

United States Department of Agriculture
Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration
Packers and Stockyards Program
Change Control Work Group -- Meeting Minutes

August 26 - 27, 2013, Washington, D.C.

Members Present: Sarah Childress (Chair), Marilyn Gallagher, LaDondra Taylor, Kari McPherson, Regina Ware (sponsor), Stephanie Feinberg, Onetisha Anderson, and Wayne Basford

August 26, 2013 (2:15 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.)

1. **Team Building Activity:** The group discussed methods of teamwork and how to maximize the group's efforts to achieve its mission under the CCWG Charter, and participated in some exercises that taught team-building skills.
2. **Review of FY 2013 Change Requests (to date):** The CCWG reviewed a compilation of Change Requests that have been submitted since October 1, 2012, and the status of each of those Change Requests.
3. **CHANGE REQUESTS:**
 - A. **Change Request # 7499349, Swine Contract Review Module:** Wayne reported that the Swine Contract Review Module Workgroup, made up of the agency's Legal Specialists and Investigative Attorneys, the Deputy Administrator, PLD staff, and two OGC attorneys, Jonathan Gordy and Leah Battaglioli, met on July 23 to discuss the Section 209(b) issue pertaining to the application of a foreign state's law. Further research needs to be performed on the application of Regulation 201.218, regarding Arbitration. Another meeting will be scheduled to discuss how the agency will review contracts to insure compliance with that regulation. Tabled until the next meeting to allow for further work by the Legal Specialists/Workgroup.
 - B. **Change Request # 7675880, Change to Calculating Packer Bonds:** The CCWG discussed PMT's request for follow-up by the CCWG regarding this CR. Sarah reported on the meeting that she had with Stephanie Feinberg and Wayne Basford (see note below). They met by teleconference on August 8, 2013, to review Regulation 201.30 and the Work Instructions implementing that regulation. Regulation 201.30 has two different formulas for calculating bonds: 1) paragraph (a) applies to markets selling on commission and takes the dollar value of livestock sold

during the preceding year (or substantial part if not operating the entire year, taking the monthly average and multiplying by 12) and dividing by the actual number of days in which the market agency did business, by the actual number of days on which livestock was sold, following by other conditions; 2) paragraphs (b), (c), and (d), apply to market agencies buying on commission or dealers, market agencies acting as a clearing agency, and packers, and directs taking the total dollar value of livestock purchased during the preceding year (or substantial part thereof) in which the entity "did business", and then divide by two (one-half), followed by other conditions. Thus, the regulation specifies consideration of the number of days of sales of livestock only for market agencies selling on commission. The term "did business" is much broader than limiting the division to the number of days on which livestock was sold. Thus, two formulas are prescribed, and markets selling on commission are, by law, treated differently from entities purchasing livestock. The CCWG discussed the CR further, and will recommend that if PMT wants to obtain further analysis of the effect of this CR, that the number of days that packers, dealers, and market agencies buying on commission and market agencies acting as clearing agencies purchase livestock be added to the Annual Report forms so that data can be gathered. After that information is available to the agency in future Annual Reports, the full impact of changing the packer, dealer, market agency buying on commission, and clearing agency bond formula can be analyzed.

- C. Change Request # 7716680, Proposed Revision of Work Instruction 23 (WI-23) (Clearing Agencies' Responsibilities):** The CCWG discussed this CR after obtaining comments from Legal Instrument Examiners, Marketing Specialists, a BPU supervisor, and a RA supervisor. Based on those comments, the submitter, Tim Hansen, has made a number of changes to the proposed new version of WI-23. The CCWG noted that Paragraph G of the proposed WI-23 needs to reference expired registrations. With that final change, the CCWG voted to recommend approval of the CR and the revisions to WI-23. Stephanie Feinberg will work with Tim Hansen in making the change to paragraph G, prior to the CR being submitted to the PMT for consideration.
- D. Change Request # 7684227, Training on PAS Data and Performance Measures:** The CCWG members do not believe that there is any widespread confusion about the new Performance elements, in that they have been added to the Position Descriptions of affected employees, and have been reviewed with those employees by their supervisors. Additionally, resources are already available to assist employees who may have any confusion about the new performance measures, including supervisory guidance, the Agent Guide, and the Naming Convention, among others. If training is to be done, the CCWG members believed that it should be done through the national quarterly meetings of units that have employees who were affected by the new measures. The CCWG voted to recommend disapproval of this CR for the above reasons.

August 27, 2013 (7:45 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.)

- 4. Meeting with GIPSA Civil Rights Staff:** The CCWG met with Eli Salahuddin, EEO Specialist/Mediator with the GIPSA Civil Rights Staff. Mr. Salahuddin gave a presentation on the work of the GIPSA Civil Rights Staff, civil rights laws, and the services, including Alternative Dispute Resolution and Advice and Assistance, which are available through the GIPSA Civil Rights Staff. The members of the CCWG discussed with Mr. Salahuddin the handling of Change Requests that may implicate civil rights issues. While the vast majority of Change Requests do not involve civil rights issues, the CCWG members expressed the need to know how to handle Change Requests when they appear to involve civil rights issues. There was specific discussion about a recent anonymous Change Request concerning Employee Morale and the agency-wide distribution of Overdue Task Reports. Mr. Salahuddin made his services available to the CCWG on an as-needed basis, and suggested that he be promptly contacted upon receipt of any Change Requests that could involve civil rights issues in order to allow for efforts to achieve an early resolution to any civil rights issues that may arise.

- 5. Meeting with GIPSA Information Technology (IT) Change Control Board:** Dan Knight, GIPSA's Chief Information Officer, met with the CCWG to discuss the work of the IT Change Control Board and how its work relates to the work of the CCWG. Mr. Knight explained that the IT Change Control Board works to track all IT investments, consider IT changes, review large IT purchases, and to provide guidance to GIPSA on IT purchases and practices. The current members of the IT Change Control Board are: Dan Knight, Chair, Regina Ware (P&SP), Amy Blechinger (P&SP), Karen Guagliardo (FGIS), LeRoy Capper (IT), Abhai Singh (IT), and Tandace Bell (FGIS). Mr. Knight also spoke about IT tools that are available to GIPSA staff, including: 1) USDA Connect, which is similar to Facebook for USDA working groups; and 2) SharePoint, which is used for USDA Tier 1 Helpdesk. Mr. Knight also explained that GIPSA IT will be moving to Tiers 2 and 3 Helpdesk duties.

- 6. Tour of the USDA Headquarters Building:** Brett Offutt, PLD Director, was very informative in providing the CCWG members with a tour of the USDA Headquarters building and the USDA's South Building where GIPSA's offices are located.

- 7. Meeting with GIPSA Administrator Larry Mitchell and P&SP Deputy Administrator Susan Keith:** Mr. Mitchell and Ms. Keith met with the CCWG to discuss the group's work, and the history of the formation of the CCWG and its predecessor groups. The CCWG members gave a PowerPoint presentation on "The Purposes and Process of CCWG" that addressed why the CCWG was created, the Submission of Change Requests and the Review Process, the Benefits of an Employee Suggestion Program, Examples of Highly Successful Employee Suggestions, the Hallmarks of a Successful Employee Suggestion Program, and Six Reasons Why Employee Suggestion Programs sometimes fail.

- 8. Meeting with PLD and BEAD staff:** The PowerPoint presentation on “The Purposes and Process of CCWG” was presented by the CCWG’s members to PLD and BEAD staff to increase the staff members’ understanding of the role of the CCWG and the value of their participation in submitting Change Requests. Training was provided on how to submit a Change Request using the CCWG ECM system. Stephanie Feinberg gave a presentation to highlight Change Requests that have been submitted by PLD and BEAD staff, and the value of those submissions to the work of the Packers and Stockyards Program.
- 9. Attendance at Administrator’s Frequently Asked Questions Webinar on Mentoring:** CCWG members a presentation by GIPSA Administrator Larry Mitchell on his experience with mentoring, and by other GIPSA staff concerning GIPSA’s Mentoring Program for the next fiscal year.
- 10. Meeting with the Federal Grain Inspection Service’s CCWG:** A meeting was held with Anthony Goodeman and another member (by teleconference) of the FGIS CCWG to discuss the work of the two GIPSA CCWG groups. The Charter for each CCWG was discussed. Suggestions were shared on how to encourage the submission of Change Requests by employees. The logistical problems of holding meetings across multiple time zones and with varying work shifts and schedules were also discussed.
- 11. Training on Contending with Change:** Rebecka Mevorah, EAP Consultant at Magellan Health Care, provided training to the CCWG on “Contending with Change, Stages of Change, and Coping Strategies” to enhance the CCWG members’ understanding of the change process and how staff members view and respond to change.
- 12. Vote on officers and appointment of Reporter:** Officers for calendar year 2014 were elected by secret ballot, as follows: Wayne Basford (Chair), and Marilynn Gallagher (Vice Chair). Stephanie Feinberg and LaDondra Taylor will serve as co-Reporters.
- 13. Open Discussion:** The need to include the date of the PMT’s decision on Change Requests was discussed. There was also discussion about whether CCWG members’ terms should continue to begin in January, or if another month would be preferable so that new members could attend any face-to-face meeting and receive orientation to the work of the CCWG.
- 14. Adjournment:** the date for the next meeting will be determined based on any new Change Requests and work and updates on current Change Requests.