. These notices allow U.S. and international stakeholders to suggest changes to current standards and regulations that may help facilitate the marketing of U.S. grain and commodities. FGIS has published numerous notices this year covering rice, services needed, sunflower seed, oats, triticale, flaxseed, rye, mixed grain, and regulation changes due to 2015 reauthorization. All current and past notices can be found on the GIPSA website.

### Labor Management Forum

The Labor Management Forum was held at the National Grain Center on April 19-20, 2016. Topics covered were work schedules, uniforms, reasonable accommodations, and hiring practices.

The next forum will take place in June or July. I want to thank **Wallace Martin, National President**, and the other union leaders for their support and contributions to a very successful forum.

### Upcoming Meetings

The annual **American Association of Grain Inspection**

**and Weighing Association (AAGIWA)** meeting will be taking place May 9-10, 2016. The annual **AAGIWA** meeting allows FGIS management to interact with official agency managers and staff and discuss important topics such as the suspension of the collection of 530 fees, licensing, the quality assurance program, and market needs.

On May 17 – 18, 2016, the **Grain Inspection Advisory Committee (GIAC)** will be meeting at the National Grain Center in Kansas City, Mo. The **GIAC** consists of industry stakeholders who are appointed by the Secretary. The meeting allows for FGIS to share information about current status of programs and services offered. The **GIAC** serves as an important link to our stakeholders and provide guidance to FGIS through resolutions that direct us in the utilization of staff and resources.

The **Canadian Grain Commission (CGC)** will be paying a visit to the **National Grain Center** and to **Washington DC** on May 31- June 3, 2016. During their visit, **FGIS** and **CGC** will enter into a Memorandum of Understanding that sets forth the manner in which we can collaborate on a number of areas including research and service delivery.

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



Enjoying Take Your Daughter/ Son to Work Day at USDA





## A Look at the Future One Grain at a Time

TSD Ambassadors Deploy to Annual Science and Engineering Festival



WASHINGTON—Young scientists, inventors, and technology enthusiasts recently converged in Washington by the thousands to celebrate and explore a week-long dedication to science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) education. At the annual USA Science and Engineering Festival at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center downtown, Ms. Shayle Williams (**above**), a physical scientist with USDA's Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration's , Biotechnology and Analytical Services Branch, demonstrated various ways to test grain. Ms. Williams and a fellow colleague, Mr. Jason Jordan, from the Inspection Instrumentation Branch are both from the Federal Grain Inspection Service, Technology and Science Division in Kansas City, Mo. They spent the weekend of April 15-17 interacting with curious students and science aficionados. Multiple USDA agencies including National Institute of Food and Agriculture, U.S. Forest Service, Agricultural Research Service, Food Safety and Inspection Service, Natural Resources Conservation Services, Food and Nutrition Service, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, and the Agricultural Marketing Service, also participated in the event. The USA Science & Engineering Festival is a national grassroots effort to advance STEM education and inspire the next generation of scientists and engineers.

Even President Obama welcomed science fair students to the White House and emphasized that his scientific agenda has included efforts to attract America's youth. "The fact is, is that we've got to get more of our young women and minorities into science and technology, engineering and math, and computer science. I've been really pleased to see the number of young women who have gotten more and more involved in our science fairs over the course of these last several years. Our diversity is a strength. And we've got to leverage all of our talent in order," he said. (USDA Photo by Lance Cheung)

## Technology and Science Division News

### Foreign Agriculture Service Undersecretary Alexis Taylor Visits National Grain Center

KANSAS CITY, Mo.—USDA Farm and Foreign Agriculture Service's Acting Undersecretary, Alexis Taylor, visited the National Grain Center (NGC) April 1. The NGC is part of the Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA) and includes five separate work functions including the Technology and Science Division (TSD) within the Federal Grain Inspection Service (FGIS). The Technology and Science Division is responsible for developing and improving methods for assessing quality in grain. Its laboratories use analytical methods from the fields of chemistry, microbiology, engineering and physical sciences to perform sophisticated analyses on highly refined equipment that detects properties in grain that may impact its marketable quality. Other functions within the NGC, such as FGIS' Field Management Division and Quality Assurance and Compliance Division, provide a framework for the Official inspection system—from establishing grain standards, to ensuring that the work performed by FGIS inspectors and third party providers who inspect grain under the supervision of FGIS, meet FGIS high standards for quality and consistency.



**Undersecretary Taylor speaks with Dr. Tandace Bell, (left) chief of the Biotechnology and Analytical Services Branch. Ms. Jennifer Helber, microbiologist, is in the background. (USDA Photo by Ruth Goff)**

Undersecretary Taylor met with the most senior female scientists and leaders at NGC including Ms. Mary Coffey Alonzo, director, Technology and Science Division; Dr. Tandace Bell, chief, Biotechnology and Analytical Services Branch; Ms. Cathleen Brenner, chief, Inspection Instrumentation Branch; Ms. Rhonda Lyne, physical scientist, Wheat Functionality Laboratory; Ms. Lisa Wulff, chemist, Trace Analysis Laboratory; and Ms. Jennifer Helber, microbiologist, Commodities Testing Laboratory. Each explained her functions at FGIS and their attraction to scientific work. They described challenges unique to women in a predominantly male field. Dr. Bell explained programs recently introduced at TSD to promote science, technology, education and math careers at the high school level. Ms. Alonzo described GIPSA programs designed to develop employee careers. The undersecretary spoke about a mentoring network, *Ag Women Lead*, and encouraged participants to become familiar with the USDA initiative.

Undersecretary Taylor toured the NGC and spoke to every scientist in the laboratories. Ms. Lyne provided a detailed explanation and demonstration of the *falling number test*, an important measure of wheat quality, and described how FGIS monitors the effectiveness of these tests performed under the official inspection system. Undersecretary Taylor also met with Mr. Brian Adam, chairman, FGIS Board of Appeals and Review (BAR). He described the BAR's responsibility for ensuring alignment within the official inspection system, and its role as final adjudicator of disputes regarding the assignment of an official grade. Undersecretary Taylor also met with Dr. Kent Lanclos, deputy director, Technology and Science Division. Ms. Ruth Goff, agricultural marketing specialist, explained the vital role of digital media in promoting understanding of grain inspection, and documented the undersecretary's welcomed visit.

## Employees in the News

### Welcome and Congratulations to Staff at the Technology and Science Division



**Dr. Chapman**

KANSAS CITY, Mo.—Dr. James Chapman was selected for a Team Leader position within the Analytical Chemistry Branch. Since 2014, Dr. Chapman worked for DeLaval Manufacturing in Kansas City as a senior chemist developing methods for detection of chemical residues in the manufacturing of dairy products, establishing ISO 17025 accreditation and GLP certification, and serving as an quality assurance auditor. He was

a consultant in the pharmaceutical industry for twenty years. Dr. Chapman also served as a research scientist and professor at Rockhurst University in Kansas City from 1993 to 2014 and was actively involved in undergraduate research. While at Rockhurst, Dr. Chapman was the chairman of the chemistry department from 1999 to 2005. Over the course of his career Dr. Chapman developed experience with a variety of separation and detection techniques used in analytical chemistry.

KANSAS CITY, Mo.—Mr. Daniel Patton was selected to fill the IT position formerly held by Mr. Robin Rother. He comes from a military family and lived in multiple cities throughout the United States, including tours in Korea. He joined the Army in 1999 and served overseas as an information operator/analyst for a Regional IT department in Seoul South Korea followed by duty in the general's staff IT Department in Daegu South Korea. After transitioning from the Army, he worked for the Defense Logistic Agency (DLA) distribution depot in Camp Carroll South Korea as a contractor for eight years. Mr. Patton joined the civil service in 2014 working with Satellite Communication for DLA as a Contingency IT Network Specialist in California in supporting the military, during disaster relief efforts, as well as other federal agencies such as FEMA. He came to Kansas City with his wife Jennifer, and two young sons.



**Mr. Patton**

KANSAS CITY, Mo.—Mr. Richard Goodwin was selected for the Physical Science Technician position in the Moisture Laboratory within the Inspection Instrumentation Branch.

Mr. Goodwin has experience with the types of instruments used in the lab, developed statistical process control charts, participated in round robin tests, and connecting instruments to computers for automated data collection.

He joins the Technology and Science Division from the Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard, Honolulu, Hawaii.

He previously worked for BASF for more than 20 years writing specifications, matching supplies with requirements, and testing samples to ensure measurements are within the accepted tolerance for the test.



**Mr. Goodwin**

KANSAS CITY, Mo.—Ms. Susanna Esker has been selected for a Physical Science Technician position within the Biotechnology and Analytical Services Branch.

Ms. Esker holds a bachelor's degree in biology, and has been with the Technology and Science Division since 2015 as a Physical Science Technician in the Inspection Instrumentation Branch (IIB).

While in IIB she performed data collection and analysis for the official and NTEP moisture meters. Prior to working at TSD, Ms. Esker was employed at Monsanto performing metabolite, carbohydrate, and spectral analysis of grain as well as preparing PCR, ELISA, PONCHO, SNP, and Zygosity tests. Ms. Esker began her tenure with the Biotechnology and Analytical Services Branch last month.



**Ms. Esker**

## Employees in the News

### Federal Grain Inspection Service Extends Welcome & Congratulations to Staff Across GIPSA



**Ms. Mitchell**

KANSAS CITY, Mo.—Ms. Angela Mitchell was selected for a Chemist position within the Analytical Chemistry Branch. Ms. Mitchell has experience in a variety of chromatographic and spectrometric analysis methods, Good Laboratory Practice (GLP) regulatory compliance, and quality control review of liquid chromatography/ mass spectrometry (LC/MS) results. She previously worked at MRIGlobal in

Kansas City, where she has served as an analytical chemist for 12 years. While there, Ms. Mitchell worked on the National Toxicology Program under contract with the National Institutes of Health. She also worked on classified projects involving innovative method development, supported the National Cancer Institute's Chemical Carcinogen Reference Standard Repository, and developed analytical methods to support product registration under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) regulations. Ms. Mitchell also worked as a chemist for both Tyson Foods and Pace Analytical Services.

KANSAS CITY, Mo.—

Dr. Dereck Bussan comes to the USDA from Tennessee, where he worked at Oak Ridge National Laboratory. He devoted his time there developing chromatographic methods coupled to inductively coupled plasma mass spectrometry (ICP-MS). Dr. Bussan received his PhD in chemistry from the University of Mississippi with an emphasis in the detection of mercury methylation potentials utilizing gas chromatography combined with ICP-MS. Prior to entering the doctorate program, he worked for an environmental laboratory in Stillwater, Okla. Dr. Bussan obtained his bachelor's and master's degrees at the University of Iowa and Oklahoma State University, respectively. His doctoral thesis focused on the investigation of molybdenum application in sensing devices for peroxide-based explosives. Dr. Bussan has extensive experience in instrumental methods, and his talents in residue analysis are going to be very useful to the Analytical Chemistry Branch.



**Dr. Bussan**



**Mr. Williams**

NEW ORLEANS—

Mr. Aaron Williams was recently selected as a shift supervisor in the Lake Charles Office. Mr. Williams began his career with FGIS in 2001 in the New Orleans Field Office Summer Internship Program. In May 2002, he received his Bachelor of Science degree in Agricultural Science with a concentration in Animal Science from Southern University in Baton Rouge. Following graduation, he was excited to remain in Louisiana and continue working for FGIS as an agricultural commodity technician. In 2005, Mr. Williams transferred to the Crowley sub-office and gained additional experience in the rice industry. In 2008, he was promoted to an agricultural commodity grader. Mr. Williams utilizes his knowledge and leadership skills while working at many of the rice mills in Southwest Louisiana.

KANSAS CITY, Mo.—

Dr. Erika Eichmann worked in pharma, chemical, bioanalytical, and government positions prior to joining to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. She received her bachelor's degree from Abilene Christian University and a Master of Science in Organic Chemistry and Doctorate in Analytical Chemistry from the University of Texas at Austin. Her experiences include extensive project management and laboratory instrumental analysis techniques. Dr. Eichmann has worked as a technical writer, compliance specialist, and scientist in explosives research, pharmacokinetics, drug metabolism, and analytical chemistry. Her background in managing client expectations, coordinating team responsibilities, and using and developing analytical instrumental methods will be valuable resources to the Analytical Chemistry Branch.



**Dr. Eichmann**



## Employees Making A Difference

New Hires, Retiree Farewell, Service Awards



**Mr. Lewis**

WASHINGTON—GIPSA's Information Technology Branch recently expanded its headquarters staff. Mr. Yale Lewis, a software engineer, has 15 years of experience building and maintaining client-server database applications using Microsoft Access, Visual Basic for Applications (VBA), and SQL Server in both government and the private industry. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Software Engineering from Capitol College in Laurel, Md., and completed coursework in C#.NET development from the University of California San Diego. Mr. Lewis honed his software skills working as a C# API developer with a major insurance provider. He is also an Army veteran. During his time away from the office he enjoys fishing, reading, and spending time with his wife and daughter.

WASHINGTON—One of the longest serving members of the Information Technology staff, Mr. Robert Kayne retired April 1.



**Mr. Kayne**

Mr. Kayne served for more than 32 years at USDA headquarters in a variety of assignments. He worked at the Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration for five administrators. Making the decision was easy. "You know when it's time to go. I made up my mind New Year's Day," he said.

As for the future, Mr. Kayne simply wants to take it easy and enjoy retirement. "I'm looking for some land where I can build a single-level home and maybe even have a dog," he said.

"He was always the first one to come in the morning, open the door and greet everyone with a hello," said a grateful fellow employee. "We're going to miss him."



**Ms. Roussell**

NEW ORLEANS—Ms Amanda Roussell was recently selected as quality assurance manager for the New Orleans Field Office.

Ms. Roussell is a 28-year veteran of the Federal Grain Inspection Service. She graduated from Nicholls State University with a Bachelor's degree in Plant Science.

She began her career with the Federal Grain Inspection Service in the Lucher Field Office in 1987. She received a promotion to agricultural commodity grader in 1990.

Ms. Roussell worked and trained to procure a variety of skills and in 2000 was promoted to supervisory agricultural commodity grader. She is a trained facilitator, compliance officer volunteer, a graduate of the 2010 Leadership Development Program as well as a mentor. Ms. Roussell brings a wealth of knowledge and leadership to the quality manager position.



### Milestones at the National Grain Center

KANSAS CITY, Mo.— Technology and Science Division Director Mary Alonzo recognized several staff members recently at the National Grain Center with USDA pins and certificates for their years of federal service and dedication to the Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration ..

**(From left to right: Mr. Fred Felix, 10 yrs; Ms. Rhonda Lyne, 20 yrs; Ms. Sara Dobbins, 10 yrs; and Ms. Brooke Rodriguez, 10 yrs. USDA Photo by Ruth Goff)**



## Employees Making A Difference



### Administrator Recognizes Staff for Years of Devoted Federal Service

WASHINGTON—Several employees from the Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA) headquarters were recently recognized for reaching milestones in government service and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

GIPSA Administrator Larry Mitchell presented bronze pins for ten years of federal service to Ms. Lakita Ross, Freedom of Information officer (left), and Ms. Sherri Murphy, program analyst, Field Management Division (right). Ms. Linda Alston, equal employment specialist from the office of Civil Rights (far right), displays her silver pin for 25 years of service at USDA.



## Packers & Stockyards Program

### Western Regional Office Enhanced Training Program Develops Agents, Auditors

AURORA, Colo.—The training of employees, especially new agents, in the Packers and Stockyards (P&S) Program at the Western Regional Office (WRO) had been a relatively inconsistent endeavor. Some agents received exceptional training while training for others employees could have been improved.

Beginning several years ago under the direction of Regional Supervisor Kraig Roesch, the WRO set out to change this by creating an improved and more consistent training program. To accomplish this, in the spring of 2014, the WRO began its peer-to-peer, on-the-job training program.

Primarily developed by WRO Supervisor Thomas Duggan, the program leveraged the diverse and extensive experience of P&S employees by helping to train one another. All employees were encouraged to participate. The formal program concluded at the end of FY 2015. However, some aspects of the program are still being utilized by agents to continue to gain the necessary skills and experience.

A more recent development of training undertaken by the WRO is the program to train new P&S agents in the regional office for approximately one year before sending them to their permanent duty station. This training program was designed for agents destined to be placed as resident agents and resident auditors, but will be utilized for office agents as well.

During the training period, new agents meet and build relationships with the office staff, experience and learn how the regional office functions. They also receive intense on-the-job field training directly from experienced agents. Each new agent is assigned a mentor to help guide and coach him or her through the training process. The first two employees to benefit from the enhanced training program were Travis Burkel and Dan Mitchell.

Following a one-year training program, Dan will relocate to California as a resident auditor. Dan served in the U.S. Army for 12 years as a combat engineer including tours in Germany, Korea, the Middle East, and the U.S. After leaving the military, he earned both his bachelor's in accounting and his mas-

ter's in business administration from the University of Colorado at Denver.

Dan wrote about his experience training in the WRO. "I first came to the agency on July 27, 2015. I was to fulfill up to one year of training in the Aurora, Colorado office before being transferred to my official duty assignment in Stockton, California. Stockton is home for me, so the relocation was seamless."

"The first week of employment was filled with paperwork, learning the computer systems, and the new employee manual. During that first week, I also sat down with Ryan Montgomery, WRO Legal Specialist, and learned about the P&S Act and Regulations."

"The second week I was able to travel with Doug Neesen, WRO auditor, and Anne Webster, WRO CRU member, to Kansas for a new market orientation and custodial review. This was an amazing learning experience and my first opportunity to see what my duties as a resident auditor would be."

"Since that trip to Kansas in August, I have worked with almost all of the employees in the office. I have worked on packer check weighs, custodial reviews, packer prompt pays, dealer reviews, and a number of follow-up investigations."

"Working from the office for the first eight months allowed me to gain insight into the roles of CRU and the LIE's. I was also able to help process annual reports and special custodial reports, tasks that resident agents normally do not complete."

"My training progressed from shadowing the lead agents, to completing some of the tasks on my own, and then to completing the full engagement; all of this while having an experienced agent with me. Finally, in December, 2015, I conducted a full market review



**Mr. Dan Mitchell**



## Packers & Stockyards Program

on my own at a market in Brush, Colo. The auctions market was close enough to the office in Aurora, Colo. that I could easily contact someone for help if I needed. Fortunately, I did not need any assistance and the review went great. In January I started working on assignments in California, and in April moved to begin work as a resident auditor in Calif.”

Travis was hired to become a resident agent, but ultimately stayed in the WRO. He is a recent graduate from the University of Arizona where he earned a master’s in agriculture and resource economics as well as his undergraduate degree in food safety. Travis grew up in Tucson where his family had a small swine breeding operation and he showed steers in 4-H. He also has experience working on a ranch and was an Ag Inspector for U.S. Customs Border Protection in Nogales, Arizona. Travis said the training was very beneficial and echoed Dan’s comments regarding the new training program in the WRO.



**WRO Resident Agent Travis Burkel**

The WRO supervisory team said it’s quite pleased with the positive outcome of the new training program and very appreciative of the staff and agents that helped make it a success. The WRO team plans to use their training program for all future hires.



Pictured from left to right: Ms. Ana Alvarado, Ms. Sherri Murphy, Milkshake, Ms. Jennifer Weiland, and Ms Jennifer Hill. (USDA Photo)

### We Got Fun—Got GIPSA?

WASHINGTON—No, the Packers and Stockyards Program has not acquired a new mascot. But who can resist a photo with Milkshake the cow, especially when sporting a stylish milk mustache?

It was all in good fun during USDA’s *Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day* April 28. This year’s theme was *Sparkling Aha! Moments*. GIPSA and other USDA agencies partner annually to promote the president’s initiative to provide work-based learning opportunities for young people. The event is part of USDA’s national outreach to local communities.

The emphasis is always on fun activities. USDA staff serve as role models for children while they learn how to protect our natural resources and the environment. See page 19 for more photos and *Aha! moments*.



## FGIS Departmental Initiatives & International Affairs



### Interested in Foreign Assignments?

By Byron Reilly

WASHINGTON—For several years, the Office of Departmental Initiatives and International Affairs has maintained a database of FGIS employees who are willing, qualified, and able to represent the agency overseas. Since the last time we updated our database, there have been many changes to the FGIS family, with retirements and new hires. To update our records, we invite you to renew, or newly express, your interest in international travel.

Global importers of U.S. grain are essential to the livelihood of FGIS. To maintain and improve our international reputation, employees are periodically asked to go on international assignments to interact face-to-face with our overseas customers, instead of less personal phone calls and email communication we use to conduct our daily business. International assignments provide unique opportunities. FGIS employees represent the Agency, meet and work with our counterparts and customers overseas, and experience new cultures.

The assignments can be quite rigorous. For example, one might be asked to conduct instructional seminars; speak in front of large groups; assist with the development of domestic grain standards and marketing infrastructures; obtain samples during discharge; help importers with quality specifications, or monitor the quality of a grain cargo in an overseas port. Assignments may require departing on short notice, working long hours under adverse conditions, and the ability to interact tactfully in tense situations with persons of different cultures. Others may be less rigorous and more familiar to you; for example, conducting a grading seminar. As each assignment arises, we match the skills required to the employee's qualifications.

If you are interested in this type of professional opportunity, we ask that all interested employees (GS-9 to GS-13) complete and submit a Questionnaire and Skills Summary from the *inGIPSA* website (Employee Resources/ Job Listings), *even if you have done so before*. There may be opportunities for international travel assignments this fiscal year. To be considered for these opportunities,



please submit this document by June 3, 2016. Completed Questionnaire and Skills Summary forms should be sent to [Jennifer.s.hill@usda.gov](mailto:Jennifer.s.hill@usda.gov).

If you have any questions, please call Ms. Jennifer Hill at (202) 690-3929.

### GIPSA Unveils New Website May 1

KANSAS CITY—The newly renovated Grain Inspection Packers and Stockyards Administration website debuted May 1 following several months of design changes, coding, and testing.

The new website sports a sleek look with a responsive mobile design that adapts to practically any platform—from a desktop screen to the most compact smartphones on the market. The site also features an enhanced search engine and is handicapped accessible.

Spearheading the effort was Mr. Jeremy Covington, webmaster and project leader. Mr. Covington collaborated with members of the GIPSA web council that stood up last August. It includes representatives from all divisions and programs across GIPSA.

“Designing the new website was a monumental task and I wish to thank our webmaster, Mr. Jeremy Covington for the many personal hours he devoted to this undertaking, as well as to the members of the web council for their efforts,” said Administrator Larry Mitchell.

## What's News at Headquarters?

### Quality Assurance and Compliance Division Explains Role, IT Welcomes Newest Staff Member

#### QACD Staff Examines Personnel Misconduct, Criminal Investigations

By Andrew Greenfield

WASHINGTON— Ever wonder who gets to investigate issues like misconduct, fraud, waste, abuse, mismanagement, and other allegations that impact USDA missions, and GIPSA programs?



Determining the validity of accusations is the role of the Quality Assurance and Compliance Division (QACD). QACD staff

scrutinize all charges of personnel misconduct within GIPSA by collecting supporting evidence that either credits or discredits allegations of employee misconduct.

QACD acts as an unbiased, third party to sort through the finger pointing, and reports findings to management and employee relations for a decision.

Official matters are not necessarily limited to actions that occur within the workplace. Personal conduct may also be considered an official matter if it reflects undesirably on suitability for continued employment, or if it adversely affects the performance of the employee's duties.

Examples of misconduct include, but are not limited to, absence without leave; falsification of official documents; conducting personal business during duty hours; fighting, threatening, or using abusive language toward coworkers, supervisors, or the public; refusal or failure to follow instructions or procedures; neglect of duty; misuse of government vehicles; inappropriate use of government use of government facilities, supplies, equipment, services, telephones, personnel, or information technology equipment including excessive or inappropriate use of the internet; worker compensation fraud; sexual harassment; falsification of an application for employment; intoxication or the consumption of alcohol or drugs while on duty; or a prohibited political activity.

In addition to personnel misconduct investigations, QACD is also responsible for conducting criminal investigations pertaining to alleged violations of the United States Grain Standards Act and the Agricultural Marketing Act.

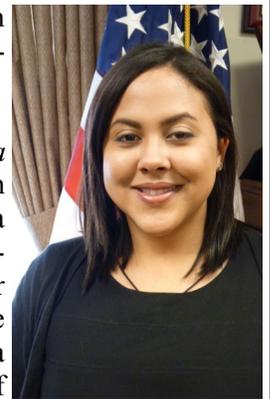
These are just a few of the topics that Ms. Samantha Simon and I learned about recently during a week-long training session in Boise, Idaho.

On a personal note, I would like to thank our training facilitator from the office of human resource management, Ms. Sheila Kopczyński, and the U.S. Forest Service for hosting us out in Boise for the week.

Contact the QACD staff in Washington, D.C. at (202) 690-3206 for general questions about personnel misconduct or criminal investigations.

#### Bienvenida to USDA and GIPSA!

WASHINGTON—Ms. Nelitza Martinez recently joined the GIPSA Information Technology staff as an information technology specialist in applications software.



**Ms. Martinez**

Ms. Martinez graduated *Summa Cum Laude* from the Interamerican University of Puerto Rico with a Bachelor of Science in Bioinformatics and a minor in Computer Science. She is also a part-time graduate student at the Georgia Institute of Technology College of Computing where she is earning a Master's in Computer Science.

After interning at the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, U.S Department of Treasury, in 2015 managing documentation and requirements gathering for applications development, she developed a genuine interest in the impact of information technology operations in the federal government.

As an applications developer in the information technology team, she hopes to keep growing professionally.



## News You Can Use

Run, Hide from Active Shooter—But not From AgLearn!



### Agency Issuances and Cancellations

WASHINGTON— The following issuances are in effect for all employees of the Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration:



GIPSA Policy Memorandum Reference No. 01, Reimbursement for Local Travel, dated March 1, 2016.

GIPSA Policy Memorandum Reference No. 02, Conformance with New Departmental Training Regulations, dated March 24, 2016.

GIPSA Directive 4315.1, Training Policy for Supervisors, Managers, and Executives is cancelled.

### LGBT AgLearn Course Ready

WASHINGTON— The Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights announced the assignment of a mandatory course *Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Non-discrimination in the Federal Workplace* in AgLearn on April 1. This course is required for all USDA employees, contractors, partners, and volunteers.

To launch the course, click on the link below. You will be prompted to sign into AgLearn. The video-based content will take approximately fifty minutes to complete:

[https://aglearn.usda.gov/learning/user/deeplink\\_redirect.jsp?](https://aglearn.usda.gov/learning/user/deeplink_redirect.jsp?link-)

[link-Id=ONLINE\\_CONTENT\\_STRUCTURE&componentID=CR-OCPT-LGBT&componentTypeID=Web+Based&revisionDate=1459191840000](https://aglearn.usda.gov/learning/user/deeplink_redirect.jsp?link-Id=ONLINE_CONTENT_STRUCTURE&componentID=CR-OCPT-LGBT&componentTypeID=Web+Based&revisionDate=1459191840000)

After finishing, check your completed work in the Learning Status pod to verify that the course is complete. This requirement must be completed no later than September 30, 2016.

### Are You Prepared for an Active Shooter?



WASHINGTON—The beauty of spring blooming in the nation's capital is all around, but in addition to enjoying mild weather and outdoor activities, federal employees are reminded that preparing for unexpected violence is not only prudent, but necessary in today's environment.

Officials at the Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Coordination (OHSEC) at USDA emphasize that the shootings at Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, South Carolina, at San Bernadino, California, on college campuses, public places, and even military bases, are grim realities that *active shooter* situations can happen anywhere.

USDA agencies and OHSEC continue efforts to engage employees by heightening security and situational awareness through the AgLearn course entitled, *Active Shooter: What You Can Do*.

The course examines the real threat of extreme workplace violence in the form of an active shooter entering a facility and recommends the following steps:

#### Run/Escape:

- Attempt to evacuate, even if others don't want to
- Have an escape route and plan
- Leave your belongings behind
- Once safely evacuated, call 911
- Keep your hands visible to avoid being mistaken for the shooter

#### Hide/Shelter:

- Find a place to hide
- Block entry and lock doors
- Remain quiet and silence all cell phones
- Quietly call 911 when you are safely hidden

#### Fight/Take Action:

- As a last resort, try to incapacitate the shooter

## News You Can Use

### Know the Rules Governing Use of Government Computers & Networks

WASHINGTON—Utilizing new tools, the Department of Agriculture, in conjunction with the Department of Homeland Security, has uncovered instances of the viewing of sexually oriented, and or pornographic materials that are bypassing the web content filter.

“There is expected behavior when utilizing a government-furnished device,” said Mr. Dan Knight, GIPSA’s information technology business director and chief information officer. “Use of government-provided systems, networks, and computers, or any other types of government resources are to be used for official business only,” he said.

“Compliance with Department Regulation 3140-001 USDA Information System Security Policy is everyone’s responsibility,” he said.

#### **The following activities are considered misuse of government equipment:**

- The creation, download, viewing, storage, copying, or transmission of sexually explicit, sexually oriented, or pornographic materials.

- Annoying or harassing another individual, for example through uninvited e-mail of a personal nature or using lewd or offensive language.

- Using the computer for commercial purposes or in support "for-profit" activities or in support of other outside employment, business activity (e.g., consulting for pay, sales or administration of business transactions, sale of goods or services), or gambling.

- Engaging in any outside fund-raising activity, endorsing any product or service, participating in any lobbying activity, or engaging in any prohibited partisan political activity.

- The creation, copying, transmission, or retransmission of chain letters or other unauthorized mass mailings.

- Any activities that are illegal, inappropriate, or offensive to fellow employees or the public. Such activities include hate speech or material that ridicules others on the basis of race, creed, religion, color, sex, disability, national origin, or sexual orientation.

- Use for posting office information to any external newsgroup, chat room, bulletin board, or other public forum without prior approval.

- Any personal use that could cause congestion, delay, or disruption of service to any office equipment. This

includes sending pictures, video or sound files or other large file attachments that can degrade computer network performance (Example: Facebook, Twitter).

- The unauthorized acquisition, use, reproduction, transmission, or distribution of any controlled information. This includes copy righted computer software; other copyrighted or trade marked material or material with intellectual property right (beyond fair use); privacy information; and proprietary data or export-controlled data or software.

- Downloading, streaming and viewing of movies and music not related to official business is prohibited (Example: YouTube).

Mr. Knight also emphasized that GIPSA proprietary information stored on electronic and computing devices remains the sole property of GIPSA. “This information needs to stay within the network. The transferring of data to private accounts for any reason is against departmental policy,” he added.

Finally, all non-government owned equipment is prohibited from being connected to the GIPSA enterprise network.

If you are unsure about what is acceptable computer or internet usage, ask your supervisor for further guidance and clarification.

A copy of the department regulation may be viewed at: <http://www.ocio.usda.gov/policy-directives-records-forms/directives-categories>



## News You Can Use

### AgLearn Webinars for Total Employee Makeovers

WASHINGTON—If you are giving thought to advancing your career, the training section at GIPSA is offering webinars on personal branding, assertive communications, and networking in the coming months.

Ms. Dianne Sutton will share tips from her bestselling book, *Workplace Savvy, A Guide to Gaining a Competitive Edge in Today's Workplace*. They include proven models, techniques, as well as career pitfalls to avoid. The first 25 registrants for each session will receive a free copy of the book.

Webinars take place in Washington and at the National Grain Center May 18, July 13 and August 16.

*Assertive Communication* takes place May 18 from 1:00 -3:00 pm (Eastern): Assertiveness is an attitude associated with specific behaviors. This session assists with positive concepts and communication skills to enhance your effectiveness.

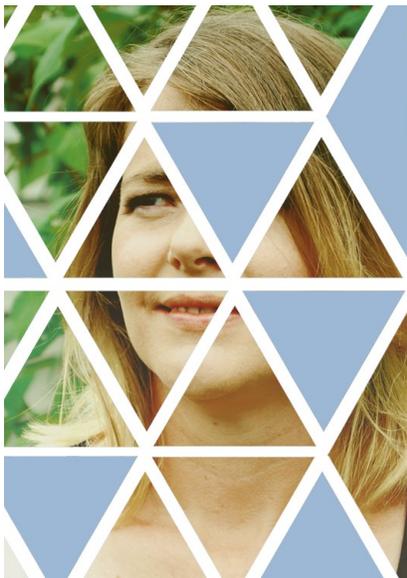
*Workplace Etiquette – What you don't know could hurt your career!* is offered July 13 from 1:00-3:00 pm (Eastern): The workshop introduces participants to the work etiquette skills needed to conduct themselves effectively, correctly, and confidently in any work environment, professional situation, or business social setting. Perceptions of work behavior and professional interaction have changed as the demands of technologically evolving environments have altered organizational cultures. The course addresses how we are often judged according to how we look and conduct ourselves.

*Networking Your Brand* is offered August 16 from 1:00-3:00 pm. Networking is an organized method of making links from people you know to the people they know, gaining and using an ever-expanding base of contact. Networking is about who knows you, not who you know.

If you require an interpreter, or other type of accommo-

ation, please contact Ms. Aline Assad: Training Specialist, at 202-720-0186 or [aline.l.assad@usda.gov](mailto:aline.l.assad@usda.gov)

Participants receive notification of enrollment through AgLearn. Seats are limited. For additional information about enrollment, course administration, or other questions please contact: Caroline Thorpe, 202-690-2332 or [caroline.c.thorpe@usda.gov](mailto:caroline.c.thorpe@usda.gov)



### USDA Guidance for Poll Workers

WASHINGTON—As in previous election years, guidance from the USDA Office of Human Resource Management regarding employees serving as volunteer poll workers continues to be in effect. That guidance states that:

Employees, with supervisory approval, may be granted administrative leave to volunteer as non-partisan poll workers in the upcoming elections.

Administrative leave may be granted at the discretion of the employee's supervisor in accordance with the needs of the office and strategic mission.

While on administrative leave, employees may not accept compensation for time spent as a volunteer. This excludes reimbursement for items such as parking and meal expenses.

USDA employees are covered by the Hatch Act. Contact the Office of Ethics for questions.



## Honoring a Quintessential Change Maker

### Agriculture Secretary Vilsack Comments on American Legend César Chávez

WASHINGTON—America’s history is rich with struggle and sacrifice, remedied by the selflessness and fearless leadership of remarkable people. A champion for justice, César Chávez advocated for and won many of the rights the agricultural workforce enjoys today. April 23 marks the anniversary of Chávez’s passing, but his legacy is immortalized in the fight for economic and social justice, and his spirit lives on in the vibrancy of rural America.

A migrant farm worker, Chávez toiled alongside men, women, and children who performed backbreaking labor for meager pay in deplorable conditions. He devoted his life to correcting these injustices, rallying through boycotts, marches and hunger strikes to secure pay raises and improve conditions for farm workers across the nation.

Conditions have improved since César Chávez founded the National Farm Workers Association in 1962, but we still have a long way to go. The Chávez family believes in honoring César’s legacy by ensuring laws and policies protect farmworkers and their families. And at USDA, we work diligently to ensure our programs improve quality of life for all Americans and that farmworkers, the backbone of America’s rural economy, have the resources they need to thrive.

The ability to influence change extends beyond USDA, and in coming weeks, California state legislators have an opportunity to make a real difference. California has the largest agricultural workforce in the country, but farm laborers are only eligible for overtime pay after working a grueling ten hours a day. I support the Chávez family in commending California Assemblywoman Lorena Gonzalez and farmworker advocates for their efforts to pass the Phase-In Overtime for Ag Workers Act of 2016, which would adjust farmworker requirements for overtime pay from ten hours to eight, improving economic stability for many.

The contributions of America’s farmworkers are endless and under the Obama Administration, USDA has made it a priority to ensure the environments in which they live and work are comfortable and safe. Farmworkers are our partners in shaping agricultural policy and provide consistent guidance and leadership in the Department’s efforts to level the playing field for the skilled individuals who help feed our nation.

As we push to build ladders of opportunity for every American to climb, we recall Chávez’s resilience through setbacks and his refusal to scale back his dreams. When we stand against income inequality and fight to raise the minimum wage – because no one who works full time should have to live in poverty – we draw strength from his vision and example.

César Chávez was recently inducted into USDA’s Hall of Heroes, a tribute that recognizes the trailblazers and innovators within agriculture, and in March 2015, I was humbled and honored to dedicate a piece of our headquarters to the man who led and organized peaceful, positive change for American farmworkers. A quintessential changemaker, Chávez created a shift in popular discourse, reminding the public that every job has dignity, every life has value, and everyone – no matter who you are, what you look like, or where you come from – should have the chance to succeed.

In Chávez’s memory, USDA supports policies that empower American farmworkers and acknowledge the hard work and long hours spent harvesting the food that sustains us. We are hopeful farmworkers will be afforded the rights they deserve across the Golden State and beyond.



Secretary Vilsack speaks during Cesar Chavez Day at USDA Headquarters (USDA Photo)

## César Chávez Day 2016

### Proclamation by the President of the United States of America

As a child of migrant workers who struggled just to get by, César Chávez knew the importance of having an economy that works for everyone and devoted his life to ensuring our Nation upheld the values upon which it was founded. On his birthday, we celebrate a man who reminded us -- above all else -- that we all share a common humanity, each of us having our own value and contributing to the same destiny, and we carry forward his legacy by echoing his peaceful and eloquent calls for a more just and equal society.

César Chávez demonstrated that true courage is revealed when the outlook is darkest, the resistance is strongest, and we still find it within ourselves to stand up for what we believe in. In the face of extraordinary adversity and opposition, he stood up for the inherent dignity of every person, no matter their race, color, creed, or sexual orientation, and for the idea that when workers are treated fairly, we give meaning to our founding ideals. Guided by his faith in his convictions, he fasted, marched, and rallied millions to "La Causa" to expand opportunity and demand a voice for workers everywhere. Together with Dolores Huerta, he founded the United Farm Workers, and through boycotts and protests, he ushered in a new era of respect for America's laborers and farm workers.



**César Chávez**  
(1927-1993)

Today, we honor César Chávez by continuing to fight for what he believed in, including a living wage for workers and their right to unionize and provide for their family. Workers should have a safe workplace and the comfort of knowing that if they work hard, they can feed their family, earn decent benefits, and gain the skills they need to move up and get ahead. We will also keep up our efforts to reform our Nation's broken immigration system so more people can contribute to our country's success. And as we strive for well-deserved policies for America's workers, like a higher minimum wage and paid leave, we are reminded that the movement César Chávez led was sustained by a generation of organizers who spoke out and fought for a better, fairer America -- and it is now upon us to do the same in our time.

Our Nation's progress has always been driven by the belief that extraordinary things happen when we come together around a common cause, and through decades of organizing and serving others, César Chávez embodied this ideal. On César Chávez Day, let us unite to reach for the America he knew was possible -- one in which hard work is rewarded, prosperity is shared, and equal opportunity is the right of all our people.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim March 31, 2016, as César Chávez Day. I call upon all Americans to observe this day with appropriate service, community, and education programs to honor César Chávez's enduring legacy.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this thirtieth day of March, in the year of our Lord two thousand sixteen, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and fortieth.



## Take Your Daughter, Son to Work at USDA Day

Moms and Dads Bring their Children to USDA for a Day of Adventure and Exploration



## Employee Recognition Day at GIPSA

GIPSA Partners with USDA Agencies, Cooks Up Cinco de Mayo Fiesta for Employee Recognition Day



WASHINGTON— GIPSA hosted Employee Recognition Day at USDA headquarters, and what better way to celebrate Cinco de Mayo than with a good fiesta? Undersecretary Edward Avalos and Administrator Larry Mitchell ditched their office agenda and ties, and hit the kitchen for hours preparing a feast of fried Mississippi catfish, hush puppies, assorted chicken, beef and veggie tamales.

“This is all about giving thanks for having the best talent and resources possible to help us fulfill our mission,” said Mr. Mitchell.

More than 150 employees representing sister agencies including Agricultural Marketing Service, and Animal, Plant Health Inspection Service dropped by to share the event with assortments of pot-luck dishes, beverages and desserts.

**(Top right, bottom: Undersecretary Edward Avalos and Administrator Larry Mitchell take a break from kitchen duty on Cinco de Mayo.)**



