



GIPSA *NEWS*

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

Traveling Along America's Heartland Visiting Field Offices and Engaging with Employees

By Larry Mitchell



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WASHINGTON— Some folks seek a little solitude in the scenery –you know, time to chew on challenges and come up with solutions. When I hit the trail to visit the field as Administrator for the Grain Inspection Packers and Stockyard Administration (GIPSA), at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) I saddle up and head out. Way out. In fact, some folks at USDA say I cross over and around, up and down the map until I'm one with the background.

These days I would rather continue doing my thinking and problem solving behind the wheel—preferably in a combine or tractor, but my trusty Chevy truck handles the duty nicely. Most times I avoid flying the friendly skies at 38,000 feet. It's not the altitude, or the crowds at airports, mind you. I'll be the first to admit I need to be firmly at ground level. After a quarter century plowing fields under Texas skies, I've got to plant my feet firmly on the soil to see how crops are growing. That means talking to America's farmers where they live and work.

I took a break from the weather in the nation's capital recently and jumped right back into the heat and humidity of America's heartland. In keeping with the spirit of USDA's *Summer Road Trip* last month I drove my pick-up on a multi-state visit to GIPSA field offices in the Midwest and engaged with employees about how we're supporting America's farmers. I even had the chance to spend Saturday with an 85-year-old friend and mentor who still farms in southeastern Nebraska and personally runs a combine. Along the way I also listened to farmers in Ohio, Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, Iowa, Kansas and a few more.

Logging more than 3,000 miles in two weeks across 16 states may sound like a lot of windshield time, but that's how I prefer to audit the agricultural landscape—by observing each crop as the odometer on my Chevy continues to spin. Talk to my staff and they'll tell you my road map almost tends to follow the farmer's almanac.

(Continued on p. 2)

See pages 3, 9 & 12 for more photos

Traveling Along America's Heartland (cont.)

I wouldn't want to second-guess any of the fine folks at USDA who monitor and report crop conditions fulltime. Mother nature's cold, wet, late start to this past spring turned parts of Northern Ohio into a train wreck from all the heavy rains. I could actually see where the subterranean drainage tiles were located because that is the only place that the corn was tall and green – the rest was stunted and yellow. While rains took a similar toll on Kansas and Missouri wheat, cornstalks appeared to reach for the sky in Iowa and Wisconsin grain activity was also buzzing in other areas.

I was shocked by the excellent quality of the crops in most areas and how they had overcome the late, wet, cold start. It was pretty rough in a few localized places along the highway from St. Louis to Louisville and it looked spotty for late-planted crops.

I was very happy to observe that in most areas the late, cold, wet start to this year's corn and soy crops had recovered to a great extent. Corn was in or moving into pollination stage, and temperatures were moderate enough to ensure viable pollination. Where the ground had any slope at all, crops looked fantastic.



Here I am at the Kansas Grain Inspection Service in Kansas City, Kansas observing Manager Mike Wholey as he explains wheat inspection procedures.



GIPSA's Toledo field office was experiencing a mini-harvest due to unusually high movement of grain for this time of year. Everyone was happy to be busy.

Besides listening to farmers during this trip I also projected my sights long range.

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I visited the fine folks at human resources, Animal Plant Health Inspection Service in Minneapolis. They provide GIPSA with valuable personnel services support. From left to right, Tina Crane, Tim Johnson, Pam Lake, me and Kristi Pirtle



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;



Traveling Along America's Heartland (cont.)



I met with FGIS Managers during their meeting at the National Grain Center in Kansas City, Missouri July 21-23. Pictured **(from left to right)** on the front row are: I.J. Perez, Samantha Simon, Byron Reilly, Randall Jones, Mary Coffey Alonzo, Tony Goodman, and Ed Stallman. On the second row are: Pat McCluskey, Kerry petit, Kent Landos., Denise Ruggles, Karen Guagliardo, Eric Jabs, Carl Jackson. On the third row are: Scott Cooley, Lynn Thomas' Cathleen Brenner, Kendra Kline, Ron Metz, Brian Adams, Tim Norden, and Tandace Bell. On the top row are: Andy Ping, Randy Deike, Robert Amhold, Sandra Metheny, Alan Wadyko, Dave Grady Jeffrey L'Heureux, and Rob Dorman.
(USDA Photo by Ruth Goff) **(See page 9 for more photos from the field.)**



While in Chicago I visited with our staff at the Master Track Scale Program. Here I am with Marcus Harwitz. The operation is entirely run by two GIPSA employees. The majority of railroad track scales around the country ensure the accuracy of their scales through GIPSA's operation. You can learn more about it as well as GIPSA's other programs by visiting our website and checking out our videos: http://www.gipsa.usda.gov/fgis/video_library.aspx



FGIS Matters

By Randall Jones, GIPSA Headquarters, Washington, D.C.

Reauthorization Update.— Unfortunately there has not been any action taken on Capitol Hill regarding the reauthorization of the U.S. Grain Standards Act because Congress is in its yearly August recess. The Senate and House are scheduled to return September 8 so there will be limited number of days in which to conduct business.

The House of Representatives passed H.R. 2088, the United States Grain Standards Act Reauthorization Act of 2015. The Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry passed the U.S. Grains Standards Act Reauthorization Act of 2015 which authorizes FGIS to establish marketing standards and conduct inspection and weighing for a variety of grains and oilseeds. The matter is pending action by the full Senate.

I anticipate the Senate will take action and that there will be minor differences in the House and Senate versions. Differences between House and Senate bills are usually sent to “conference” which consists of members of the House and Senate who work to develop a single bill that is then submitted to the House and Senate for another vote.

I remain very hopeful that the House and Senate will take action to send a reauthorization bill to the president for his signature before the bill expires, but what happens if reauthorization does not occur prior to midnight September 30? The answer is that FGIS will continue business by performing inspection and weighing services as well as oversight of the official agencies. The critical difference is that FGIS will not have authority to collect supervision and administrative fees. The saving grace is that FGIS can use fees previously collected to cover the supervision and administrative costs. so at least for a short period of time our stakeholders would not see any disruption in services. Next month I hope to have better news.

Meeting with Pacific Northwest Exporters— FGIS managers traveled to Portland August 27 and accompanied members of the Portland Field Office for the annual meeting with grain exporters from Washington and Oregon, as well as staff from the North American Export Grain Association. During the meeting FGIS members discussed local and regional issues of importance to exporters, market trends, workplace safety, and international issues impacting the movement of grain from the U.S. to foreign commerce. This was an optimal time for sharing upcoming changes that may impact the industry and receiving valuable feedback regarding FGIS service delivery. During the visit the management team enjoyed time engaging in discussions with staff from the Portland Field Office. A similar meeting took place in New Orleans earlier in the year.

FY 2016 Budget— GIPSA is currently determining proper allocation of funds for fiscal year 2016. This is a critical activity since the agency must ensure all offices receive proper funding to cover staff salary and benefits as well as office expenses. As usual, the GIPSA leadership team is making difficult decisions for FGIS to be successful, meet the needs of our stakeholders and stay within the anticipated spending authorities. If Congress does not pass a funding bill for FY16 by September 30, we can expect a continuing resolution. That is a mechanism which provides funding for a period less than a year – typically for a few months.

Labor Management Forum— A labor management forum takes place this month at the **National Grain Center** in Kansas City, Missouri. FGIS managers and union representatives prefer to meet in person every year to discuss issues of mutual concern. Check back in next month’s article for a detailed account of the forum.



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

Spotlight on Civil Rights

BIRMINGHAM, AL— An outreach team from GIPSA headquarters traveled south recently to speak with minority farmers and ranchers and celebrate civil rights achievements.

Civil Rights Director Kevin Smith and Outreach Coordinator Anderson Neal, attended the Federation of Southern Cooperatives / Land Assistance Fund 48th anniversary celebration and the 14th Estelle Witherspoon Lifetime Achievement Awards dinner in Birmingham, Alabama August 13-18.

GIPSA's team met with minority farmers, ranchers, and landowners from the Federation of Southern Cooperatives represented by six states: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, and South Carolina to discuss issues about improving their quality of life. They were accompanied by Mr. Peter Jackson, coordinator for the Small and Beginning Rancher program.

The Federation of Southern Cooperatives is a non-profit, cooperative association organized by grassroots cooperatives from across the South as a direct outgrowth of the civil rights movement. Along with training, education and technical assistance to limited resource farmers, ranchers, and landowners, their work includes cooperative development, marketing, wills and estate planning, and affordable housing. The Federation owns over 1,000 acres of farm and forestland.

GIPSA representatives attended the Federation's Rural Training and Research Center in Epes, Alabama, participated in USDA panel discussion, workshops, toured exhibits, agri-tours, and received updates on the Hispanic and Women Farmers and Ranchers Settlement.

The civil rights representatives also distributed the *USDA Toolkit Postcard for Small-scale and Mid-sized Livestock and Poultry Producers and Processors* to attendees who also received information about USDA programs and services.



Farmers and ranchers from several states across the South discuss issues during a recent meeting of the Federation of Southern Cooperatives in Alabama. (Photo by Anderson Neal)

(Continued on p. 12)

Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack on the Passing of Amelia Boynton Robinson

WASHINGTON— Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack released the following statement on the passing of Amelia Boynton Robinson, a key civil rights leader and former employee of the Department of Agriculture, where she worked



to ensure that rural African Americans across the South had access to resources and information about food production and processing, nutrition and healthcare: "Amelia's quiet leadership taught America that inclusion and understanding have the power to lift up individuals and communities and help them heal. She stood for equality and opportunity for all at a time when those things were closed to too many. Earlier this month, I had the opportunity to make the walk across the Edmund Pettus Bridge—a visual reminder of the legacy of Amelia and thousands more like her who championed civil rights for all. We should honor Amelia by continuing to fight so that no American remains shadowed and shackled by prejudice, injustice, and poverty. My thoughts and prayers are with Amelia's family, friends and everyone who loved her.

President Obama Pays tribute to Amelia Boynton Robinson during a ceremony at the White House.

(Spotlight on Civil Rights, cont.)

In Memoriam

Statement from President Obama on the Passing of Civil Rights Leader Julian Bond



Julian Bond, 1940-2015

WASHINGTON—Julian Bond, outspoken advocate of civil rights, economic justice, peace, and racial equality died August 15. He was 75. Among his accomplishments, Mr. Bond served for 20 years as a representative and senator in the Georgia legislature. He was president of the Southern Poverty Law Center in Montgomery, Alabama, professor of history at the University of Virginia, and visiting professor at American University in Washington, D.C. During the 1960's Mr. Bond participated in non-violent protests and voter registration drives throughout the South. As a college student he served as communications director for the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. Mr. Bond graduated from Morehouse College and received numerous honorary degrees throughout his lifetime.

President Obama offered the following statement: “Julian was a hero and, I’m privileged to say, a friend. Justice and equality was the mission that spanned his life – from his leadership of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, to his founding role with the Southern Poverty Law Center, to his pioneering service in the Georgia legislature and his steady hand at the helm of the NAACP. Michelle and I have benefited from his example, his counsel, and his friendship – and we offer our prayers and sympathies to his wife, Pamela, and his children. Julian Bond helped change this country for the better. And what better way to be remembered than that.”

Administrator’s Award Nominations

WASHINGTON— Do you know someone at GIPSA who deserves recognition for extraordinary accomplishment, or always going the extra mile? If so, the nomination deadline for the GIPSA Administrator’s Award is October 23.

Anyone is eligible to be nominated regardless of grade level.

Categories for the Administrator’s Award include:

- Distinguished and Superior Individual Awards for employees who display extra effort to fulfill GIPSA’s mission.
- Distinguished and Superior Group Awards for teams that meet an agency need.
- EEO/Civil Rights Awards for contributions to a workplace free from prejudice and discrimination.
- Safety Awards for making our work environment safer and healthier.
- GIPSA Support Awards for non-GIPSA employees who provided direction or support to GIPSA’s effectiveness.

Nominations must be postmarked by October 23 and may be forwarded to: Ebony.A.Broadwater@usda.gov ; or by fax, (202) 690-0609. Mail nominations to: Administrator’s Awards Committee, Office of the Administrator, USDA/GIPSA, STOP 360, 1400 Independence AVE, SW, Room 2055-S, Washington, D.C. 20250-3611.

For a sample nomination see attachment 2-B, GIPSA Directive 4451.1, *Employee Recognition Program*, selection criteria for Distinguished and Superior Individual Awards, EEO/Civil Rights Awards, and Safety Awards in Section 2.6 (2).

For additional information contact Ms. Broadwater at (202) 720-1748.

Names in the News

Retirement Best Wishes



DESTREHAN, La.— The staff and family at the New Orleans Field Office wish Mr. Charles “Charlie” Williams, continued success and happiness on the occasion of his retirement. An Agricultural Commodity Grader and valued member of the FGIS family, Mr. Williams retired August 1 following 40 years in federal service. He began his civil service career February 8, 1975. Mr. Williams spent most of those four decades with USDA and worked briefly with the U.S. Forest Service for six months. He plans to continue enjoying life while pursuing his passion as pastor and leader in his congregation, and spending time with his family. We wish “Charlie” the best.

Summer Memories

Washington—This past summer, Ms. Elena Reyes-Santos worked as a program analyst at GIPSA headquarters during her second internship through the Hispanic American Colleges and Universities (HACU) program. Her first came in 2013 with the Food Safety and Inspection Service at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

Ms. Santos spent her time with the Packers and Stockyards Policy Litigation Division and also supported other branches. She maintained the hog market prices database weekly reports, trained in sanction summaries, and calculated stipulations. She also created payment tracking spreadsheets and updated files in the drives, among her other tasks.

What else would a summer college intern do besides learn the ropes from the corral of a cubicle? Travel, of course—to another university. During a trip to Des Moines Ms. Reyes visited the Iowa State University Beef Research Facilities, Feedlots and an Auction Market as a requirement for completion of her graduate degree with a focus on analysis of production costs in beef cattle systems.



GIPSA field agents from the Midwestern Regional Office provided Ms. Santos an opportunity to observe the feedlot production process from cow-calf production to auction markets and packing plants. The trip complemented her previous academic research with firsthand knowledge about production systems. “It even gave me ideas of practices that may be viable and eventually implemented in Puerto Rico. It was a great experience for me, and I know there is more to come. I thank both HACU and USDA for opening doors for me and for other students nationwide,” she said.



On behalf of the GIPSA staff, *A dios* and happy trails to Ms. Santos as she continues in her career.

Names in the News

FGIS Supervisors with 35 or More Years of Federal Service



Front Row: Mack Hall, Fred Lindseth, Kim Harper, John McCann, Joe L. Hearn, Clinton Brinkley, Horace Robinson, George Banks, Ronald Hill

Second Row: Perry C. Smith, Jr., Henry Fallon, Shelton Buckley, Robert Evans, Rufus Campbell, Wally Alves, Miguel Ceballos

Third Row: James McLaurin, Roger Friedrich, Earl Monroe, Myron Hall, Jeffrey Joseph, Milton Clayton, Vernet Knight, Albert Snelson

Top Row: Steven Everidge, Alonzo Craighton, Danny Williams, Russell Frank, Garey Holmes, Carl Beckwith, Larry Giles **Not Pictured:** Willie Earl Washington (USDA Photo by Ruth Goff)



Photos from the Field



Left—While visiting the Toledo field office during my road trip this summer I had an opportunity to chat with two graduate program interns. Emil Chinaea on my left, is from the University of Puerto Rico and Justin Johnson is from Alcorn University. (Photo by Lynn Thomas)

Below—Valerie Hills, Andy Otto, and Steph Trujillo from the Grand Forks field office prepare donations for the Fed's Feed Families campaign. Donations included 5,353 lbs. of edible beans, split peas, whole dry peas and lentils. So far, the staff has provided more than 15,385 lbs. to local food banks. (Photo by Ed Stallman)



Veterans Tips

4 Ways to Clean Up Your Email Communication Veterans Administration Shares Advice

WASHINGTON— Have you ever read an email where you weren't sure whether the sender was annoyed with you or just being direct? Or one where you had to Google every other word because it was full of unfamiliar acronyms and technical language? After reading the message two or even three times, you still didn't understand what it was saying or how to respond.

With so much workplace communication happening through email, it's important that you're able to write messages that your recipients can understand. That's why knowing how to communicate effectively through writing is part of VA's All Employee Competency Model.

Here are a few tips to help you make sure your emails are clear, concise, and written in the correct tone before you hit send.

1. Share your main point first

Think about the purpose of your email before you start writing. What's the main message that you need to share? Make sure that you state the most critical information upfront.¹ If you're making a request of your reader, say so at the beginning. Your recipient should immediately know why you've written and how your message applies to him or her. If you bury your message too far down in your email, you may confuse your reader or make him or her lose interest before understanding what you're saying. The last thing you want your reader to think is, "Get to the point!"

2. Remember your audience

Consider who you're writing to as you decide what to put in an email. What information is relevant to them? Include and clearly explain anything that your reader needs to know, and leave out unnecessary details. You should also pay attention to the words that you use in your email. When you work in a career field for a while, you become an expert in certain subjects, and it's easy to forget that your audience may not have the same understanding.² For example, if you're an IT specialist, you probably know about information systems and software programs. If you're writing to someone else who works in IT and has similar background knowledge, including technical IT terms may be OK. For other audiences, consider whether or not you need to use technical language. If your message can be understood without it, leave it out. If you need to use technical terms to get your point across, make sure to clearly define them.

No matter your audience, keep in mind that your emails will be most effective if you use plain, simple language that's easy to understand. VA has [guidelines](#) that can help you use plain language in your emails to any reader.

3. Pay attention to voice and tone

Even when you're writing, your "voice" should still be heard.³ That's why it's important to avoid words or phrases that you wouldn't use in regular speech. As you write, visualize yourself telling a coworker the same message and think about what you would say.

Make sure you're **communicating** in a tone that's correct for your reader. Are you talking to a colleague or peer? An informal, conversational tone may be OK. For someone who isn't as familiar to you, try a more formal tone. You should also be more formal if you're writing to a senior manager, but be direct and share only the most important information.³ If you still have trouble knowing what tone to use, try putting yourself in your reader's shoes. **(Continued p. 11)**



Veterans Tips (cont.)

How formal would you expect the email to be? What language do you imagine the message would use?

4. Double-check your spelling and grammar

One of the quickest ways to look unprofessional is to send an email full of spelling and grammar mistakes. It can undo all of the work you put into crafting your message and considering your audience and tone. To avoid careless errors, proofread your message before you send it – even if you’re writing an informal email to a coworker.

To check your emails before sending, you can try:

- Reading your message at least once or twice
- Using a spelling and grammar check
- Reading your message aloud to get a sense for tone

If you’ve reviewed your message and are still hesitant to send it, ask a detail-oriented coworker to proofread it for you. He or she may catch mistakes that you’ve missed and make sure you’re using the right tone.

These tips also apply to other types of writing. With more written communication taking place through social media and text messaging, some people have developed a habit of writing quickly and informally without checking over their work. But by starting with your main point, keeping your audience in mind, considering voice and tone, and proofreading, you can learn to write concisely and cleanly – no matter the medium.

Want more tips on how to communicate professionally through email and social media? Check out MyCareer@VA’s guide to effective communication and social networking.

Sources

¹ *Business Writing: Know Your Readers and Your Purpose*. Skillsoft On-Line Learning. Accessed July 30, 2015.

² Heath, Chip, and Dan Heath. 2007. *Made to Stick*. New York: Random House.

³ *Business Writing: How to Write Clearly and Concisely*. Skillsoft On-Line Learning. Accessed July 30, 2015.

Tip of the Month from the National Finance Center

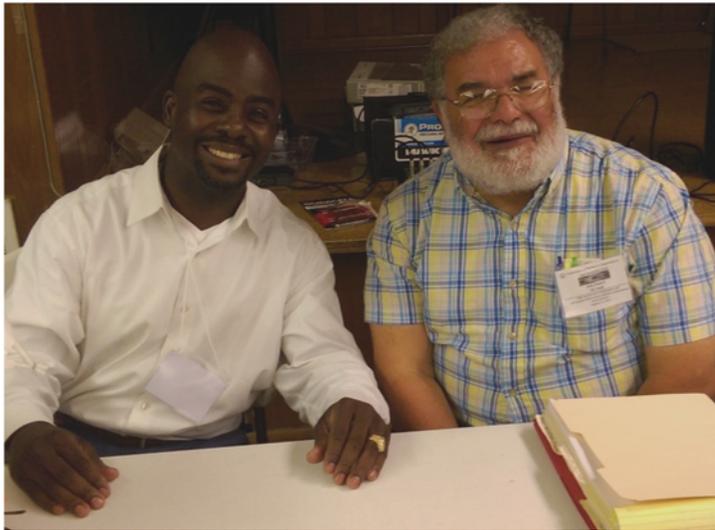
WASHINGTON— A recent bulletin from the National Finance Center (NFC) reminds every USDA employee that the official payment date of record with the Department of the Treasury is the Monday following NFC completion of the bi-weekly payroll process.

The official payment date on all Direct Deposit payments is also the Monday following completion of the payroll process, or Tuesday during pay periods when Monday is an official Federal holiday. Saturday is not the official payment date.

The first business day after Payroll processing weekend is the actual payment (settlement) date for direct deposit transactions, even though some financial institutions place funds in an employee’s account early and post them as *pending* or *memo posting* transactions. By regulation, financial institutions are not obligated to post funds earlier than the actual payment date.



Spotlight on Civil Rights



(Continued from page 5)

During meetings with community-based organizations farmers received information about various USDA agencies like NRCS, FSA, RD, Cooperative Extension, ARS, AMS and GIPSA. The team also received invitations to visit other minority landowners and cattle ranchers to provide information about similar USDA programs and services.

GIPSA's Civil Rights Director Kevin Smith (left) enjoys a conversation with Mr. John Zippert, a renowned *foot soldier* in the struggle for racial justice, developer of farmers' cooperatives, and advocate of economic rural development and education in the South.

Engaging with Employees... —by Larry Mitchell

GRAND FORKS, N.D.— During my summer road trip I paid a visit to the field office at Grand Forks, North Dakota. It was a memorable stop on my scheduled driving tour of the Midwest before heading to the Field Office Managers meeting in Kansas City.

Manager Ed Stallman claimed I got the *two cent tour* as he explained procedures for the break-down and grading of pulse commodities. Ed also proudly unveiled his latest creation—the Sunflower Dehuller, a pneumatically powered contraption that effectively dehulls confectionary sunflower seeds by using high pressure to crack open seeds as they're hurled through a series of PVC pipes. It looked like a Rube Goldberg device with all sorts of twists and bends, but it certainly worked. Seeds didn't stand a chance against Ed and his machine.

Ed and his crew also make sure that leftover sample bags of edible beans, split peas, whole dry peas, and lentils are donated to the local food banks as part of USDA's current Feds Feed Families campaign that runs through October 1.



Sharing the spotlight with me during my visit to Grand Forks are (front row, left to right) Carmon Lindbald, José Robinson, Ed Stallman. Along the back row are (left to right) Penny Kilbride, Andy Otto, Larry Mosloff, and Steph Trujillo.

**DON'T WAIT.
COMMUNICATE.** **MAKE YOUR
EMERGENCY
PLAN TODAY.**

SEPTEMBER IS NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH!



www.ready.gov/September
#NatlPrep



FEMA

AMERICA'S
PrepareAthon![™]

Ready[®]



WASHINGTON—September is National Preparedness Month. The Federal Emergency Management Agency encourages everyone to participate in this year's theme, *Don't Wait. Communicate. Make Your Emergency Plan Today.*

FEMA officials offer a reminder that now is a great time to make an emergency communication plan for your family. As the nation marked the tenth anniversary of Hurricane Katrina's devastation on New Orleans this month, families are asked to spend time and talk about how members will contact each other and where to meet should disaster strike.

National Preparedness Month culminates with National *PrepareAthon!* Day September 30 when the public is asked to turn attention from awareness to action. FEMA officials stress the importance of this national day of action to practice family emergency communication plans, and make sure everyone knows what to do by sharing phone numbers to stay in touch.

To participate in America's PrepareAthon! visit www.ready.gov/prepare. Click on *Be Counted*. Add your activity and share how you, your family, friends, and community are getting more prepared. Your registration could motivate others to prepare.

Engaging with Employees... (cont. from p. 2)

I met with senior managers from the Federal Grain Inspection Service during the annual meeting at the National Grain Center in Kansas City, Mo. and listened to the latest round-up of best practices and innovation from grain inspection operations around the country.

We devoted considerable time harnessing staff talents to lay the foundation for our five-year strategic plan, including how we will modernize services, improve efficiencies, better serve our customers, craft a robust succession plan for our workforce, and establish measurable quarterly goals.

A brief side trip gave me an opportunity to observe grain inspection operations from private sector stakeholders. Manager Mike Wholey from the Kansas Grain Inspection Service hosted a tour of his facility laboratory and demonstrated the protocol for grading and testing wheat. Their operation is staffed by a dedicated workforce of professional inspectors that add considerable value to our nation's grain export and reflects daily in the quality of American grain production around the world.

If you're wondering how long I'll continue to drive—well, give me a few more hours behind the wheel and I'll let you know. See you on the road.





The National Grain Center Report

NGC Reporters: Roger Friedrich, Ruth Goff, Jennifer Helber, and Ryan Rudder

Mexico Trade Team Visits NGC

A group of wheat millers, quality control personnel, and managers from Mexico visited the National Grain Center (NGC) August 11-13, 2015. Mr. Marcelo Mitre, the Mexican representative for U.S. Wheat Associates, accompanied the delegation. In addition to being trained on U.S. wheat grading procedures the group toured the NGC facility and labs.





The National Grain Center Report

NGC Reporters: Roger Friedrich, Ruth Goff, Jennifer Helber, and Ryan Rudder

Federal Grain Inspection Service Supervisors Meet in Kansas City

KANSAS CITY, Mo.— Federal Grain Inspection Service (FGIS) supervisors participated in a leadership meeting at the National Grain Center in Kansas City August 18-21 to review skills and strengthen the cohesiveness of FGIS supervisory and management leadership.

Along with management, supervisors identified discussion topics to enhance organizational effectiveness. Some of the topics were previously identified by employees in the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey and included Individual Performance Plans, performance management, and accountability.

Supervisors also met with the FGIS Executive Management Team, a group of senior-level managers to share current issues. Mr. Randall Jones, FGIS Deputy Administrator, covered reauthorization. The Director, Technology and Science Division, Ms. Mary Alonzo, discussed innovation and offered her outlook for the future of the grain industry.

As new managers, Ms. Samantha Simon, Director, Quality Assurance and Compliance Division and Mr. Kent Lanclos, Deputy Director, Technology and Science Division, discussed differences between GIPSA and their previous government experiences.



Mr. Tony Goodeman, Acting Director, Field Management Division, provided viewpoints and discussed issues from across field offices. Other topics covered included: misconduct and performance, team building, labor relations, ethics, safety, communication and conflict resolution.





The National Grain Center Report

NGC Reporters: Roger Friedrich, Ruth Goff, Jennifer Helber, and Ryan Rudder

NGC Welcomes New Members to High-Performance Team

Quality Assurance



Mr. Greg Neill has been selected as the newest member of the Federal Grain Inspection Service (FGIS) Board of Appeals and Review. Mr. Neill is joining FGIS from Montana State's Department of Agriculture. At Montana, he developed an extensive background in grading of grains and commodities.

As Quality Assurance Specialist, Mr. Neill performed many quality control functions for both subjective and objective factors, he also trained new inspectors and monitored the quality of other inspectors' work.

Throughout his career, Mr. Neill promoted the official system through his outreach work with producers, grain marketers, international trade teams, and the public, by providing information on FGIS' grading standards and quality assurance processes.

Chemistry

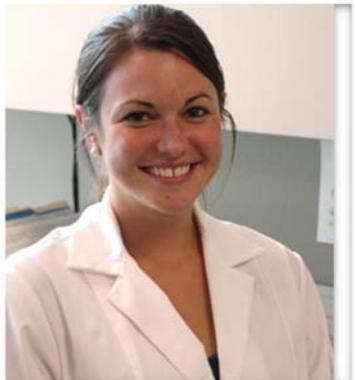


Dr. James (Jim) Krest was selected for a chemist position in the Analytical Chemistry Branch (ACB).

Dr. Krest began working with GIPSA in 2014 as a chemist with the ACB and focused on mycotoxin reference method analyses and mycotoxin test kit performance verification tests. Dr. Krest also contributed to the procurement of elemental analysis equipment and implementing GIPSA deoxynivalenol and fumonisin reference methods on new instrumentation.

Dr. Krest earned a Ph.D. in Geological Sciences from the University of South Carolina and served as an assistant professor at the University of South Florida where he taught environmental science courses, built and maintained an analytical chemistry laboratory, and carried out research in environmental chemistry.

Biotechnology & Analysis



Ms. Shayle Williams was selected as a Physical Scientist and works in the Biotechnology and Analytical Services Branch Biotechnology Laboratory.

Ms. Williams received her Bachelor of Science Degree in Biochemistry from Benedictine College, and joined the Technology and Science Division in 2014 via the Pathways Recent Student Program as a Physical Scientist in the Commodity and Reference Laboratory.

Ms. Williams's background in biochemistry, DNA extraction, and PCR analysis will be a valuable asset to the Biotechnology Laboratory

Marketing and Regulatory Programs Business Services

Designated Points of Contact for GIPSA at Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

AWARDS AND PERSONNEL ACTION PROCESSING

Valerie Stevens, Human Resources Assistant
612.336.3338

BACKGROUND INVESTIGATIONS

Tom Lewis, Personnel Security Specialist,
612.336.3296
Patricia Hample, Personnel Security Assistant,
612.336.3607 [NACI]

DEBT COLLECTION/MANAGEMENT

User Fee Debt Management (customer accounts)

Sharon Cronk, Debt Management Specialist,
612.336.3258
Paula Daugard, Accountant. 612.336.3690
Edison Vizuete, Accounts Receivable Supervisor,
612.336.3284

Civil Penalty Debt Management

Melvin Copeland, Debt Management Specialist,
612.336.3264
Jennifer Elias, Financial Management Analyst,
612.336.3260
Lora Swanson, Supervisory Financial Management
Analyst, 612.336.3392

Treasury Cross Servicing

Paula Daugard, Accountant, 612.336.3690

GIPSA Bankruptcy

Douglas Crews, Financial Management Analyst,
612.336.3256

All GIPSA Write-offs

Jennifer Elias, Financial Management Analyst,
612.336.3260

EMPLOYEE RELATIONS/MISCONDUCT & PERFORMANCE ISSUES

Kirk Bateman, Employee Relations Specialist,
970. 494-7415

FLEET VEHICLES

Skip Bradford, Fleet Manager, 612.336.3419

JOB ANNOUNCEMENTS/HIRING

Tom Mack, Staffing Specialist, 612.336.3326
Jeff Gutow, Staffing Assistant, 612.336.3415

LEAVE AND COMPENSATION

Karen Betts, Civilian Pay Technician,
612.336.3409

Policy Point of Contact for pay, leave, and tours of duty

Debbie Thilgen, HR Specialist, 612.336.316

Operational Point of Contact for pay, leave, tours of duty, and Web T/A

LINCPASS/PERSONNEL SECURITY

Sue Burnette, Personnel Security Assistant,
612.336.3325
Patricia Hample, Personnel Security Assistant,
612.336.3607 [sponsor]
Bruce Kauk, Personnel Security Assistant,
612.336.3357 [adjudicator]

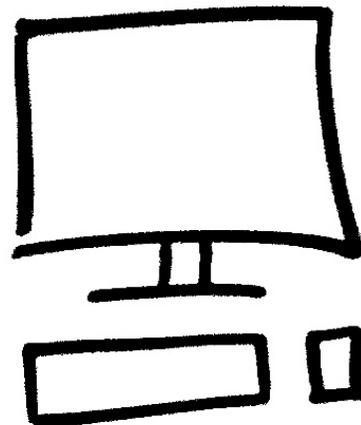
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Training Updates

By Caroline Thorpe, GIPSA Headquarters, Washington, D.C.

The following courses are available through AgLearn and must be completed by September 30:

- **No Fear Comprehensive**
All new employees
- **Sexual Harassment Prevention for Federal Employees**
All non-supervisor employees
- **Sexual Harassment Prevention for Federal Managers**
All supervisors, managers and executives
- **Business of Coaching: Getting Ready to Coach**
All supervisors, managers, executives, and SEPMs
- **Maximizing Employee Engagement**
All supervisors, managers, and executives



To access the courses open your AgLearn account and complete the assigned training on your To-Do List. Details of required courses are provided. For additional information call Caroline Thorpe, (202) 690-2332.

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PERFORMANCE PLANS/PERFORMANCE ELEMENTS AND STANDARDS

Gwen Montgomery, HR Specialist, 301. 851-2928

POSITION DESCRIPTIONS/CLASSIFICATION

Jared Sammon, Classification Specialist, 612.336-3592

Faith Dietz, Classification Assistant, 612.336-3332

Valerie Stevens, Processing Assistant, 612..336-3338

PROCUREMENT/CONTRACTING

Herbert Suber (IT & Construction), Chief Specialized Contracting Branch, 301.851-2687

Nathan Johnson, Procurement Branch Chief, 612. 336-3404

PURCHASE CARDS/IPAC AND MISC. BILLINGS/MISC REQUESTS

Sheila Hensley, Supervisory Accountant, 612.336-3384

Montgomery Jensen, Financial Technician , 612.336-3373

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS

David Walton, Program Coordinator, 301.851-2936

Carol Griffith, Reasonable Accommodation Specialist, 301-851-2938

RETIREMENT AND INSURANCE BENEFITS

Brian Fleming, Human Resources Benefits Specialist, 612.336.3621

Judy Dunaski, Benefits Assistant, 612. 336-.3287

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Daphne O'Neal-Samuelsson, TMACO FMT, 919.855-7126

Paul Butler, TMACO, 970.494-7147

Arlette Nelson, TMACO DAR, 612.336-3385

Matthew Norris, TMACO Landline DAR, 970.494-7077

Mark Eakin, TMACO Wireless DAR, 970.494-7095



WASHINGTON— The following Federal Grain Inspection Service (FGIS) directives, changes, and cancellations are in effect as of August 2015:

- Issuance Change No. 111 to the Grain Inspection Handbook Book IV, Forms and Certificates, Chapter 4, Data Collection Forms, dated July 31, 2015
- FGIS Directive 9180.61, Official Moisture Calibrations for Unified Grain Moisture Algorithm Compatible Meters, dated August 1, 2015
- FGIS Directive 9170.15, Review Inspections of Grains and Commodities, dated August 11, 2015

-CANCELLATIONS-

FGIS 1040.1	3/10/1980	Federal Executive Boards
FGIS 1041.1	12/12/1983	Committee Management
FGIS 2460.1	5/12/1971	Cooperative Documents
FGIS 2510.2	4/26/1974	Settlement of Claims for Unpaid Compensation Due Deceased Employees
FGIS 2510.3	4/10/1975	Claims Under the Military Personnel and Civilian Employee's Claim Act
FGIS 2570.1	11/20/1973	Waiver of Claim for Erroneous Payment of Pay or Allowances
FRGIS 3080.1	11/4/1982	Procurement of Reproduction Services Washington, DC and Field
FGIS 3150.1	12/3/1992	Information Resources Management Review Board
FGIS 3320.1	3/1/1982	Use of Telegraph Facilities
FGIS 3320.2	7/13/1979	Facsimile Transmission Service
FGIS 4293.2	7/24/1981	Emergency Notification
FGIS 4295.1	11/21/1979	Requests for Personnel Action
FGIS 4297.1	9/4/1981	Maintenance and Security of Subsidiary Personnel and Pay Records
FGIS 4300.1	5/9/1984	30-Day Emergency Appointments
FGIS 4310.1	7/8/1982	Employment of Relatives
FGIS 4311.1	7/12/1993	Appointment Affidavits Oath of Office
FGIS 4312.1	1/3/1994	Position Management Plan
FGIS 4330.1	12/12/1983	Appointment of Experts and Consultants
FGIS 4335.1	10/13/1973	Details of Personnel
FGIS 4411.1	9/12/1980	Financial Aspects of the Government
FGIS 4534.1	7/13/1981	Salary and Time Limitations
FGIS 4715.1	9/30/1980	Resignations
FGIS 4752.2	3/27/1975	Employee Rights in Agency Adverse Personnel Actions of Removal, Suspension, reduction in Rank or Pay or Furlough Without Pay
FGIS 4790.10	8/15/1972	Abatement of Air and Water Pollution at Federal Facilities
FGIS 4790.4	7/12/1993	Bloodborne Pathogens Exposure
FGIS 4831.1	1/4/1980	Retirement
FGIS 5007.1	10/31/1989	Acquisition Management Program
FGIS 5010.2	5/26/1995	Obtaining Blanket Purchase Agreements for Inspections Services Under the AMA

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-CANCELLATIONS-

FGIS 5007.1	10/31/1989	Acquisition Management Program
FGIS 5010.2	5/26/1995	Obtaining Blanket Purchase Agreements for Inspections Services Under the AMA
FGIS 5160.1	5/24/1993	Official Agency Logo and USDA Seal
FGIS 5160.2	11/29/1990	Identification Signs
FGIS 5200.1	11/8/1989	Personal Property Management
FGIS 5400.1	10/11/1994	Motor Vehicle Management Vehicle Operator's Guide
FGIS 9070.2	10/23/2012	Management Control Programs
FGIS 9180.54	5/1/1997	Fees and Billing for Canola: Oil content and Gas Chromatographic Determinations of Glucosinolates and Euricic Acid
FGIS 9181.3	5/1/2008	Proficiency Program: Detection of Biotechnology Events

For additional information contact Ms. Terri Henry at (202) 205-8281

Remembrances in September....



WASHINGTON— President Obama offered the following thoughts in 2011 when he proclaimed Patriot Day and National Day of Remembrance:

“On September 11, 2001, a bright autumn day was darkened by the worst attack on the American people in our history.

More than a decade later, the world we live in is forever changed. But as we mark the anniversary of September 11, we remember what remains the same: our character as a Nation, our faith in one another, and our legacy as a country strengthened by service and selflessness. In the spirit that moved rescue workers and firefighters to charge into darkness and danger that September morning, we see the same sense of moral responsibility that drove countless Americans to give of themselves in the months that followed. We offered our neighbors a hand and lined up to give blood. Many helped our Nation rebuild and recover long after the dust had settled, donating and volunteering and helping survivors who had borne so much. We were united, and the outpouring of generosity reminded us that, through challenges that have spanned from acts of terrorism to natural disasters, we go forward together as one people.”

WASHINGTON—National Hispanic Heritage Month begins September 15 and runs through October 15. The annual celebration honors contributions and cultural traditions of the Hispanic-American community.

It is designed to promote appreciation for the diversity of the Hispanic-American population and the commonalities that weave an array of cultures and backgrounds into one vibrant American fabric.

The celebration traces its origins to 1968 when President Lyndon B. Johnson proclaimed a week-long observance.

In 1968 Congress expanded the celebration that commemorates the independence of five Latin American nations: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Mexico and Chile.

Today Hispanics make up 17% of the U.S. population with over 54 million people.

