

GRAIN INSPECTION PACKERS AND
STOCKYARDS ADMINISTRATION

FEDERAL GRAIN INSPECTION SERVICE

CAREER PATH GUIDE
FOR
AGRICULTURAL COMMODITY GRADER
SERIES GS-1980
AND
AGRICULTURAL
COMMODITY AID/TECHNICIAN
SERIES GS-1981
GRADES GS-2 THROUGH GS-9
(Month) 1999

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United States Department of Agriculture
Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration
Washington, DC 20250

**EMPLOYEE OPPORTUNITY - AFFIRMATIVE
EMPLOYMENT POLICY AND
ACCOUNTABILITY STATEMENT**

I am affirming the Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration's (GIPSA) commitment to Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, which guarantees Equal Employment Opportunity for all employees and applicants for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, or handicapping condition. Our objective is to provide a work environment free of unlawful employment discrimination.

All GIPSA employees, especially managers and supervisors, are responsible for supporting our policy on Equal Employment Opportunity and for ensuring that the workplace is free of discrimination. All personnel practices, including recruitment, selection, training, promotion, and transfer are required to be free of unlawful discrimination. Reprisal of any kind against employees or customers will not be tolerated. This policy will carry a zero tolerance for retaliation.

To this Administrator, this means we must all show respect for others, be professionals at what we do. Conduct ourselves and carry out responsibilities to the best of our abilities - move beyond the old ways and move forward for the benefit of all GIPSA employees, Agriculture, and the customers we serve.

Meeting these objectives will prepare us for the 21st century.

James R. Baker
Administrator

April 29, 1997

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SECTION I-CAREER DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

WHAT IS IN THIS GUIDE?

This Guide was developed to provide ACG and ACA/ACT employee grades GS-2 through GS-9 with a tool to become more informed about career goals development and individual career planning.

WHAT IS CAREER DEVELOPMENT?

Career development of employees is for many organizations the next logical phase in human resources planning. This tool can be used by individual employees to describe their career goals they wish to accomplish, to assess their development actions, and choose appropriate action to make intelligent decision concerning their career options and opportunities. The following commonly used term will help focus attention on describing the career planning processes:

* *Life planning*-A self-analysis process for identifying relative emphasis in one's life among work, family, leisure, education, and spiritual development.

* *Career*-The sequence of a person's work-related activities and behaviors and associated attitudes, values, and aspirations over the span of one's life.

* *Career Planning*-A deliberate process for becoming aware of self, opportunities, constraints, choices, and consequences; identifying career-related goals; and "career pathing" or programming work, education, and related developmental experiences to provide direction, timing, and sequence of steps to attain a specific career goal.

* *Career Management*-An ongoing process of preparing, implementing, and monitoring career plans undertaken by the individual alone or in concert with the agency.

* *Career development*-The outcomes of your career planning. These outcomes that you pursue may be based on individual needs or those of the agency.

* *Human Resource Development*-Includes management and supervisory responsibilities to develop and utilize each employee's potential to perform the work and missions of the organization.¹

¹ Training and Development Handbook, Third Edition
Robert Craig, Editor in Chief

CAREER PLANNING

"Life is not a dress rehearsal."

The key to career planning is thorough information gathering. It is ultimately the EMPLOYEE (YOU) who must decide what your career and life goals are.

One of the requirements for taking charge and understanding careers, career planning, and career management is for you to get involved. Formerly, a career was believed to be life long. We've come to recognize that life is increasingly made up of a sequence of careers. It was thought that there were definite breaks between careers, and that career changes were dramatic shifts. Now, it's becoming evident that most careers overlap and that we carry skills and interest from one to another. Each career is built on new knowledge and skills but utilizes some skills and knowledge from prior careers.

When the jobs you take are a mismatch with what you need and want, the mental and physical costs can be high. Performance problems can result, advancement is not as likely, personal frustration and stress can wear you down.

Traditionally, career planning has been seen as upward movement to higher responsibility and more pay, or a mysterious activity that the organization did for you. The definition of career planning has changed. Moving up through advancement is only one way to view a career plan. Career progress doesn't require continual promotion, just continual growth.

YOUR CURRENT POSITION

The position you now hold as an ACG or ACA/ACT serves 2 career-planning purposes: (1) as a place to express your talents, and (2) as a training ground. In your current job, you are being appraised constantly by people who will have a direct impact on your career future. As a training ground, your job provides opportunities for you to develop and test new skills and to learn how the organization works, how decisions are made, and how to influence others effectively.

Part of your career planning must include the concept of "growing" in your job. This is a large contributor to job satisfaction and can be important in determining your need for action (if any) about your career.

Your view of satisfaction and success is determined by your own values and needs. Your perspective on your career is the sum total of your experience, education, and expectations.

Organizations are becoming more aware how the basic beliefs and values of the agency affect the productivity of employees. Understanding this is a skill that must not only be applied by management but must be fully understood by employees seeking to manage their careers.

CAREER PLANNING - A DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

1. Recognize and define decisions to be made about your career.
2. Identify what is personally important to you (define your decision criteria). Assess your values, interests, abilities, priorities, etc.
3. Develop and analyze alternative career actions or options:
 - A. Write down alternative actions or career paths.
 - B. Identify both the good and bad consequences of each alternative.
 - C. Estimate the probability of each consequence occurring
 - D. Describe the significance of each consequence to you or the desirability.

You should gather information from a wide variety of sources for this step. Potential sources include printed materials; ideas, opinions and feedback from other people, especially those close to you; surveys, tests, and critiques; what you know about yourself; classes, workshops, courses, etc.

4. Choose the alternative that meets your needs with the minimum acceptable level of risk (all decisions will meet your needs).
5. Plan a course of action to implement the chosen alternative, or achieve your goal.
 - A. What are the specific results you want to achieve; Are they stated in such a way that you will know when you have achieved them?
 - B. List the specific steps you need to take to reach the goal.
 - C. Establish target dates for each of these steps.
 - D. What resources (money, time, people, equipment, etc.) do you need in order to carry out the plan?
6. Readjust and reevaluate your career plan each time a new issue or concern arises that affects your plan.

SECTION II - FGIS INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION TO THE FGIS INSPECTION AND WEIGHING JOBS

Grains exported from the United States must be certified by the Federal Grain Inspection Service as having met a specific standard. This means that agency employees must officially sample, inspect, and weigh grains before loading for export and certify the quality and quantity (grade, class, condition, and weight) at the time of inspection.

Official United States standards exist for eleven grains: barley, corn, flaxseed, mixed grain, oats, rye, sorghum, soybeans, sunflower seed, triticale, and wheat.

In addition to providing mandatory inspection and weighing services to determine the grade for export shipments, FGIS supervises and (in certain cases) provides inspection and weighing services at interior locations. FGIS may also be requested to render customer service for buyers and sellers to perform a variety of other tests to ensure that contractual specifications are being met.

WHERE ARE WE LOCATED?

Most positions are located in field offices throughout the United States. The Agricultural Commodity Graders (ACG) position is the primary position in these offices. Graders in this position sample, inspect, grade, and weigh grain. Field offices also have Agricultural Commodity Aid/ Technicians (ACA/ACT) to support the Graders.

HOW AND WHERE IS THE FIELD FGIS ORGANIZED?

FGIS field activities are primarily divided into the domestic and export programs. In the export programs the ACG and ACA/ACT positions are found primarily at field offices located at major United States locations: Baltimore, League City, New Orleans, Toledo, and Portland. In these positions employees work in an export grain elevator or grading laboratory, and on oceangoing vessels or barges. They are required to work shifts and overtime, including night and weekends.

In the domestic program ACG and ACA/ACT positions are found primarily at field offices in the interior United States: Wichita, Cedar Rapids, Moscow, and Kansas City. Employees in these offices monitor and supervise the original grading, inspection, and weighing services that are designated to private and/or state agencies at domestic markets. The ACGs supervise the official agencies' activities by monitoring grading accuracy, observing onsite work, and perform field appeals. Performing these duties requires travel, but most work is performed in a field office.

Although work shift changes or occasional overtime can be required, the ACGs usually perform their duties during a standard daily work schedule.

SECTION III-CAREER OCCUPATIONS-FGIS ACG AND ACA/ACT

(The Federal Government identifies its positions by title, pay plan, occupation, and grade)

(See Appendix C Explanation of the Federal Personnel System (FPM))

Agricultural Commodity Grader (Grain) GS-1980

The Agricultural Commodity Grader (Grain) is the primary occupation in FGIS. This position requires the incumbent to grade, inspect, and weigh grain. The entry or trainee level of the position is GS-5 and allows for a noncompetitive promotion to GS-7 and from GS-7 to GS-9. For the incumbent to be eligible for promotion he/she must serve 1 year in grade and successfully perform the requirements for the next grade level. Before a trainee can be considered qualified for promotion to GS-9, he/she must pass a proficiency evaluation in four grains. The grading of wheat must be one of these grains and weighing can be substituted for one of the grains with the exception of wheat.

Career Progression:

GS-1980-5 Trainee Grader - Normal Entry Level

The employee is either recruited from college, from the support occupation of Agricultural Commodity Aid/Technician, or has been a licensee employed by a private or State agency.

GS-1980-7 Advanced Trainee Grader - Developmental Level

The employee is required to grade 2 or more kinds of grain. Weighing experience may substitute for one of the grains.

GS-1980-9 Working or Full Performance Level

The employee is required to grade 4 or more kinds of grain. The employee must be able to grade all major grains his/her field office normally inspects. (See introduction for grains)

Agricultural Commodity Aid/Technician (Grain) GS-1891

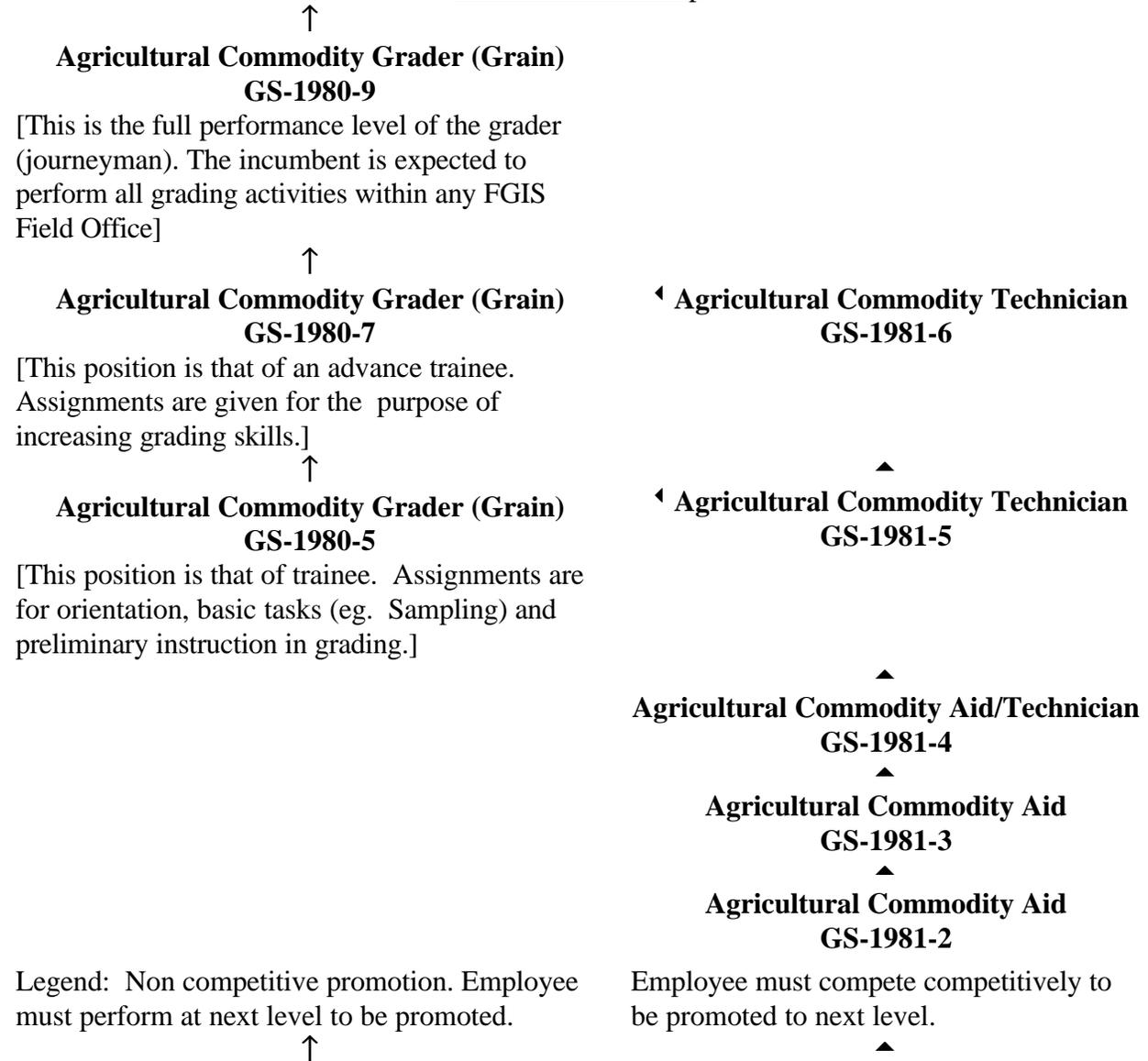
The Agricultural Commodity Aid/Technician is a support position in the field office designed to perform routine repetitive chores for grading activities. The progression from GS-2 to GS-6 is based upon performing more complex assignments. Many times employees in this position accumulate qualifications which allow them to compete for the Agricultural Commodity Grader position.

CAREER MAP FOR THE ACG AND ACA/ACT OCCUPATIONS

A career map provides a visual summary of the career paths an ACA/ACT and ACG in FGIS can follow to progress from one position or grade level to another as shown in the following map.

AGRICULTURAL COMMODITY TECHNICIANS (ACA/ACT) AND GRADER (ACG)

Read from bottom up



The ACG during their progression to GS-9 and performance of their duties builds qualifications for three potential career paths with the FGIS program. Each path requires the ACG to compete in a competitive process against general qualification requirements and selective criteria.

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES ABOVE THE GS-9

Career opportunities for the ACG above the GS-9 level are somewhat limited. The primary career opportunity is that of a first-line supervisor (Shift Supervisor, GS-1980-11). Other opportunities for career paths that employees may pursue with FGIS are found in the Career Charts that follows. The following general skills will help employees compete for positions above the GS-9 level:

- Grading/Inspection Skills
- Human Relations and Interpersonal Skills
- Written and Oral Communications Skills
- Technical Competencies (Computer, Scales, Instrumentation)

POSITIONS ABOVE THE GS-9 LEVEL(1) Technical Experts

(1) Quality Assurance Specialist
BAR Specialist

(2) Operations/Supervision
Shift Supervisor
Area Supervisor
Assistant FOM
Field Office Manager
Branch Chief
Division Director
Deputy Administrator

(3) Program Specialist
Marketing Specialist
Program Analyst
Compliance Specialist

SECTION IV-POSITION OVERVIEWS

QUALIFICATION STANDARDS AND EVALUATION CRITERIA

Agricultural Commodity Aid GS-1981-2
Agricultural Commodity Aid GS-1981-3
Agricultural Commodity Aid GS-1981-4
Agricultural Commodity Technician GS-1981-5
Agricultural Commodity Technician GS-1981-6

Agricultural Commodity Grader GS-1980-5
Agricultural Commodity Grader GS-1980-7
Agricultural Commodity Grader GS-1980-9

Agricultural Commodity Aid (Grain)
GS-1981-2

<u>Description of Duties</u>	<u>Basic Eligibility Requirements</u>	<u>Evaluation Criteria</u>
<p>Under close supervision, the incumbent performs routine technical functions in support of the Agency's inspection and weighing services for grain, rice, and related commodities. Tasks include performing limited weighing functions, sampling, performing mechanical measurements of the grain, rice and other applicable commodities, and performing check loading, sampling, check weighing, and sanitation inspections of processed commodities.</p>	<p><u>under X 118 Qualification Standards</u></p> <p>Positions at the GS-2 level require 3 months of general experience.</p> <p><u>Experience:</u> Experience that demonstrates the ability to perform the tasks in the position.</p> <p>OR</p> <p><u>Education:</u> High school graduation or equivalent.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Combination of education and experience.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ability to learn the characteristics of grain and grain products and inspect samples for appearance, odor, and condition. 2. Ability to prepare samples for testing and to perform calculations. 3. Ability to report test data and keep records.

**Agricultural Commodity Aid (Grain)
GS-1981-3**

<u>Description of Duties</u>	<u>Basic Eligibility Requirements under X118 Qualification Standards</u>	<u>Evaluation Criteria</u>
<p>The incumbent performs routine technical functions in support of the Agency's inspection and weighing services for grain, rice, and related commodities. Tasks include performing limited weighing functions, sampling, performing mechanical measurements of the grain, rice and other applicable commodities, and performing check loading, sampling, check weighing, and sanitation agriculture, inspections of processed commodities.</p>	<p>Positions at the GS-3 level require 6 months of general experience.</p> <p>Experience: Experience that demonstrates the ability to perform the work of the position.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Education: One academic year above high school with courses related to chemistry, botany, or other related subjects.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Combination of education and experience.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Knowledge of characteristics of grain and grain products and ability to inspect samples for appearance, odor, and condition. 2. Ability to prepare samples for testing and to perform calculations. 3. Ability to report test data and keep records.

Agricultural Commodity Aid (Grain)
GS-1981-4

<u>Description of Duties</u>	<u>Basic Eligibility Requirements under XI18 Qualification Standards</u>	<u>Evaluation Criteria</u>
<p>The incumbent performs technical functions in support of the Agency's inspection and weighing services for grain, rice, and related commodities. Tasks include performing one or more of the following functions: weighing, sampling, conducting preliminary physical tests and some chemical tests, making visual inspections and mechanical measurements of the grain, rice and other applicable commodities, and performing check loading, sampling, check weighing, and sanitation inspections of processed commodities.</p>	<p>Positions at the GS-4 level require 6 months of general experience and 6 months of specialized experience.</p> <p><u>Experience:</u> Experience that demonstrates the ability to perform the work and has provided a broad knowledge of industrial methods, procedures, materials, machinery, or facilities used in a production, processing, or transportation-related operation. This experience must have provided a base of knowledge for the development of skills in applying specific sampling and inspection techniques and for learning a variety of procedures, practices, and safety requirements involved in handling, storing, and transporting grain, rice, or processed grain products.</p> <p>OR</p> <p><u>Education:</u> 2 academic years above high school with courses related to agriculture, chemistry, botany, or other related subjects.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Combination of education and experience.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Knowledge of characteristics of grain and grain products and ability to inspect samples for appearance, odor, and condition. 2. Ability to prepare samples for testing and to perform calculations. 3. Ability to report test data and keep records. 4. Ability to monitor flow of grain and weighing functions within an elevator.

Agricultural Commodity Technician (Grain)
GS-1981-5

<u>Description of Duties</u>	<u>Basic Eligibility Requirements under X118 Qualification Standards</u>	<u>Evaluation Criteria</u>
<p>The incumbent performs a variety of technical functions in support of the Agency's inspection and weighing services for grain, rice, and related commodities. Tasks include performing official weighing, and at least two of the following: (a) sampling, (b) conducting physical tests, (c) conducting chemical tests, (d) making visual inspections and mechanical measurements of the grain, rice and other applicable commodities, (e) conducting stowage examinations, and (f) performing check loading, sampling, check weighing, and sanitation inspections of processed commodities.</p>	<p>Positions at the GS-5 level require 1 year of specialized experience equivalent to the GS-4 level.</p> <p><u>Experience:</u> Experience that provided a broad knowledge of industrial methods, procedures, materials, machinery, or facilities used in a production, processing, or transportation-related operation. This experience must have provided a base of knowledge for the development of skills in applying specific sampling and inspection techniques and for learning a variety of procedures, practices, and safety requirements involved in handling, storing, and transporting grain, rice, or processed grain products.</p> <p>OR</p> <p><u>Education:</u> 4-year course of study above high school leading to a bachelor's degree with courses related to agriculture, chemistry, Botany, or other related subjects.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Combination of education and experience.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Knowledge of characteristics of grain and grain products and ability to inspect samples for appearance, odor, and condition. 2. Ability to prepare samples for testing and to perform calculations. 3. Ability to report test data and keep records. 4. Ability to monitor flow of grain and weighing functions within an elevator.

**Agricultural Commodity Technician (Grain)
GS-1981-6**

<u>Description of Duties</u>	<u>Basic Eligibility Requirements under X118 Qualification Standards</u>	<u>Evaluation Criteria</u>
<p>The incumbent performs independently the full range of technical functions in support of the Agency's inspection and weighing services for grain, rice, and related commodities. Tasks include (a) sampling, (b) conducting physical and chemical tests, (c) performing official weighing, (d) making visual inspections and mechanical measurements of the grain, rice and other applicable commodities, (e) conducting stowage examinations, and (f) performing check loading, sampling, check weighing, and sanitation inspections of processed commodities.</p>	<p>Positions at the GS-6 level require 1 year of specialized experience equivalent to the GS-5 level.</p> <p><u>Experience:</u> Experience that provided a broad knowledge of industrial methods, procedures, materials, machinery, or facilities used in a production, processing, or transportation-related operation. This experience must have provided a base of knowledge for the development of skills in applying specific sampling and inspection techniques and for learning a variety of procedures, practices, and safety requirements involved in handling, processed grain products.</p> <p>OR</p> <p><u>Education:</u> One semester or equivalent of full-time graduate-level education in agriculture, chemistry, botany, or other related subjects.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Combination of experience and education.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ability to perform the full range of chemical tests found in grain inspection laboratories. 2. Ability to perform visual inspections and mechanical measurements in order to assist in establishing the kind, class, and quality of grain products. 3. Knowledge of grain sampling procedures, both mechanical and manual, in order to properly monitor and/or collect grain samples for grading. 4. Ability to record test data and maintain accurate official records. 5. Ability to communicate both verbally and in writing in order to provide instruction to less experienced personnel and maintain working relationships with industry and other Agency personnel.

**Agricultural Commodity Grader (Grain)
GS-1980-5**

<u>Description of Duties</u>	<u>Basic Eligibility Requirements under X118 Qualification Standards</u>	<u>Evaluation Criteria</u>
<p>The incumbent is a trainee grader. Work is assigned for the purpose of orientation and learning basic requirements of the position, such as sampling. The assignments are increased in complexity until the incumbent is able to Perform a variety of activities necessary to support of the Agency's inspection and weighing services for grain, rice, and related commodities.</p> <p>Developmental assignments include (a. sampling, (b) conducting physical and chemical tests, (c) performing official weighing, (d) making visual inspections and mechanical measurements of the grain, rice and other applicable commodities, (e)conducting stowage examinations, and (f) performing check loading, sampling, check weighing, and sanitation inspections of processed commodities and to grade and pass proficiency examinations in two or more grains.</p>	<p>The applicant for the position must have completed a 4-year course of study leading to a bachelor's degree.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>have 3 years general experience, 1 year of which was equivalent to at least the GS-4 level. No specialized experience is required.</p> <p>EDUCATION: Major study—any field that included 9 semester hours or the equivalent in agriculture, botany, crop production, agronomy, product processing, food chemistry, technology, quality control, or other related subjects.</p> <p>GENERAL EXPERIENCE: Experience that provided familiarity with the standard methods or practices related to the product's processing, storage, transportation, quality control techniques, or marketing in terms of the effects such factors have on product quality. See attachment for examples of this kind of work.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Knowledge of Grain Marketing. 2. Ability to communicate both verbally and in writing in order to provide instruction to less experienced personnel. 3. Ability to work with others and maintain working relationships with industry and other Agency personnel.

Agricultural Commodity Grader (Grain)
GS-1980-7

<u>Description of Duties</u>	<u>Basic Eligibility Requirements under X118 Qualification Standards</u>	<u>Evaluation Criteria</u>
<p>The incumbent is an advance trainee grader. Work is assigned for the purpose of not only learning the basic requirements of grading but to create an understanding of why the system works the way it does; be able to identify malfunctions in the system, and take appropriate corrective actions. The assignments are increased in complexity until the incumbent is able to independently perform a variety of activities necessary to support of the Agency's inspection and weighing services for grain, rice, and related commodities. Work assignments at this level include a wide variety of (a) sampling, (b) conducting physical and chemical tests, (c) performing official weighing, (d) making visual inspections and mechanical measurements of the grain, rice and other applicable commodities, (e) conducting stowage examinations, and (f) performing check loading, sampling, check weighing, and sanitation inspections of processed commodities. The incumbent at this level must be able to grade and pass proficiency examinations in four or more grains before they are eligible for the GS-9.</p>	<p>The applicant for the position must have completed a 4-year course of study leading to a bachelor's degree. One full year of graduate-level education or superior academic achievement.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>One year of specialized experience which was equivalent to at least the GS-5 level.</p> <p>EDUCATION: Major study-any field that included 9 semester hours or the equivalent in agriculture, botany, agronomy, product processing, food chemistry, technology, quality control, or other related subjects.</p> <p>Specialized Experience See Attachment.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ability to inspect and grade grain. 2. Ability to obtain representative grain samples. 3. Ability to understand and use directives, handbooks and manuals. 4. Ability to communicate both verbally and in writing in order to provide instruction to less experienced personnel. 5. Ability to work with others and maintain working relationships with industry and other Agency personnel.

Agricultural Commodity Grader (Grain)
GS-1980-9

Description of Duties	Basic Eligibility	Evaluation Criteria
<p>The incumbent determines the grade of grain and related commodities and makes independent decisions on difficult and borderline grade determinations. Performs agency services in support of grain, rice, and related commodity markets. These include (a) the original inspection and weighing of grain; (b) the permissive inspection, weighing and check loading of rice pulses, processed grain products and other assigned commodities; and/or (c) the technical supervision (oversight, reporting, and review) of grain and commodity inspection and weighing activities performed by licensed other and contracted non-Federal inspectors.</p>	<p>Requirements under X 118 Qualification Standards Positions at GS-9 and above require "hands on" grading and/or inspection experience of grain and/or grain products and 1 year equivalent to at least the GS-7 level.</p> <p><u>Education:</u> Undergraduate and Graduate Education -Major Study-any field that included 9 semester hours or equivalent in agriculture, product processing, food chemistry, technology, quality control, or other related subjects.</p> <p>OR</p> <p><u>Experience:</u> Experience that provided familiarity with standard methods or practices related to the product's processing, storage, transportation, quality control techniques, or marketing in terms of the effects such factors have on product quality. The experience may have been gained in work such as:</p> <p>* Agricultural production (farming, growing, or raising) that provided a knowledge of grading and the quality factors related to grading of grain and/or grain products.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ability to inspect and grade grain 2.. Ability to obtain representative grain samples. 3. Ability to understand and use directives, handbooks and manuals. 4. Ability to communicate both verbally and in writing in order to provide instruction to less experienced personnel. 5. Ability to work with others and maintain working relationships with industry and Agency personnel.

SECTION V—TRAINING PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES TO ASSIST CAREER PROGRESSION

Training Programs

The Federal Grain Inspection Service, a program of the Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration, maintains an administrative system designed to assist employees in planning for career management. It trains its supervisors to assist the employee in developing career plans, it provides through the Training Staff a structure of Collateral Duty Training Specialists in each field office to provide assistance and counsel to supervisors and employees in career planning. FGIS provides for:

(1) Individual Development Plans (IDP)

FGIS requires its employees to discuss the development of an Individual Development Plan with their supervisor. This discussion provides for career counseling and identifies training that will improve performance and enhance skills, benefiting FGIS and its employees.

(2) Technical and Professional Training

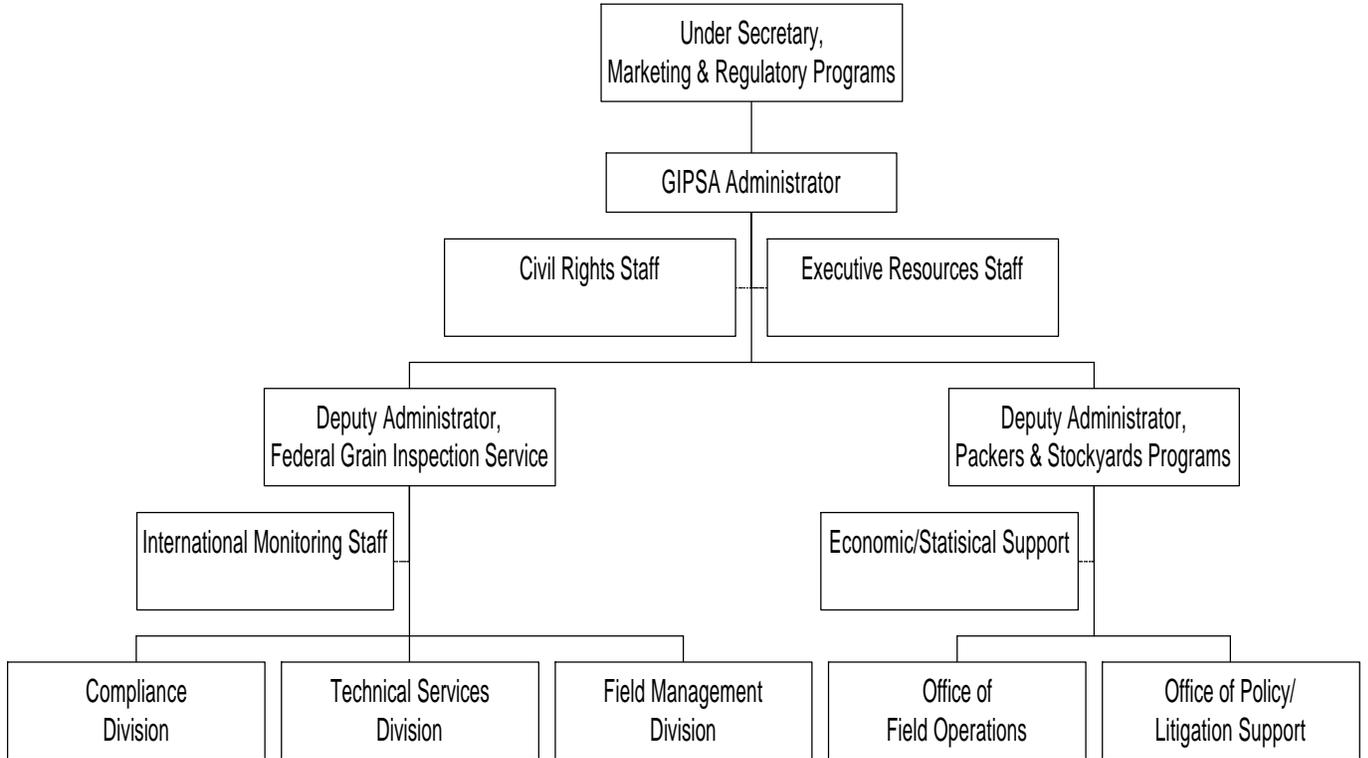
FGIS offers extensive on-the-job and formal training in grading skills. It also encourages professional training of its headquarters personnel as part of its effort to be recognized as the predominant inspection agency worldwide.

(3) Supervision and Management Development

FGIS offers several supervisory and management development programs. It sponsors individual candidates for Senior Executive Service training and mid- management training. It offers a variety of leadership development training through the USDA Graduate School. It also encourages the continuing development of supervisors through Agency-sponsored courses, seminars, and meeting.

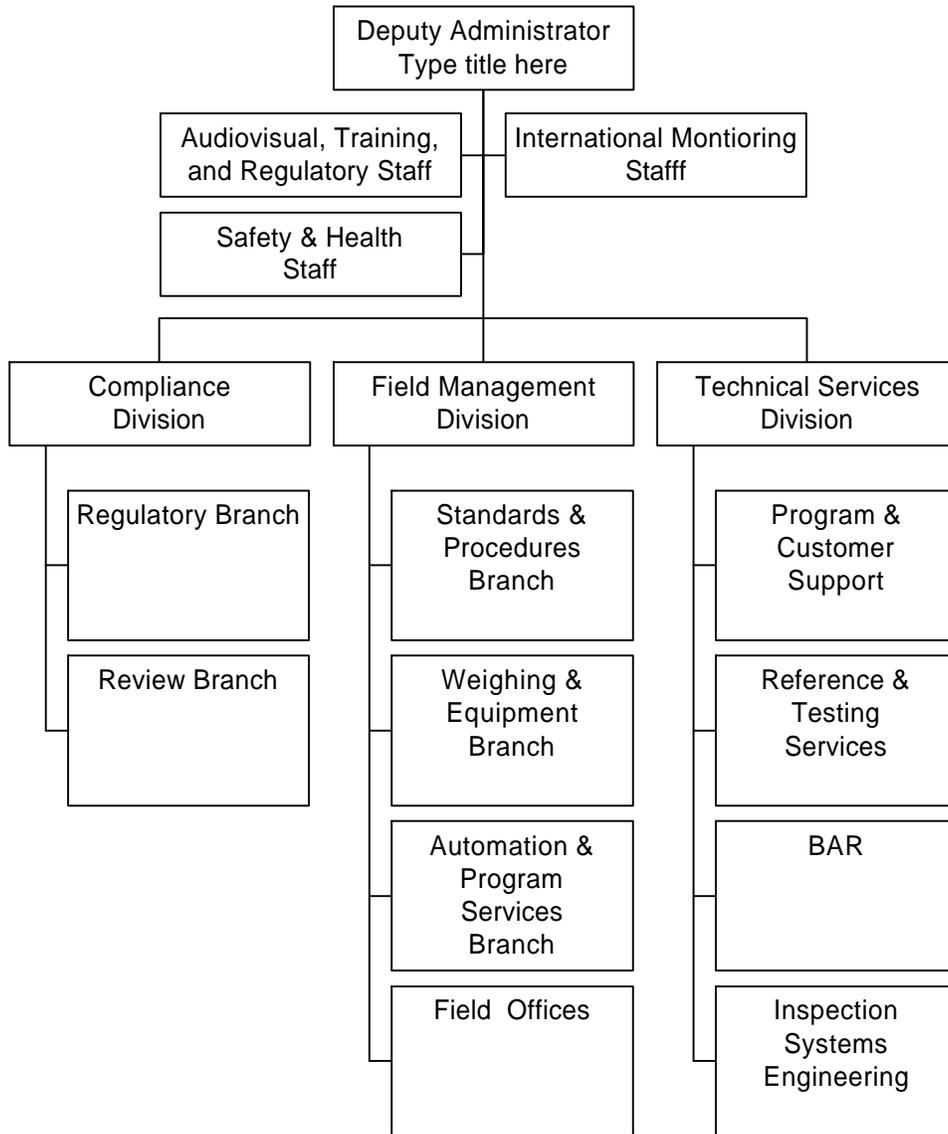
APPENDIX A

Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration



APPENDIX B

Federal Grain Inspection Service



APPENDIX C

EXPLANATION OF THE FEDERAL PERSONNEL SYSTEM (FPS)

Before you can successfully plan a realistic career path, you must know basic information about the Federal Personnel System. This part of the guide defines terms and explains key personnel concepts which will affect how you can use this Guide to plan your career with the Federal Grain Inspection Service.

EMPLOYMENT TERMS AND CONCEPTS:

Career or Career Conditional Employment-The majority of federal employees are in the competitive service on career or career-conditional appointments. "Competitive Service" means that you compete with other people by submitting an application either for a special one-time recruitment announcement or for placement on a continuing register of eligibles. Competitive appointments can be made on a temporary or permanent basis. If you are selected for a permanent competitive appointment, you start out "career conditional" with a one-year probationary period. After three years of satisfactory service, you become a "career" employee.

Excepted Employment-This is the alternative system to the competitive service. Appointments are made, usually without competition, based on special "appointing authorities. "Employment is usually on a temporary or limited basis. If you are in the excepted service, your career path options are limited because you do not have status (see below).

Status Employment-Career or career-conditional appointments are permanent appointment in the competitive service; they are also call "status" appointments. Many career opportunities, particularly merit promotion vacancy announcements, are open only to status employees. Therefore, if you are on an excepted appointment, or a competitive temporary appointment, your first career goal may be to seek an appointment which offers status. Then you can continue moving toward your goal by competing for new opportunities through merit.

STANDARDS TERMS AND CONCEPTS:

Position Classification Standards-This is a set of guidelines used to analyze position descriptions to determine their titles and grades. The standards are issued by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), the government agency which establishes federal employment regulations and policies based on laws passed by Congress, Executive Order from the President, and judicial decisions. Personnel specialists use the classification standards to determine what positions make up an organization. The classification of a position is based on factors like the complexity and difficulty of duties and responsibilities, the extent of supervision received, and the knowledge and abilities required by the work.

Series, Grade and Title-The series of the position is a number which identifies groups of positions by a general kind of work. For example, the agricultural commodity grading occupation falls into the 1900 - Quality Assurance, Inspection, and Grading Group. Within groups, positions are given a series number which identifies the specific work done. For example, a 1980 is an Agricultural Commodity Grader (ACG). Grades relate to the level of difficulty or amount of responsibility of positions. For example, the work of GS-1980 (ACG-9 level) is more difficult or involves a greater level of responsibility than that of a GS-1980, grade 7 level. Official names of positions, or titles, are dictated by the position classification standards. Standardized titles are used. For example, GS-1980 is always called an Agricultural Commodity Grader.

Qualifications Standards-This is another set of OPM guidelines that personnel specialists use to determine if candidates are qualified for positions. Important factors in determining qualifications include kind of previous work experience, length of experience and education.

PROMOTIONS TERMS AND CONCEPTS:

Promotions-A promotion takes place when an employee is placed in a position with a higher grade level than the one he or she currently holds.

Basic Requirements for Promotion-The following basic requirements must be met before you can be promoted:

1. There must be higher level duties to perform (this is determined by a personnel specialist by evaluating the proposed position against the classification standards; the higher graded position must be established by the personnel office before you can move into it);
2. you must be qualified for the higher level-grade (the personnel office reviews your background to see if you meet the qualification standards for the proposed job); and
3. Your supervisor must determine that you are capable of performing at the higher level (this judgement is made by your supervisor-the fact that your current performance is satisfactory does not guarantee that your supervisor thinks you are able to perform higher level duties).

Time-in-Grade Restrictions In addition to the basic requirements described above, you must meet time-in-grade restrictions before you can be promoted. Time-in-grade refers to a law which limits the number of times an individual can be promoted within a given time period. Time-in-rules require 52 weeks between promotions above the GS-5 level, and limit promotions to not more than two in a 52 week period below the GS-5 level. Sometimes people have already met other requirements but have to wait to be promoted until they meet the time-in-grade rules.

Competitive Situations-In addition to meeting basic requirements for promotion and time-in-grade rules described above, there are some circumstances in which a Federal employee must compete (apply under a vacancy announcement) for promotion or other position opportunities. Following are situations which will require applicants to compete under merit promotion procedures:

1. Movement into a position at a higher grade or one with greater promotion potential than your current position.
2. Selection for a detail to higher grade or a temporary promotion for longer than 120 days.
3. Entrance into training which is required for promotion, or being accepted into a training program which will prepare you for promotion.
4. Upgrade of a position as a result of adding new duties or responsibilities, except in certain circumstances.

Merit Promotion-Merit promotion is the mechanism through which status employees compete, by applying for vacancy announcements, for internal career opportunities. Each government agency has a "merit promotion plan" which defines situations which require competition and establishes rules for conducting competition. Your supervisor can provide you with a copy of the FGIS Merit Promotion Plan.

1. **Career Promotion**-If you have been placed (through competitive processes) in a career ladder position, or a position filled at a grade below the full-performance level, you can be promoted to the full promotion potential of your position without further competition.
2. **Laterals/Reassignments**-You do not have to compete if you move to a position which is at the same grade and has the same promotion potential as your current position.

Temporary Assignments-Details and temporary promotions lasting for 120 days or less are not competitive situations.

RIF's-You do not have to compete if you change positions as a result of a reduction-in-force or as a result of a court or settlement action.

5. Classification=grades-When a position is upgraded based on a classification decision, the need for competition will depend on the situation. If your position is upgraded as result of the issuance of a new classification standard, you will not have to compete for the promotion. Also, sometimes higher level duties will be assigned to a position because of changes in the organization and its programs. A position upgrade as a result of the addition of new duties may result in an "accretion of duties" promotion which can sometimes be made without competition. However, the merit promotion plan contains specific rules governing when a accretion of duties promotion can and cannot be made without competition. When accretion of duties take place, a personnel specialist will evaluate the situation and determine if the newly created position can be filled competitively.

Reclassification and Position Reviews-**Reclassification** action happens when a position description is reviewed and it is determined that the title, series or grade should be changed. Employees often ask supervisors to have their position reviewed assuming that a promotion will follow. However, a review could reveal no change to the position's classification, a change which doesn't affect grade, or even a downgrade. Similar to an accretion of duties situation, if the position is upgraded as a result of review, a personnel specialist determines whether or not it can be offered to an individual without competition.

Promotion Potential-This term refers to the highest grade level to which the duties of a particular position can be classified. When a job is advertised at a grade level lower than its actual classification, the announcement will show the promotion potential, or full performance level, of the position. If an applicant is selected at the lower level, he or she can be promoted, without having to compete again, to the highest level. This is called a "career promotion." People who are working at a lower level in a job with promotion potential are called "trainees". A person who has reached the maximum of their position's promotion potential is said to have reached the "full performance" level.

ADDITIONAL CAREER ADVANCEMENT TERMS AND CONCEPTS:

Career Ladder-When you are placed in a position with promotion potential you are said to have a "career ladder" to the maximum grade established for that position. This occurs only when the promotion potential was established at the time you originally applied for your specific position. Career promotion are made to the successive grades on the ladder without competition (see "Noncompetitive Situations" above). However, even career-ladder promotions are not automatic-employees must still be performing at the next higher level and still meet basic requirements for promotion and time-in-grade.

Bridge Position-This term refers to positions which can serve as a stepping stone from lower level positions to higher potential positions. These positions called "technicians", typically perform some duties which could be assigned to Agricultural Commodity Grader, GS-5. For example, Agricultural Commodity Technician, GS-5/6 level can perform a variety of functions in support of the Agency's inspection and weighing services. However, an Agricultural Commodity Technician, GS-6 level may provide specific sampling and inspection techniques, procedures, practices, safety handling, storing, and transporting of grain, rice, or other processed grain products. Since

experience at this level could help qualify the technician to move into a higher-level Agricultural Commodity Grader position, if forms a bridge between the two positions when all other requirements are met.

Career Path-This is a personal designed, unique route you take in overall development of your career. Your career path can involve movement from one kind of position to another, successive promotions, or even downgrades to desired series. In addition to actual position changes, your career path plans may also involve any of the following: on-the-job- training; seminars or other informal study; developmental work experiences - like details; formal education; and personal development activities - like reading *books*; listening to motivational tapes, or seeking out a mentor relationship with someone who has "made it" in your chosen career. Even though you may enlist advice and support from your supervisor, training officer, or personnelist, the responsibility for planning and following a career path rests solely with you.

APPENDIX H

CAREER DEVELOPMENT REFERENCE MATERIALS AND BOOKS

BOLLES, Richard Nelson, *What Color is Your Parachute?*, Ten Speed Press, 1991. (Updated and expanded each year; first published in 1972, considered the Classic Book on Career Changing and Job Hunting. The Appendix includes an excellent list of Career Development Books.)

CABRERA, James C. And Albrecht, Charles F., Jr., *The Lifetime Career Manager (New Strategies for a New Era)*, Adams Publishing, 1995.

CAREY, Robert, *Career Transition (A Guide for Federal Employee in a Time of Turmoil)*, FPMI Communications, 1996.

EIKEBERRY, Carol, *The Career Guide for Creative and Unconventional People*, Ten Speed Press, 1995.

GILBERT, Sara D., *The Career (Where to Get Free, Low-Cost) Training (and Salaried Job Training) Sourcebook*, McGraw Hill, Inc., 1993.

HALL, Douglas T. And Associates, *The Career is Dead (Long Live the Career)*, Jossey-Bass Publisher, 1996.

HOWARD, Ann (Editor), *The Changing Nature of Work*, Jossey-Bass Publisher, 1995.

LEIDER, Richard J., *Life Skills (Taking Charge of Your Personal and Professional Growth)*, Pfeiffer and Company, 1994.

RALPHS, Lenny T., *Organization Development (A Practitioner's Tool Kit)*, Crisp Publications, Inc., 1996

SCHEIN, Edgar H., *Career Anchors (Discovering Your Real Value)*, Pfeiffer and Company, 1990.