



# GIPSA *NEWS*

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

NOVEMBER 2014

## INSIDE THIS

### ISSUE:

- ◆ *Shout-Out!*
- ◆ *Names in the News*
- ◆ *Issuance Report*
- ◆ *FGIS Matters...!*
- ◆ *PSP CCWG*
- ◆ *Training Updates*

## It's Been a long Time Coming

Jennifer S. Hill Washington, DC

It is a wonderful day at the United States Department of Agriculture and more so with in the Grain Inspection Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA). Since the last issue of the GIPSA News back in July there has been quite a bit of activity. This issue is in essence a review of some of the things that have transpired during the last few months. There have been retirements including that of former Acting Director for the Technology and Science Division, **David Funk**; new hires; changes in positions; Foreign Trade team visits, Manager's meetings; and a plethora of exciting things. In this message I would like to highlight just a couple.

During the 2014 Feds Feed Families Campaign GIPSA was able to contribute 196,011 pounds of food. Out of 40 USDA Agencies GIPSA was ranked the 9<sup>th</sup> largest contributor. This effort was led by **Linda Alston** of the GIPSA Civil Rights staff In Washington DC. She served as the GIPSA wide Champions which required engaging both headquarters and field office employees. With her hard work and the GIPSA family's outstanding generosity we were able to contribute to the 6.2 million pounds of food donated by USDA employee's nations wide. The Feds Feed Families Camping ran from June 2 through August 29, with the Federal Employees nationwide donating over 14.8 million pounds of food for those in need.

Our very own **Morgan Arvaneh**, Information Technology Specialist and Artist, had one of his pieces selected to be a part of the Art and Agriculture gallery. Morgan's fine art piece entitled Butter Fly Drinking from Pink flowers will be displayed in the USDA Washington, DC headquarters building.

As we settle into the fall the 2014 Combined Federal Campaign is under way. This year's USDA campaign is being led by Rural Development. It is expected to run from now through December 15, 2014.

Please see the blurb on page 15 for instructions to register within the pledging platform.

GIPSA has seen a number of changes over the past few years; especially in area of personnel. With so many people achieving retirement eligibility we are bound to see many more changes. One thing I hope doesn't change is the giving spirit of GIPSA employees. GIPSA is known for being the small agency with a heart. I commend you all for your generosity and caring hearts. I hope that you experience something great each day of your life. Please enjoy this issue of the GIPSA news and be sure to submit something for the next one.



## FGIS Matters....!

Randall Jones, Washington ,DC



**Market Update.** The leaves are showing their brilliant colors and morning temperatures are a bit on the cool side which signals fall is upon us. More importantly grain producers across the country are in full swing harvesting their spring seeded crops and from all accounts we are looking at a record corn and soybean harvest. For those producers savvy enough to forward contract at least a portion of their crops they can expect to realize a good payday. For those producers marketing on the open market, their revenue will not be as positive as cash prices have fallen dramatically from the prices enjoyed the past couple of years.

If you have been working in an export market you know first-hand just how busy things have been in the past months. For fiscal year 2014, FGIS exported 82.8 million metric tons of grain which was the largest amount of grain exported from these facilities in more than 30 years. This fiscal year is starting out at record pace even surpassing last year's record. For the month of October, FGIS grain exports are 128 percent above last year. As usual for this time of year, soybeans make up the bulk of the exports followed by corn.

**Labor/Management Relations.** On September 3 and 4, we held a Labor Management Forum at the National Grain Center. We were fortunate to have an excellent representation of officers from the National and Local Unions as well as a number of managers. We had a great deal of success and covered the following topics: staffing needs, interview panels, awards, clothing program, work schedules, safety and training needs. We plan to hold the next Labor/Management Forum via teleconference in December.

### AAIGWA

FGIS participated in the American Association of Grain Inspection and Weighing Agencies (AAGIWA) board meeting in September. The discussions lasted much of the day and focused on on licensing updates, Agricultural Marketing Act fees, reauthorization, exception program, mycotoxin testing, and quality programs.

**2015 Strategic Initiatives.** Based on the input that we gathered from FGIS, the following are our FY15 FGIS Strategic Initiatives:

1. Enhance the inspection process through automation of data collection and utilization to improve efficiency of operations and certificate accuracy.
2. Create a customer centric, engaged, and high performing workforce by identifying opportunities for employees to develop competencies identified for mission-critical technical and leadership positions within FGIS.
3. Develop an FGIS-wide communication strategy in order to provide accurate and timely program information to employees and customers.

**Fiscal Year 2015 Funding.** In September, Congress passed and the President signed a continuing resolution which provides funding through December 11, 2014, at levels similar to FY14. As we have more information related to the FY15 budget, we will certainly pass it along to you.

**Advisory Committee Meeting.** The Grain Inspection Advisory Committee will meet on November 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>, 2014, at the National Grain Center. Each Division will present information centered on the fifteen resolutions that were established at the last meeting in July. The 15 resolutions, the minutes of the meeting and the presentations can be found on the GIPSA homepage and on pages 8 and 9 of this newsletter.

*Continued, see FGIS on page 3.*

FGIS from page 2

**U.S. Wheat Associates and National Association (USWA) of Wheat Growers Meeting.** On October 30, I attended the USWA and NAWG meeting and discussed the need for reauthorization of portions of the U.S. Grain Standards Act that provides authority for our export grain inspections. My primary goal was to provide information and data supporting the value of the Official System and the critical work that we do on a daily basis. Official inspection costs approximately \$.01 per bushel which is a bargain considering that we are the Gold Standard recognized throughout the world.

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

## Egypt Grain Inspection Team



On August 25 – 27, the National Grain Center in Kansas City, Missouri, hosted a grain seminar for an Egyptian grain inspection team. The team consisted of six members sponsored by the U.S. Grain Council. Accompanying the team was Dr. Nabil (Bill) Azmy, U.S. grain Council Program Director (and retired Board Member of Appeal and Review member).

The Board of Appeals and Review (BAR) staff lead the seminar and covered topics relevant to corn and sorghum grading. Emphasis was on damages using the test strip exercise. There was also an odor detection exercise, as well as corn breakdown (laboratory process), hand sieve demo (BCFM), assignment of grades, and damage portion analysis.

Dr. David Funk welcomed the group with opening remarks. Ramon Luevano, Assistant BAR Chairman, gave an overview on inspection; Policies, Procedures, and Marketing Branch gave a standards update. The Trace Analysis Lab did a presentation on aflatoxin. A BAR Equipment Specialist covered equipment checktesting and dockage tester troubleshooting; the Quality Assurance and Compliance Division provided an update on the Quality Assurance Program.

The visit concluded with a tour of the National Grain Center. Inspection Instrumentation Branch displayed the two approved moisture meters in use for the official inspection system. Also discussed were proper procedures and troubleshooting for the meters. The BAR and Grading Services Lab (GSL) area were toured. The BAR staff displayed the scanner used in viewing images of kernels as an aid to inspection and also answered questions about the role of the BAR. The tour culminated with closing remarks by Mary Alonzo, Director, Technical Services Division. The group was presented with certificates of completion. They then left the National Grain Center and were to depart Kansas City for New Orleans to continue the U.S. tour.



### 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

### Retirement



**David Funk** retired on September 30, 2014, with over 26 years of federal service. In February 1988, he joined FGIS as Chief of the Quality Control Branch at the Kansas City Technical Center. During the period of 1988 to 2001, Dave guided many major technology transitions within official inspection including initiating soybean protein and oil testing by near-infrared transmittance (NIRT), moving from near-infrared reflectance technology (NIRR) to NIRT for wheat protein, making significant improvements in FGIS methods for standardizing, replacing Kjeldahl with the Combustion Nitrogen Analyzer method as the FGIS reference method for protein, replacing Soxlet with SoxTec as the FGIS reference method for oil extraction, replacing the Motomco 919 with the DICKEY-john GAC 2100 as the official moisture meter, and introducing computer imaging for assessment of broken kernels in rice (California only). He conducted research on grain moisture measurement beginning in 1995 that led to the development and publication of the Unified Grain Moisture Algorithm in 2001. In 2005, he became Associate Director for Methods Development, from December 2010 until October 2011, he served as Acting Director for the Technology and Science Division (TSD), and then served as Deputy Director of TSD and GIPSA's Chief Scientist. His continued research and refinement of the Unified Grain Moisture Algorithm led to its adoption as the official grain moisture method in 2012 and 2014.

After retirement from FGIS, Dave is looking forward to traveling and having more time to spend with his wife, kids, grandkids, church activities, and a multitude of hobbies.

**Tom Steele**, Acting Field Office Manager in the Portland Oregon Field Office, retired on September 10, 2014, after 36 years with FGIS. Tom began his career with FGIS in Portland in 1978 as an Agriculture Commodity Aid, then worked his way to Technician in 1979 and was accepted into the Grader Program in 1980 under the Upward Mobility Program. Tom was RIF'd back to the Technician position in 1981 under the Reagan cutbacks and remained a Technician until 2000 when he once again had the opportunity to advance to Grader. Tom was promoted to Quality Assurance Specialist in 2004 and later to Assistant Field Office Manager in 2010. Tom has filled the role of Acting Field Office Manager since February of 2013.

Tom leaves with many fond memories of his co-workers throughout the years and wishes everyone the best in their futures.



### New Position

**Jeff L'Heureux**: Promotion to Assistant Field Office Manager of the Domestic Inspection Operations Office (DIOO). Jeff has a Nebraska farming background and an Ag Business degree from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Jeff has built a diverse inspection background since graduation from the University of Nebraska. He worked for two official inspection companies for five years and has been with d100 for six years. During his time with d100 he has experience in all facets of field office responsibilities.



**Ramon Luevano** began his career in grain inspection working at Official Inspection Agencies from 1972 thru 1980 at the Plainview Grain Inspection Service, Fort Worth Grain Exchange and the Amarillo Grain Exchange. In September of 1980 he accepted a position with FGIS in the Plainview Field Office where he eventually became the Quality Assurance Specialist (QAS) until the Field Office was closed. He was offered and accepted a position at the Wichita Field Office where he continued the role of QAS along with the existing QAS. After a brief absence from Agriculture he took a position on April 2007 at the Kansas City, Missouri sub office. In 2008 he became one of six Agricultural Commodity Graders (ACGs) from different regions of the nation to that were to become the first members of the newly established Grading Services Lab. (GSL) located at the Technical Services Division (TSD) in what is now known as the National Grain Center. In 2009 he was accepted as a senior member of the Board of Appeals and Review (BAR) serving under that capacity until his acceptance as Assistant Chairman of the Board of Appeals and Review in July 2014. Since his humble beginnings as a grain sampler in 1972 Ramon has amassed a wealth of knowledge in grain inspection, processed commodities and graded commodities.

## Names in the News (continued)

### New Hires



**Claudius LaSalle Price** is a native of Baton Rouge, Louisiana. He attended Southern University A&M College and received a B.S. degree in Agriculture Science with a concentration in animal and plant science. As a child Price spent many summers with his grandparents in the backwoods of Mississippi, and grew to love agriculture and what it entails. That same love has landed Price in Kansas City, Missouri, where he hopes to become a major asset to the Domestic Inspection Operations Office (D100) in his current position as a Commodity Grader Trainee.

**Brian C. Woods** hails from Mobile, Alabama. He attended Alabama Agricultural and Mechanical University, where he received a B.S. and M.S. in Food Science. Woods' interest in science/agriculture stems from summers in his Uncle's laboratory as a child along with knowledge of rural Alabama farming. Woods now serves as an Agricultural Commodity Grader Trainee.



**Ved Pathak** is a new Physical Scientist with the Trace Analysis Labs at the National Grain Center. A Ph.D. in Chemistry with wide experience in analysis of variety of chemical entities of different origin, like plant material, marine products, pilot plant impurities, organic reaction minor products, pharmaceutical products, and drug metabolites; Ved has worked in purification and identification of these products using a variety of separation and spectroscopic techniques. In addition to analytical chemistry, he also has expertise in structure based drug design, combinatorial chemistry and process development. Ved worked on anti-cancer, flu, inflammation and obesity projects. And is a coauthor on 20 patents and 50 research publications. Prior to joining USDA, trace analysis labs, Ved worked for pharmaceutical industry (including 7 years with Pfizer Global R&D, La Jolla) and consulted for a variety of start up companies in biotech and biofuel.

**Shayle Williams** is from the small town of McPherson, Kansas, where she was raised in a family of 10 kids. She didn't venture far to attend college, first at Highland Community College on a track and field Scholarship and later, Benedictine College on both Academic and Track and Field Scholarships graduating with a bachelor's of science degree in Biochemistry. Shayle has been working in the Commodities Testing Lab and is learning and assisting microbiological testing of pathogens in Corn-Soy products, along with, the testing of Export-Cargo Sampling Program. Shayle will soon take part in the validation of new methods compared to existing. For the future, Shayle is looking to expand her education possibly in the UMKC graduate program.



On August 25, 2014, **Avery R. Fisher** started as the Southern Missouri Resident Agent for the Midwestern Regional Office. Mr. Fisher's duty station is Jefferson City, Missouri. He graduated from the University of Missouri in December 2012 with a major in Animal Science and a minor in Agricultural Economics. He previously worked for the Missouri Department of Agriculture as an Environmental Public Health Specialist.



**Steve Justice**, native of Haverhill, Massachusetts. Graduated from the University of New Hampshire Dec. 2013 with a B.S. in Environmental & Resource Economics; has accepted the position as a grader in the Pathways Recent Grad program. in Portland. Steve has been an infantryman in the Army National Guard since 2011.

**Sean McMillen**: Sean comes to us with nearly a year of experience grading eggs with FSIS. He has accepted a position with FGIS as grain inspector, is in training, and is a participant in the Pathways Recent Graduate Program.

## A DAY IN MARSHALL



The alignment of the ribs are different, Chris explained. In dairy breeds the ribs run at an angle from the spine, down and back toward the bovine's posterior. In beef breeds the ribs run in a more vertical direction down from the spine. Looking down from the catwalk above the consignment pens at Fauquier Livestock Exchange, Inc. in Marshall, Virginia, veteran Packers and Stockyards Program (P&SP) Resident Agent Chris McClure explained differences in the features of dairy and beef breeds to Jamal Bryant. Our trip to Marshall was part of Jamal's six-week internship with the Policy and Litigation Division (PLD) as a participant in the DC Summer Youth Employee Program. While Stephanie Feinberg, PLD Program Analyst checked out a pen of cow-calf pairs, Chris further explained to Jamal that dairy breeds must process

more food to produce large quantities of milk. Having the ribs run at a bit of an angle allows dairy breeds to ingest more food.

Descending from the catwalk, Chris described for Jamal the overall flow of livestock through the market facility from unloading to load-out. Fauquier is an in-weight market, Chris said, meaning the livestock is weighed at the time they are dropped off for consignment rather than while the sale is in progress. Chris had come to Fauquier to reweigh livestock and check the weights against those obtained by Fauquier at the time of consignment.

We found the scale room at the bottom of the catwalk staircase. The indicators for both scales; one scale for individual animals and one for small groups, showed the scales to be in balance. We stepped outside the scale room and checked the scales. There was no binding of the scale platforms. Chris pointed to the positioning of the scale fences. The fences were attached to the outside edge of the platforms, just as they should be. Chris explained to Jamal that if the fences were not attached to the platforms the livestock could throw the weight off if the livestock should happen to be in contact with a fence when the printer was activated. We returned to the scale room where Jamal watched as Chris guided Fauquier personnel reweighing livestock. From the scale room we walked over to the office where we looked up the consignment weights for the same livestock making note of the relatively small differences.

Before leaving the office, Fauquier's Office Manager introduced Jamal to the documentation generated by Fauquier's computerized record-keeping system. Accounts of sale, invoices, buyers lists, and ledgers; everything compiled and linked together by the computer system making tracking the disposition of all things connected with the sale possible with minimal effort. In the office foyer Jamal helped us locate the market facility posting notice. It was hanging above the customer counter letting buyers and sellers know that sales at that facility are in the interstate flow of commerce and subject to regulation by P&SP. We looked for the tariff which should be posted for public viewing. The tariff informs consignors of the rates charged by Fauquier for stockyard services. We were unable to find a copy. No need to worry. Fauquier's computer system had it and a fresh copy was printed out and posted in no time.

As the sale began Chris made the rounds talking with different individuals. It was a perfect opportunity to acquire intelligence on livestock marketing issues in Northern Virginia. Meanwhile, Stephanie watched the sale with Jamal and answered his numerous questions about the livestock. What's the difference between a heifer and a heiferette, he asked? Listening to the cadence of auctioneer's almost unintelligible chatter Jamal compared the sights and sounds of the Fauquier sale with those he'd seen on YouTube. No, he agreed, YouTube can't capture the total essence of a livestock sale. A huge boar enters the ring causing Jamal to sit upright. That is one really big hog, he says!

By the time we left Fauquier for Jamal's home in downtown DC, he had a very thorough introduction to the ebb and flow of a real livestock market. Whether or not Jamal again sees livestock turned in a sale ring for inspection by the livestock buyers, or hears the rhythmic chant of a livestock auctioneer, I think it is safe to say he had an experience in Marshall he will carry with him wherever life takes him.



## Grain Inspection Advisory Committee Meeting

The Grain Inspection Advisory Committee met in Kansas City, Missouri, at the National Grain Center on July 15-16, 2014.

Seven new members were welcomed to the Advisory 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, Gaviolon Grain LLC, Progreso, Texas; **Todd E. Rus-som**, 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.

During the meeting Scott Averhoff, Owner/Operator Scott Averhoff dba SARA Farms, was elected vice chair and will become the Chairperson during the first meeting of 2015.

The following resolutions were introduced and passed by the Advisory Committee:

1. Whereas the U.S. Department of Agriculture is mandated under the U.S. Grain Standards Act to provide Official inspection and weighing services for exports of U.S. grains and oilseeds, Therefore be it resolved that the Advisory Committee urges in the strongest terms that FGIS take whatever actions are necessary to immediately restore Official grain inspection and weighing service wherever and whenever it is disrupted, either by immediately replacing absent inspectors with FGIS Official personnel or with inspectors from available qualified providers, including other designated or delegated Official Agencies.
2. The inspection and weighing services provided by FGIS are critical to the continued export of U.S. grain and oilseeds. In order to assure uninterrupted service, the Grain Inspection Advisory Committee strongly recommends the reauthorization of GIPSA for a minimum of 10 years.
3. The Advisory Committee recommends that GIPSA initiate the implementation of a Quantitative Rapid Test kit Verification Program for the detection of genetically engineered traits in grains.
4. It is known that moisture condenses onto cold grain. Because of the possible propensity for cold grain pneumatically delivered from a sampler to an inspection laboratory in a warm humid atmosphere to result in an apparent decrease in the TW result and an apparent increase in the moisture result, the Advisory Committee recommends that FGIS study this issue with an eye to finding a way to correct the results of measuring the two factors to account for this phenomenon.
5. Whereas GIPSA is exploring the possibility of expanding the concentration ranges in performance criteria for mycotoxin test kits, the Advisory Committee recommends GIPSA consider setting the following ranges for performance criteria:
  - Aflatoxin - 5 to 700 ppb
  - Vomitoxin - 0.5 to 30 ppm
  - Fumonisin - 0.5 to 100 ppm
  - Ochratoxin A - No Change
  - Zearalenone - No change
6. The Advisory Committee recommends that GIPSA review and update all the quality assurance tolerances

Advisory Committee from page 7

- utilized in the official inspection system. Specifically, the Advisory Committee recommends that the first to be reviewed reflect the Unified Grain Moisture Algorithm (UGMA) technology for moisture measurement.
7. Whereas the Test Weight module/apparatus that is integrated in the current official moisture meters is capable of testing for the test weight of grain; the Advisory Committee recommends that GIPSA complete and report its research regarding the feasibility of changing the official method for determination of test weight from the kettle method to the test weight apparatus integrated in the official moisture meters.
  8. The Advisory Committee recommends that GIPSA continue its work with updating inspection lab lighting standards. Lab lighting is crucial for proper visual quality analysis. Advancements in LED technology and lower overall cost should prove this technology a suitable replacement for current approved lighting technology.
  9. The Advisory Committee recommends that GIPSA continue its work to utilize technology enhancements to advance efficiencies for grain inspections. For example, GIPSA should continue its work with the USDA Rice Studio (rice scanner project) by connecting with industry stakeholders for feasibility of using the technology for further evaluations: including rice brokens sizing, color, and potential uses with other grains.
  10. The Advisory Committee supports continued focus on water-based quantitative mycotoxin test kits. Industry efforts to be "green" by reducing use of hazardous chemicals and associated waste are becoming commonplace. Encouraging manufacturers of testing methodology to develop the water-based methods should be continued.
  11. The Advisory Committee recommends two face-to-face meetings annually as there are many important issues to address.
  12. The Advisory Committee recommends continued work in verifying the accuracy of mycotoxin test kits for Distillers Dried Grains with Solubles (DDGS).
  13. The Advisory Committee recommends FGIS explore the needs with animal producers for DDGS quality measurement of key amino acids for animal nutrition.
  14. The Advisory Committee recommends that GIPSA suspend scheduled export grain inspection and weighing fee increases when the retained earnings exceed the 3-month reserve level.
  15. The Advisory Committee recommends that GIPSA post financial information for FGIS user fee accounts on a monthly basis to their website for access by users.

## Western Regional Office visit by Under Secretary Avalos

On July 28, 2014, the Under Secretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs, Edward Avalos came to the Western Regional Office WRO for an informal visit. The WRO prepared lunch for his visit, making his visit more casual and personal. During lunch, Mr. Avalos moved around the room sitting at each table and talking with WRO staff. At the end of lunch, he spoke to the group beginning with his work on a farm as a youth. Mr. Avalos talked about his work on agricultural issues a Director with the New Mexico Department of Agriculture. He spoke about his desire to make a difference during his time as Under Secretary and continued support of the Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards program.



# GIPSA 2014 Summer Meetings



# Have an idea?



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

## A Shout-Out Goes to...

“Shout-out” to P&SP Senior Auditor Nancy Speer, WRO and Auditor Loree Dickens, WRO—they always let me know if they’re going to be working in my area and keep me abreast of their findings.

“Shout-out” to P&SP Legal Instruments Examiner, Terry Jenkins, WRO—who always sends me a copy of any acceptance letter that goes out to a Kansas registrant.

A huge thank you shout to Wade Berteau for providing Book III update and load order interpretation training for Washington State Department of Agriculture personnel on August 15, 16, and 17. The training was well received, greatly appreciated, and will improve uniformity of service at export locations in Washington.

A shout out goes to Marsha Schwartz, Ruth Goth, Shane Rumsey, and Roger Fredrich for all their help with the Advisory Committee Meeting.

Congratulations to Christine Ellis on her new position. Thank you for all the help and guidance you have provided GIPSA.

Field IT Staff Adel Ibrahim, Robin Rother, and Phil Thomas were in DC the week of July 14th for cross training. The team reviewed SOPs and collaborated with the DC staff on how to better support all GIPSA IT systems. The lessons learned was put to good use the last week of July. Gilbert is the only person that pushes out Java updates via BigFix. He was out in training when a need arose to get Java patched. This is where Robin stepped in to get the Java Update rolled out. She pushed out the updated but it but it did not seem to be updating on any of the computers. Robin contacted Shane McDowell, an OCIO ITS contractor for assistance. Shane and Robin got on a Lync session and he saw that the relays that the jobs go through were not configured properly as they were competing with 14,000 other computers for updates and that is why it was taking so long. Dan gave him permission to reconfigure the relays into a more streamlined configuration. Now it should not take as long to push out patches and get results back. The work Robin did has improved patch deployment from Bigfix and the skill she learned has benefited us all. Thanks Robin.

Shout out to Jennifer Weiland for completing the Marine Marathon.

## Outreach

### 2014 Ag Discovery Program at Delaware State University



On July 11, 2014, GIPSA's FGIS-Field Management Division representatives **Andy Greenfield and Sherri Murphy** along with **Dawn Cowan** of GIPSA's Civil Rights Staff participated for the sixth year in a row in the 2014 AgDiscovery Program at Delaware State University in Dover, Delaware, sponsored by the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS). AgDiscovery is an outreach program designed to enrich teenage students with information about careers with APHIS in plant and animal science and wild-life management. During the two-week summer boarding program, twelve students took part in character and team building activities and diversity

workshops, and had the opportunity to gain a first-hand look at the many career paths open to them in the field of agricultural sciences.

**Andy, Sherri, and Dawn** presented information to the students on the role FGIS plays as part of GIPSA and USDA. The presentation focused on the check-testing of equipment, random sampling, statistics, and inspection techniques. It also gave the students an idea of the day to day responsibilities of Agricultural Commodity Technicians and Graders out in the field.

To illustrate the random sampling part of the presentation, the students were divided into groups of four and randomly selected a scoopful of multi-colored M&Ms, which represented a sample of mixed grain. The students worked together to divide the candies out into each of their six colors, representing equal amounts of different types of grain. The activity demonstrated that although there is an equal probability to select a particular color (grain) at random, the outcome may vary from the target percentage since random sampling has inherent variation. After the activity, the students were able to eat their samples. This activity was repeated in more difficult scope with mixed corn and wheat, when the students acted as graders, and had to separate white corn (5 percent) from yellow corn and white wheat (10 percent) from red wheat. Again, the concept of variation was instilled in them. The students were actively engaged as well as entertained in all of the activities presented and were very eager to ask questions about the agency.

We would like to thank Dr. Harry Thayer and APHIS for inviting us back this year to participate in the program as well as **Alan Disch** and **Rodney Bell** and others in the Grading Services Laboratory (GSL) and Board of Appeals and Review (BAR) for providing us the samples.

### Mexican Grain Quality Study Team

In July, US Grains Council, sponsored a Mexican Grain Quality Team at the National Grain Center. The team toured the National Grain Center and with the BAR (Board of Appeals and Review). They were instructed on official mycotoxin procedures in corn and introduced to official grain grading procedures under the USGSA. There were eight members on the team from various different aspects of grain marketing, but all the visitors were quality control department supervisors. Everyone was very content with the visit, but most importantly they left convinced of how well things are done at FGIS.



On August 14, 2014, a Philippine Trade Team visited the National Grain Center during a trip sponsored by U.S. Wheat Associates.

## Outreach

### We Have an App for That



Over twelve thousand visitors from around the world access GIPSA's online educational material each year. Now we have just completed a major upgrade of the content published on the [Education and Outreach](#) page of the GIPSA public website. Our new eLearning content has improved interactivity and is now accessible on mobile devices including a [free app for iPad](#). The content available to the official inspection system, grain industry, and public includes:

#### **Visual Reference images.**

The complete [Visual Reference Image \(VRI\)](#) library is available online including the Insect and Other Factor VRI which are not available in any other format. The VRI are also available in iBook, ePub, and PDF format for mobile devices. In addition the principal grain VRI are available in English, Korean, Japanese, Simplified Chinese, Traditional Chinese, and Spanish. We also provide a commodity image library containing over 100 high resolution images of commodities from Adzuki beans to Wheat.

#### **eLearning**

GIPSA has developed interactive eLearning content for training inspectors and grain industry professionals. Courses are available in four categories:

1. [FGIS Grain Inspection Orientation](#). These courses are a must for any new FGIS or grain industry employee. They provide an in-depth overview of the Federal Grain Inspection Service, the U.S. Grain Standards and the U.S. grain marketing and inspection system. Whether you need to develop new knowledge or just want an update to stay aware of the current shape of the grain industry, this course will explain in detail how the U.S. grain-inspection and marketing system works.
2. [Grading Tutorials](#). These thirteen courses review the official USDA procedures for inspecting standardized grains and rice.
3. [Grain Grading Study Questions](#). These applications are an electronic form of training "Flash Cards" which aid new inspectors in learning the terms, procedures, and requirements of grading presented in the Grain Grading Tutorials and the Grain Inspection Handbook (Book II Grain Grading Procedures).
4. [Inspector Calibration Trainers](#). Inspector Calibration Trainers are used by inspectors to fine tune their implementation of the VRI and other skills such as grain classification. These online tools, used in combination with hands-on-training, will help inspectors improve their accuracy.

#### **Video Library**

Our new [Video Library](#) page contains over 50 video titles. In addition to video versions of our FGIS Orientation and Grain Grading tutorials, it includes a large library of general information, inspection equipment and procedures videos. Is there a topic you would like to see added to our training content? Contact GIPSA's [Digital Media Group](#) with your ideas.

## Outreach

### Riceland Food Rice Seminar

The Stuttgart Field Office held the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual rice grading seminar for Riceland Foods at the Riceland Mill B facility in Stuttgart, AR on June 18, 2014. Alan Heimsch, Quality Assurance Specialist, and Albert Snelson, Shift Supervisor provided rice grading training to thirty-one Riceland Foods employees. The training included:

- Total Broken Kernels exercises for Medium and Long Grain Milled Rice and Medium and Long Grain Parboiled Milled Rice.
- Damaged Kernel Exercises: Peck Damage
- Paddy Kernel: Brown rice paddy in Milled Rice
- Test Boxes that contained Stain Damaged Kernels (VRI R 2.1), Chalky Kernels (VRI R-8.0), Heat damaged Kernels (VRI R-2.0) and Red Rice and Damaged Kernels (VRI 2.7).
- Milling degree exercising with 10 samples ranging from Hard Milled, Well Milled and Reasonably Well Milled.



### BARBECUE with the Administrator

Several of our New Orleans Building Beyond 2014 ACG Trainees had a rare opportunity August 18. While in Kansas City for a detail through the domestic inspections market, they were able to have barbecue with GIPSA Administrator Larry Mitchell. They took the initiative to network with members of our management team when they found our managers were in Kansas city for meetings at the National Grain Center. This type of forward thinking is what GIPSA is all about.



*Left to Right in picture:*

*Eric Jabs, Tony Goodeman, Tom Steele, Randy Deike, Ed Stallman, Vernett Knight jr., Larry Mitchell, Samantha Simon, Joel Banks, Dechone Bruno, Paris Zervoudis, Benjamin Brown, Merle Russelburg, Randall Jones, Kendra Kline, Jorge Vazquez, Sandra Metheny, Bob Lijewski.*

## 2<sup>nd</sup> North Carolina Hmong/Asian American Pacific Islanders (AAPI)

### Round Table Discussion

Peter Jackson, Washington, DC



On September 21-22, 2014, Peter Jackson, GIPSA's Small Farms and Beginning Farmers and Ranchers Outreach Coordinator, represented the agency at the 2<sup>nd</sup> North Carolina Hmong / Asian American Pacific Islanders (AAPI) Round Table Discussion in Albemarle, North Carolina. The event was hosted by the National Hmong American Farmers, Inc., USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), and USDA's Office of the Assistant of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (OASCR). The outreach consisted of a round table discussion and a field visit to a poultry farm located in Rockingham, North Carolina.

Over 50 Asian poultry growers from North Carolina attended the event, along with representatives from several USDA agencies, North Carolina Extension Agents, community-based organizations, and State and local government officials. The successful engagement was facilitated through the multi-lingual presentations that provided the Hmong farmers a safe and open forum to express themselves and to identify areas where USDA can provide assistance. The second day's tour of the poultry farm illuminated the economic challenges of the minority farmer working within the poultry industry. A better understanding of the community needs as well as USDA resources was gained from this meeting.

The National Hmong American Farmers, Inc. (HNAF) is a non-profit community based organization based in Fresno, California that provides direct services to limited resource and immigrant producers in the Central Valley and throughout the country. Additionally, HNAF focuses on local, state, and federal agricultural policy analysis and advocacy.

## UPDATE -- INTERNAL CONTROLS -- RISK ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Joanne Peterson, GIPSA Internal Control Officer

A system of internal controls is essentially a system of checks and balances. They help bring order, direction, and consistency to our lives and to how we administer GIPSA programs. In plain language, internal controls are the policies and procedures that are implemented to prevent and to detect unintentional errors that could adversely affect how we live and do business. GIPSA management is responsible for ensuring that controls are in place; but, ultimately, every GIPSA employee is responsible for making internal controls work.

I have been involved in internal controls since the late 1980's. I have seen management support for internal controls get top billing; I've seen it go by the way side; I have seen the support come back to a lesser degree; and, in 2014, management support for internal controls is in sharp focus once again.

In October 2013, I was named GIPSA's Internal Control Officer. I have been tasked to establish a more structured internal control program; to raise awareness on the concept and purpose of internal controls; to conduct risk assessments and internal control reviews of GIPSA's functions; and to get more employees involved in, and familiar with, GIPSA's internal control program.

An internal control program is comprised of several components. The first, which GIPSA has completed, was the creation of an Assessable Functions Inventory, which identifies all the functions which make up our Agency. In April 2014, Management and Budget Services (MBS), with the assistance of several points of contacts from GIPSA's headquarters and regional offices, initiated and completed the second component—conducting risk assessments of GIPSA's assessable functions. A risk assessment identifies, measures, and prioritizes risks, appropriately, so that primary focus is placed on the areas of greatest significance.

**Internal Control** from page 14

GIPSA employees from across the U.S. participated in the risk assessment process. They assessed their assigned function(s)' risk by utilizing a .pdf fillable worksheet, which posed questions regarding the functions' control environment, risk, and safeguards. The reviewers scored each question with a value of 1-2-3-4-5 (1 being always agree; 5 being disagree), and they were asked to explain on the worksheet why he/she scored 3, 4, or 5 to any of the questions (3 being sometimes agree; 4 being rarely agree; and 5 disagree). The scores carried forward to a Total Score block, which corresponded to the overall vulnerability of their function—High, Medium, or Low Risk.

GIPSA's reviewers conducted risk assessments for 322 assessable functions, which included 175 identical functions which the Packers and Stockyards Program's regional offices perform. The reviewers did not rate any of GIPSA's assessable functions a high risk, which indicates that the Agency's functions achieved their missions or goals, produced accurate reports or data, allowed only authorized use of resources, and operated according to laws or procedures. Of the 91 functions that scored a Medium Risk, 78 functions scored in the low range (51-68), while 13 scored in the higher range (70-93).

| GIPSA Program                           | Total Assessable Functions | High Risk (101 or >) | Medium Risk (51-100) | Low Risk (50 or <) |
|-----------------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| Civil Rights Staff                      | 9                          |                      | 1                    | 8                  |
| Management & Budget Services            | 46                         |                      | 4                    | 42                 |
| Information Technology Staff            | 31                         |                      | 8                    | 23                 |
| Federal Grain Inspection Service        | 36                         |                      | 17                   | 19                 |
| P&SP—Headquarters                       | 24                         |                      | 9                    | 15                 |
| P&SP--Regional Offices                  |                            |                      |                      |                    |
| ERO                                     | 56                         |                      | 6                    | 50                 |
| MRO                                     | 58                         |                      | 17                   | 41                 |
| WRO                                     | 62                         |                      | 29                   | 33                 |
| <b>TOTAL Functions and Risk Ratings</b> | <b>322</b>                 | <b>0</b>             | <b>91</b>            | <b>231</b>         |

In July, I began an internal control review of GIPSA's Electronic Capital Planning and Investment Control (eCPIC) Reporting and Monitoring function. eCPIC is the government-owned technology system that is designed to help Federal agencies manage and control their initiatives, portfolios, and investment priorities. eCPIC eases and automates the complex processes surrounding the management of investments and investment portfolios. The objective of this review was to determine GIPSA's level of compliance with policies and procedures and to determine if adequate internal controls are in place and if they are functioning as intended. The most significant problem that I identified was the lack of GIPSA policies and standard operating procedures, which I found did not have a negative impact on the function as a whole.

A senior manager expressed his/her opinion of the risk assessment process by stating "I found the internal control assessment process to be beneficial since it helped surface some issues of which I and others were not aware." I hope other managers will see the benefit in the risk assessment process as it will give them the opportunity to resolve problem areas that they may not realize need improving due to their daily activities of managing. I, further, hope that the risk assessment process will be a productive tool for GIPSA's managers. I will be providing the managers a summary of their functions that rated a medium risk so they can evaluate the employees' concerns, develop corrective action plans to resolve the areas needing improvement, and resolve the areas that you have brought to their attention as best as they can. Throughout FY 2015, I will follow up with the managers to ensure the identified areas have been resolved.

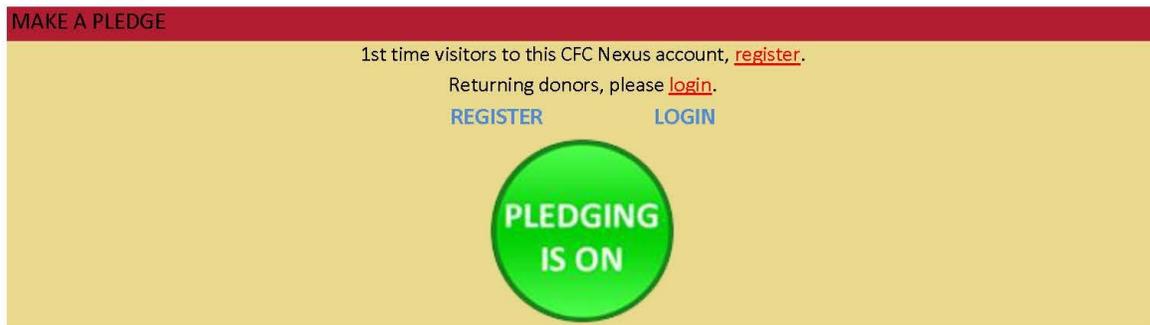
I am hopeful another beneficial outcome will result from the risk assessment process—enhanced communication between managers and their employees. I found those employees who completed the risk assessment worksheets responded to the questions truthfully and objectively and provided their concerns constructively and diplomatically. Managers should welcome the opportunity to work more closely with their employees to address the issues that were identified by this process for the betterment of the programs and of GIPSA, at large.

I believe GIPSA is headed in the right direction toward having a structured internal control program. Managers and employees are involved more than ever, and GIPSA continues to make great strides in complying with the internal control standards. I am grateful for everyone's support and concerted effort in this undertaking and extend a **"Thank YOU for an extraordinary job well done!"**



## CFC Nexus Pledging Online Sign-Up Instructions

1. Go to <https://www.cfcnexus.org/cfcnca/>
2. Click on Register or Returning Donor.



3. Select Department of Agriculture.
4. Select your Agency.
5. Fill out the data fields.
6. The email data field is oddly constructed. Don't get confused. Notice it is broken into separate pieces by the @ sign. **Select the .gov portion first.**

ENTER YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS

|          |   |           |      |   |
|----------|---|-----------|------|---|
| John.Doe | @ | w dc.usda | .gov | ▼ |
|----------|---|-----------|------|---|

7. Create the user name (John.Doe) from your email and create a password.
8. Click the button on the bottom to complete registration.
9. Click Proceed and then login to the main screen for pledging.

## Links of Interest

Read about Ohio Resident Agent Leslie Jordan's work in her community .

<http://ourohio.org/community/building-community/1151/our-community-lisa-shumaker-and-leslie-jordan>

## Issuance Report

Terri Henry, Washington, DC

FGIS Directive 9180.61, Official Moisture Calibrations for Unified Grain Moisture Algorithm Compatible Meters, dated August 1, 2014

FGIS Program Notice 14-12, Sunflower Oil Calibration Adjustment and Updated Calibration Procedures for Nuclear Magnetic Resonance (NMR) Instruments, dated July 24, 2014

FGIS Directive 9170-14, FGIS Rolling Stock Fall Protection, dated August 4, 2013

FGIS Program Notice 14-03, “EnviroLogix QuickTox for QuickScan Aflatoxin Free Quantitative Test Kit, dated August 13, 2014

FGIS Program Notice 14-11, Revision of Transgenic Status Statements, dated August 28, 2014

HRDG 4368, Telework Program, August 2014

### **EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EAP)**

(800) 222-0364

(888) 262-7848 (TTY)

<http://www.FOH4You.com>

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



## PSP Change Control Working Group

### 10 Ways to Submit a Change Request (CR)

1. Give it to your CCWG representative
2. Inspire others to submit a CR
3. Look-up the form on the inGIPSA website
4. Slide an anonymous CR under your supervisor's door
5. Call the GIPSA Hotline
6. Send a CR by pigeon and hope it arrives
7. Learn and practice using the USDA ECM system (No one likes it – but it's all we've got!)
8. Write it in a foreign language and watch us try to interpret it
9. Get a group together & brainstorm
10. Have your co-worker submit it

## Training Updates

Caroline Thorpe, Washington, DC

| Mandatory Training Due                                                                                                        |                                 |                                                               |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| Course                                                                                                                        | Due Date                        | Trainees                                                      |
| <b>CyberSecurity:</b> FY2015 Informational Security Awareness                                                                 | March 31, 2015                  | All Employees                                                 |
| <b>Civil Rights:</b> No Fear Act Comprehensive                                                                                | Within 30 days of hiring (USDA) | New Employees ( <b>About 35 Employees need to complete</b> )  |
| <b>Civil Rights:</b> Reasonable Accommodation For the Federal Workforce                                                       | December 15, 2014               | All employees                                                 |
| <b>Cultural Transformation:</b> Effective Team Communication*<br>*If there are problems call the AgLearn Helpdesk.            | September 19, 2014              | All Employees ( <b>About 100 Employees need to complete</b> ) |
| <b>Ethics:</b> Calendar Year 2014 Ethics Sweepstakes                                                                          | June 30, 2014                   | All Employees ( <b>5-Employees need to complete</b> )         |
| <b>LincPass</b> Training                                                                                                      | December 15, 2014               | All Employees w/computer access                               |
| <b>Safety:</b> General Security and Situational Awareness Training                                                            | October 15, 2014                | All Employees                                                 |
| <b>Safety-New Course:</b> Active Shooter: What You Can Do. This will replace the GIPSA Active Shooter training on youtube.com | April 30, 2015                  | All Employees-- Requirements yet to be announced by e-mail.   |

### 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 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 oppor-

*Continued, see Training on page 19*

Training from cover page 18

tunity for you to get information on both the technical skills or soft skills or career development of an employee. Mentoring is defined as an individual who facilitates personal and professional growth by sharing knowledge and insights learned through the years. The assumption is that, unlike coaching, the mentor has some form of information or advice needed by the mentee.

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

Examples of developmental activities include the following list:

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

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

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

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

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

Are EEO/CR issues or concerns affecting your employment with GIPSA?

Do you have questions?

Need help?

Then let your voice be heard.

Call the Civil Rights Staff at 202-690-3640



GIPSA News is the employee newsletter of the USDA Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration. Send your news, ideas, suggestions, comments, questions, or thoughts for the next issue to:

**Jennifer S. Hill**

USDA, GIPSA, Stop 3620  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-3649  
Phone (202) 690-3929  
FAX (202) 690-3951  
Jennifer.s.hill@usda.gov



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

By November 14, 2014

USDA, GIPSA, Stop 3620  
Departmental Initiatives and  
International Affairs  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-3649