



GIPSA *NEWS*

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

JUNE 2014
2014

2 Years of Passion and Leadership

Larry Mitchell, Washington DC

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Recently, I celebrated my second anniversary with GIPSA and just wanted you to know that the dedication, expertise, professionalism and especially the passion exhibited by the agency staff has not gone unnoticed. I see it here in headquarters every day and have witnessed the same in all of the field offices I have visited to date.



Larry Mitchell

The qualities just mentioned go to the heart of why GIPSA is a leader within the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). In the past two years, you stepped forward in addressing agency challenges in the areas of information technology, civil rights, cultural diversity and inclusiveness, the Combined Federal Campaign, tight operating budgets and increased responsibilities.

When Secretary Vilsack challenged us to increase our participation in the Federal Employees Viewpoint Survey (FEVS), you stepped up again and increased GIPSA's participation rate. Thanks to the GIPSA Employee Engagement Team (the team itself is yet another example of your passion and willingness to volunteer) our agency increased our FEVS 2014 participation rate to over 75.5 percent, a rate well above our target of 70 percent. This compares to a response rate of just 51.8 percent in 2012 and 60.6 percent in 2013. Job Well Done!

Another area where the agency stands ready to meet the challenge is SPACE. In fact, we already have a head start. According to Dr. Parham, Assistant Secretary for Administration, the USDA South Building is large enough to accommodate 9,000 employees, but currently only has 4,500. Moving people from other offices leased and rented in the national capital area to the South Building helps save those precious appropriated funds that can go to more critical needs. Some offices in the area cost \$8,000 per employee, while others cost in excess of \$18,000. But one of the keys to the space initiative is the amount of outdated paper records stored. And again, GIPSA has stepped forward as a leader. P&SP's Policy and Litigation Divi-

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sion/ Business and Economic Analysis Division employees took the lead and first steps in addressing the Departmental Initiative on better space utilization by reviewing records stored in the South Building, including those stored in the attic, and disposing of 4.5 tons of paper records, which provides 350 cubic feet of storage space. Job Well Done! We will be working with the rest of the agency to follow in their footsteps.

GIPSA is also well on its way to meeting our goals for this summer's Feds Feed Families (FFF) campaign. This year we hope to focus more activities outside of the capital area, and our field offices are responding. Grand Forks, N.D. field office has already made a 4,500 pound donation of peas, lentils and beans gleaned from samples to their area food bank. The Crowley, La. field office has donated similarly gleaned rice to their local food bank too. And headquarters' people please continue attending our weekly farmer's market. In addition to purchasing fresh produce for personal use, you can also buy produce items and donate them at the market. The person manning the table will weigh the food and give you a receipt to turn in to our very own FFF Coordinator, Linda Alston for agency credit. And let's not forget GIPSA's very own Jennifer Hill, our FFF coordinator for last year's campaign, is now temporarily assigned to help coordinate the national campaign for the entire federal government. I have no doubt that This Job Will Be Well Done!

We will soon have one more outlet to lead and use our passions and expertise. Last winter Secretary Vilsack, frustrated as many of us are with the restrictions now in place to foster fair and competitive livestock markets, asked GIPSA to lead an effort to help small and medium sized livestock producers find new marketing opportunities. Working with the Know Your Farmer Know Your Food campaign and other initiatives across the Department, a Toolkit for small livestock and poultry producers was created <http://www.usda.gov/documents/usda-tools-small-midsized-livestock-poultry.pdf> and announced by Secretary Vilsack. GIPSA is now working to create a team made up of experts from the appropriate USDA agencies to train P&SP employees at their upcoming regional meetings. We will then work to distribute the information to county FSA offices, local producers and community based organizations. I am certain of the generations of livestock expertise behind so many individual P&SP staff members. I understand your frustration in not being able to do more, your passion to do more and your willingness to step forward and lead this critical undertaking. I have no doubt that This Job Will Be Well Done!

As I mentioned in my opening paragraph, I have witnessed just how extraordinary GIPSA folks are in every office I have visited so far. I must admit that even after be-

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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.

Names in the News

Condolences



John Marcus Shropshire, the son of Marcus Shropshire, passed away at 1:45 p.m. Saturday, June 21, 2014, at his residence in Clinton, La. He was 40, a native of Baton Rouge and resident of Clinton. He was a retired dispatcher for Intertek USA and a 1992 graduate of Hahnville High School. Visitation was held from 2:30 p.m. until 4:30 p.m. Friday, June 27, 2014, at Mercy Funeral Home, Clinton, then from 10 a.m. until 11 a.m. Saturday, June 28, at Union Chapel Baptist Church until services at 11 a.m. at the church. Interment took place in Shropshire Cemetery, Clinton. Survivors include his wife, Healanie Shropshire; his parents, John and Perlae Shropshire; a son, Reggie Marcus Shropshire; a brother, Derik Shropshire; and a grandfather, William M. Whitley Sr. Preceded in death by his maternal grandmother, Mamie Whitley; and paternal grandparents, Gertrude and L.J. Shropshire.

Charles A. Ogletree, 90, Retired Federal Grain Inspector with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, passed away April 28, 2014. Charles is survived by his wife, Marian of Wichita; sons, Michael (Artis) Ogletree of Washington, D.C., David (Sharon) Henderson of Aurora, CO; daughters, Sandra (James) Williams of Jonesboro, GA, Cynthia Ridge-Henderson, Cassandra "Linda" Moore, Beverly Forkum, all of Wichita, Bonita (Michael) Gray of Washington, D. C. Visitation took place at Hillside Funeral Home East. Service took place at St. Mark United Methodist Church, 1525 N. Lorraine, Wichita, KS 67214.



Retirement

Michael Barnhart is retiring on July 31, 2014 with 34 ½ years of federal service. Mike is from Gretna, Louisiana. He began his career with the Federal Government in 1977 in the FGIS Belle Chasse Field Office.

In his retirement, Mike plans on doing a lot of fishing. He and his wife Karen have two children and 5 grandchildren. They plan on spending time visiting their children and grandchildren.

New Position

Sara Ludwig is the new Administrative Support for the Domestic Inspection Operations Office. Sara brings eight years of administrative experience working with the Technology and Science Division of FGIS to her new position in d100. Sara holds a business and marketing degree from Park University. She will be working in the d100 section of the National Grain Center. D100 is happy to have Sara as a member of the field office.

La Dondra Taylor has been selected as the new Assistant Administrative Officer in the Midwestern Regional Office. La Dondra started her career with Packers & Stockyards Program in January 2000 as a student intern. She has been a Legal Instruments Examiner since 2003 and is currently serving as a member of the CCWG. La Dondra has her Bachelor's degree in Business Administration from Grand View University.

New Hires



Jeremy Covington is a Mississippi native that grew up in a small town called Columbus, MS. He is a USDA 1890 scholar and began college at Tennessee State University in Nashville, Tennessee in fall 2010. As an incentive of the 1890 Scholars Program, Jeremy has received internships every summer with GIPSA. His first experience as an USDA summer intern was alongside Yohanna Lorio at the New Orleans Field office. There, he learned the basic duties of an IT Specialist and helped Yohanna set up servers at the local grain elevators.

Jeremy spent his last two summer internships learning at the National Grain Center (Technology and Science Division) in Kansas City, MO. His first summer in KC he worked with Robin Rother, who is the IT specialist at that site, as well as with Roger Friedrich and the digital media team. His second internship in KC was alongside James Lambert under the supervision of LeRoy Capper, where he helped on several FGISonline projects including alternate approaches to collecting data from a Foss 1241 grain analyzer. Jeremy is now a full time employee and says he looks forward to the road ahead. He believes that the education he received from Tennessee State University along with his experiences from his internships have more than prepared him for his career with the USDA. Welcome Jeremy!

Names in the News (continued)

New Hires

The New Orleans Field Office would like to congratulate the newest group chosen as Agriculture Commodity Graders: **Joel Banks, Bonnie Breaux, Benjamin Brown, Dechone Bruno, Joshua Chumbley, Benjamin Cotton Jr., Kenneth Davis, Louis Harrison, Quintin Joshua, Oscar Porter, Joshua Raymond, Jared Rodriguez, Dwan Scott, Ashleigh Young, and Paris Zervoudis.** Their training has begun with the first location being in Destrehan, LA. Other offices that will provide them with training. Additional experiences in the coming months will be Grand Forks, ND; Kansas City, MO; and Stuttgart, AR.



The New Orleans Field Office would like to welcome the following ACA and ACT Intermittents as they join the ranks as our newest employees: **Trentis Allen** (Kenner); **Raheem Dunmiles** (Luling); **Shakeil Lucas** (St. Rose); **Corey Butler** (LaPlace); **Alexis Edwards** (Paulina); **Trevor Greiner** (LaPlace); **Christophe Garon** (Gramercy); **Tyler Kramer** (Paulina); **Torri Pack** (Baker); and **Jarred Scott** (Baton Rouge).

FGIS Matters....!

Randall Jones, Washington DC

FEDERAL EMPLOYEE VIEWPOINT SURVEY. GIPSA rolls. I want to thank each of you – and there were many - who took the time and filled out the employee viewpoint survey. Out of the 327 surveys sent to GIPSA staff, 247 of you filled out the survey which placed the agency at 75.5% completion rate and well above our target of 70%. Way to go. Completing the survey is a primary tool for you to voice your opinion and help shape our great agency. Obviously we have much more work to do much of which will be facilitated by employee action committees. I encourage you to stay engaged and together we can make GIPSA the best place to work.



Quality Assurance. The primary core mission of FGIS is to facilitate the marketing of U.S. grain which is accomplished by the great work that each of you do on a daily basis. While our activities are broad in scope, the results of much of our work are relayed to our stakeholders via the certificates that we issue. If you compare FGIS to a private enterprise, you could say the product that we produce and sell is the certificate. It is critical that the marketplace and our stakeholders have supreme confidence in the certificates that we issue and the data contained therein. **Samantha Simon, Director, Quality Assurance and Compliance**, and her team are focused and dedicating their efforts to ensure that our work meets our high quality standards. We are currently looking at inspector results on a weekly basis and are very pleased with the work that is being done. Early results show, just as we expected, that our inspectors are the best at what they do. Nationally the proficiency for all inspectors exceeds 90%. We have heard that many of you would like to have access to the results and we are working feverishly to create and deploy a system that will routinely inform inspectors. Confidence in our certificates is paramount and will continue to remain a high priority for FGIS.

Supervisor Training at the National Grain Center. At the end of this month, we have training scheduled for all the shift supervisors and the first line supervisors at the National Grain Center. The training will consist of a wide range of topics such as budgets, human resource training, and fall protection.

Fed Feed Families. Feds feed families kicked off in the beginning of June and with the help of the **Grand Forks Field Office**, GIPSA hit the ground running. **Ed Stallman, Manager, Grand Forks Field Office**, and his team donated 4,572 pounds of beans and peas to their local food bank. Everyone is encouraged to participate and can do so by making a donation to a local food bank and then provide a copy of the receipt showing the donation to Linda.M.Alston@usda.gov.

Welcome To Our Future Inspectors. **Ron Metz, Director, Domestic Inspections Operation Office**, is leading an initiative to train the next group of grain inspectors many of which were hired through the **Pathways Recent Graduate Program**. All of the new hires will be travelling to the **National Grain Center** later this summer to receive training on grain grading and an introduction to the different divisions within FGIS and the work performed by each. Until next time, keep up the good work and stay safe!

Feds Feed Families at ERO

The **Eastern Regional Office**, Atlanta, is currently in the process of collecting donations, as part of the nationwide **Feds Feed Families (FFF)** campaign. USDA has the lead this year and kicked off the campaign in May. JC Cannon, John Rollins, and Regina Willis have been selected as coordinators for the ERO initiative. This is the first time ERO has participated, and our office has collected approximately 60 pounds thus far, and is off to a great start, after only two weeks into the campaign. We still have two months left for our collection and if people respond as they have in our past food drives, we should have up to two hundred pounds by campaign end. We will keep up our advertising and email campaign for the drive, focusing on the critical need for donated items during the summer months. The Atlanta Community Food Bank has been selected to receive donations.



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ing here two years, I still haven't gotten to all of our field offices, but rest assured that my goal is to visit the few offices I have missed as soon as I can. Can't wait to see you, because GIPSA's people step up to the challenges and lead, and they do so with passion

Names in the News continued...

GIPSA Spotlight



Employee Spotlight



Name: Jessica Power
Years with GIPSA: 7.5 years
Division: P&SP

Title: Resident Agent

Major Duties: As Kentucky's Resident Agent, my duties range from compliance reviews to investigations. I insure compliance with the Packers and Stockyards Act and Regulations.

Greatest accomplishment: My lifelong goal has been to promote agriculture. My passion and drive was instilled in me at birth, as a daughter and granddaughter of Kentucky farmers. Raised on a dairy, beef, and tobacco farm, I chose agriculture as my life path. Graduating from Morehead State University with a Bachelor's of Science Degree in Agriculture Science, my goal was the agriculture industry. My career

with the federal government began nearly 12 years ago with USDA APHIS Veterinary Services. My promotion to Resident Agent with USDA GIPSA PSP was my greatest federal accomplishment. The position combined my love of agriculture, government, and law into a career position tailored for my background and studies.

Interesting fact: In addition to Agriculture my passion and work for the American Cancer Society's Relay For Life has been a big part of my weekends and vacations. I have served the past several years as the Event Chair for the Relay For Life of Bath County. This year I have taken over my family's team as Captain. Our involvement was sudden and tragic, with a cancer diagnosis. My little sister was diagnosed with Hodgkins Lymphoma at 18 years old. Today, she's a 13 year cancer survivor and we Relay for her. She has been an inspiration to our entire family and community. When I'm not Relay fundraising you will find me on weekends following my 8 year old daughter, Maci Jo, to competitive All-stars Cheer events or camping with my husband Michael. We live a filled life of love and family!

Favorite unhealthy food/ healthy Food: Since giving birth in 2005 I have struggled with weight. I was finally diagnosed with a complex form of Hypothyroidism in 2013 after several years of testing and continued Endocrinologist visits. Since 2011 I have dropped 47 lbs and am working to a healthier life as I continue to battle autoimmune diseases. My favorite healthy food during my weight loss and health struggles has been broccoli baked chicken.

What did you want to be when you grew up: When I was growing up I wanted to be an Attorney, FBI Agent, or State Police officer.

Favorite quote: And on the 8th day God looked down on his planned paradise and said, "I need a caretaker." So, God, made a farmer." - Paul Harvey 1978 FFA Convention (My mom was there!)



Thank You

The Crowley, LA office has been donating to a local food bank. Since the beginning of Fiscal Year 2014 they have donated on several occasions totaling 800 lbs. of Rice. They received a thank you letter from the Kaplan Food Bank President. The pounds collected will go towards GIPSA's total donations toward the Feds Feed Families Campaign.



Presenting the National Grain Center's Feds Feed Families Champion!



Lisa Wulff

Lisa is making a Difference and You Can Too!



Hello! My name is Lisa Wulff and I am a Chemist at the National Grain Center in Kansas City, Missouri. This is my first year at the NGC and also my first time volunteering for Feds Feed Families, and I look forward to working with the event this summer – supporting a good cause brings out the best in people. Working with my colleagues here at the NGC as we try to make a real difference in the lives of others has already been an enjoyable experience. I hope others recognize that they too can truly make a difference by volunteering a little of their time to the service activities available throughout the year.

Thus far, we have been able to collect enough non-perishable items for our local food bank, Harvesters, to provide 119 meals to those in the Kansas City and surrounding areas currently needing food assistance. As the summer progresses and those of us with gardens find ourselves with a surplus of garden-fresh produce, we hope to also contribute some of this bounty to local food pantries through the nationwide Ample Harvest network (<http://www.ampleharvest.org/FFF>). To give us all even more of a reason to be generous with our support, coming events at the NGC also include monthly bake sales and a lunch sale, all with items graciously donated by coworkers.

In a country that produces enough food to be able to distribute it around the world, it seems almost unbelievable that any of our own residents should at times be concerned about where their next meal might come from. What can you do to help? Get involved with Feds Feed Families and make a difference!

<http://www.harvesters.org/>



2014 GIPSA Feeds Families Champion: Gleaning



On Wednesday, July 2, Dawn Cowan and I volunteered at the Mid-Atlantic Gleaning Network (MAGNET) Warehouse. The Gleaning Network links farmers who have crops that are edible but not marketable with those who distribute food to the needy through the work of volunteer gleaners. The food is then taken to the warehouse where it is prepared for distribution. This is what several USDA employees did for four hours on Wednesday. Dawn and I, along with Dr. Gregory Parham, Assistant Secretary of Agriculture for Administration, his wife, and employees from Food Nutrition Service and Forest Service, prepared and bagged cabbages for distribution. All food gleaned

and donated by Washington, D.C. area USDA employees is donated to the Capital Area Food Bank (CAFB). The CAFB feeds those who suffer from hunger in the Washington metro area by distributing it through its network of 500 partner agencies.

One of the employees brought her two elementary school age children. This was not their first gleaning experience. They participate in gleaning, along with their mother, at several other gleaning sites. For their participation, they receive the credits they need to graduate high school. Their kids enjoyed talking with everyone and finding out about the work we do at the USDA.

Consider gleaning in your communities. Gleaning prevents the unnecessary wasting of quality food, provides access to fresh, nutritious foods for low-income populations, who are often unable to buy healthy, local foods because of cost or availability; provides resources to nonprofit agencies, many of who have shrinking staffs and budgets due to the economic climate; and builds good relations between community members, local gardeners, and farmers.

By donating my time, I was able to help others within the community. I enjoyed the experience, meeting other employees and their families, and plan to continue gleaning during Feds Feed Families and on my own time.



VILSACK NAMES GRAIN INSPECTION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

WASHINGTON, 2014 -- On April 2, 2014, Agriculture Secretary Thomas J. Vilsack announced the appointment of seven members to serve on the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Grain Inspection Advisory Committee. The appointees will serve a 3-year term.

"I am pleased that these individuals have agreed to serve on the Grain Inspection Advisory Committee," said Vilsack. "They bring a great deal of knowledge and experience to this committee."

The new members are: **Scott E. Averhoff**, owner/operator, Scott Averhoff dba SARA Farms, Waxahachie, Texas; **Marvin R. Paulsen**, professor emeritus, University of Illinois, Urbana, Illinois; **Timothy D. Paurus**, vice president terminal operations, CHS Inc., Inver Grove Heights, Minn.; **Cesar Ramirez**, manager, Gavilon Grain LLC, Progreso, Texas; **Todd E. Russom**, manager, Anheuser-Busch InBev, St. Louis, Missouri; **Jessica L. Wilcox**, farmer/crop insurance agent, Wilcox Farms/CGB Diversified Services, Fairview, Oklahoma; and **Steven Wirsching**, vice president and director, U.S. Wheat Associates, Portland, Oregon.

The Grain Inspection Advisory Committee is comprised of 15 members appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture who represent all facets of the grain industry. The Grain Inspection Advisory Committee meets annually to advise USDA on the establishment of programs and services under the United States Grain Standards Act.

Have an idea?



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

A Shout-Out Goes to...

Shout-out to **Brett Offutt** for hiring a Summer Youth Employment Program Student.

A shout out goes to P&SP's Policy and Litigation Division/Business and Economic Division employees who took the lead and first steps in addressing the Departmental Initiative on better space utilization by reviewing records stored in the South Building, including those stored in the attic, and disposing of 4.5 tons of paper records, which provides 350 cubic feet of storage space.

A shout out goes to the **GIPSA Employee Engagement team** for hard work to assist the agency in increasing our Federal Employee View Point Survey (FEVPS) 2014 participation rate to over 75.5%, a rate well above 2013 and above our 2014 target.

A shout-out to **Dan Knight** and **Abhai Singh** for their diligence in trying to hire an additional Summer Youth Employment Program student.

A shout out to **Jennifer Hill** for being chosen to serve on the NATIONAL Feeds Feed Family Team for the entire federal government, AND for agreeing to continue her work as editor and publisher of GIPSA News!

"I would like to express my heart-felt appreciation to **Ms. Ana M. Alvarado** for volunteering to scribe the first meeting of the members of Action Team 3 held on Wednesday, July 9, 2014. This was not a meeting Ana was even scheduled to attend. Without my asking, Ana offered to take notes at the meeting. She knew my co-facilitator, Jennifer Hill, was away on detail and would not be able to assist me. Not only did Ana take detailed notes, more than once during the course of the meeting Ana noticed me getting bogged down "in the weeds" with regard to an issue and she politely reminded me of the time and number of questions we had yet to cover. Because of this, the Team covered more ground during the two-hour meeting. Ana also stopped to ask questions of the participants to ensure the notes properly described the issue they had raised. Ana Alvarado simply made the meeting a better experience for everyone, especially me." -Tim Hansen

Special Emphasis Corner

Links of Interest

The following are links to the 2014 previous special emphasis programs given by USDA.

- ◆ February – Black History Month Observance – Triple Nickels Film and Panel Discussion
 - ◆ [http://origin-qps.onstreammedia.com/origin/usda/\[Inbox\]/022714/022714.html](http://origin-qps.onstreammedia.com/origin/usda/[Inbox]/022714/022714.html)
- ◆ March – Women’s History Month – Katherine Archuleta, Director U.S. Office of Personnel Management
 - ◆ [http://origin-qps.onstreammedia.com/origin/usda/\[Inbox\]/031314/031314.html](http://origin-qps.onstreammedia.com/origin/usda/[Inbox]/031314/031314.html)
- ◆ May – Asian American Heritage Month – I do not have the direct link. Click the link below which will take you to the OHRM website for all links
 - ◆ <http://www.dm.usda.gov/employ/observances.htm>
- ◆ June - GLBT Pride Month Observance with celebrity Chef Art Smith
 - ◆ http://origin-qps.onstreammedia.com/origin/usda/%5BInbox%5D/DM/060514/060514a_OCAPFINAL.mp4
- ◆ June – Caribbean American Observance - Doreen E. Thompson, ESQ. National Caribbean-American Foods & FoodWays Alliance
 - ◆ http://origin-qps.onstreammedia.com/origin/usda/%5BInbox%5D/DM/061914/061914_1CAPFINAL.mp4
- ◆ **The links can be found on the USDA, OHRM site under “Observances”. All USDA observance are listed for the year.**
 - ◆ <http://www.dm.usda.gov/employ/observances.htm>
- ◆ **People's Garden Will Bring Sustainability Showcase to DC's National Mall**
 - ◆ http://www.huffingtonpost.com/f-kaid-benfield/peoples-garden-will-bring_b_5534609.html

Excerpt from the “50th Anniversary of the Civil Rights Act Proclamation

by the President of the United States of America”

“...As we reflect on the Civil Rights Act and the burst of progress that followed, we also acknowledge that our journey is not complete. Today, let us resolve to restore the promise of opportunity, defend our fellow Americans' sacred right to vote, seek equality in our schools and workplaces, and fight injustice wherever it exists. Let us remember that victory never comes easily, but with iron wills and common purpose, those who love their country can change it.

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 July 2, 2014, as the 50th Anniversary of the Civil Rights Act. I call upon all Americans to observe this day with programs, ceremonies, and activities that celebrate this accomplishment and advance civil rights in our time.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this thirtieth day of June, in the year of our Lord two thousand fourteen, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-eighth.”

**Follow [this link](#) for complete proclamation.*

Special Emphasis Corner *continued*



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PSP Change Control Working Group

MRO Economist Gayle Pounds Barnett submitted a far-reaching Change Request (CR). Gayle's CR proposed a Swine Contract Review Module based on the 2008 Farm Bill requirements. The CCWG reviewed the CR and worked with Gayle to include review standards for the new GIPSA regulations that went into effect in February 2012.

The standards were closely reviewed and refined to fully effect the Act and regulations. Because of the complexity of the legal and policy issues that were involved, the CCWG put together a Working Group that included Deputy Administrator Susan Keith, PLD's Brett Offutt, Gale Mason, and Jeana Harbison, OGC Attorneys Jonathan Gordy and Leah Battaglioli, and Regional Office legal staff – Greg Andrews, Kevin Studer, Ryan Montgomery, William Brake, and Wayne Basford. The Working Group met on three occasions and did exhaustive legal research into the laws of all 50 states and territories regarding issues such as choice of law and statutes of limitations. In depth research was done on the different arbitration models that are in use, including the Federal Arbitration Act, the American Arbitration Association, and the Uniform Arbitration Act used in many states. The P&SP Management Team recently approved of the CR, and it will be implemented shortly with training on the use of the new module.

Thanks to Gayle Pounds Barnett and the Working Group, GIPSA is now in position to conduct contract reviews in a way that will help to insure fair contract terms. The work undertaken by this large effort will also be used in finalizing a Poultry Contract Review Module. Gayle's CR is a prime example of an employee helping her agency to greatly improve its processes, and our hats go off to her with gratitude!

Travel Bits Pieces



Concur Government Edition (CGE) - GIPSA is scheduled to transition to the new travel system, Concur Government Edition, CGE, on February 23, 2015.

Travel Card Training – The annual travel card training has been revised and is now available in AgLearn. All travel cardholders are required to take the mandatory training. A hard copy of the training is available. Also, cardholders are required to sign the cardholder agreement which is in AgLearn and will be stored in your learning history. The due date for the training is August 31, 2014. Please e-mail or fax a copy of your training certificate and agreement to Rose Alexander at rose.d.alexander@usda.gov or 202-690-2173.

Issuance Report

Terri Henry, Washington, DC

GIPSA Directive 4790.5, Office Safety, dated May 29, 2014.

GIPSA Directive 2100.1, Accounting Adjustments, dated May 29, 2014.

Issuance Change No. 6 to the Fumigation Handbook, dated June 16, 2014.

FGIS Policy Memorandum Reference No. 259, Large Animal Excreta, dated June 17, 2014.

Issuance Change No. 4 to the Rice Inspection Handbook, dated June 19, 2014.

Issuance Change No. 110 to the Grain Inspection Handbook-Book III Inspection Procedures, dated June 18, 2014.

Training Updates

Caroline Thorpe, Washington, DC

Mandatory Training Due		
Course	Due Date	Trainees
No Fear Act Comprehensive	Within 30 days of hiring (USDA)	New Employees
Veteran Employment Training for Federal Hiring Manager	August 31, 2014	Hiring Managers
Reasonable Accommodation For the Federal Workforce	August 31, 2014	All employees
Calendar Year 2014 Ethics Sweepstakes	June 30, 2014	All Employees
Managing Performance in Marketing and Regulatory Programs	June 30, 2014	All Employees
Effective Team Communication	August 31, 2014	All Employees
General Security and Situational Awareness Training	August 31, 2014	All Employees
Active Shooter Training	August 31, 2014	All Employees
Leave	August 31, 2014	All Supervisors and Managers
WebTA for Supervisors	August 31, 2014	All Supervisors and Managers

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. 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

Continued, see Training on page 16

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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 coachee 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

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