

GIPSA Extends Pilot Programs

WASHINGTON, D.C. (October 1, 1998) -- USDA's Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA) currently has three pilot programs--timely service, open season, and barge--which are scheduled to end October 31, 1999. The 1993 Amendments to the U.S. Grain Standards Act authorized GIPSA to initiate pilot programs that would allow more than one official agency to provide official services within a single geographic area for the purpose of evaluating their impact upon the official grain inspection system. Thus far, GIPSA has found the three pilot programs have not had an adverse impact on the official system; however, participation has been light, especially during the first 2 years. In the third year, participation already is greater than the total of the first 2 years combined, but the Agency believes additional time is needed to collect and analyze information to determine if exclusive boundaries should be maintained as they are, eliminated, or modified. Accordingly, effective November 1, 1998, GIPSA is extending the pilot programs to September 30, 2000--the end of the 1999 fiscal year.

The three pilot programs will continue to operate as follows:

- Timely service -- Allows official agencies to provide official services to facilities outside their assigned geographic area on a case-by-case basis when these official services cannot be provided in a timely manner by the official agency designated to serve that area.
- Open Season -- Allows official agencies to offer their services to facilities outside their assigned geographic area where no official sample-lot or official weighing services have been provided in the previous 6 months.
- Barge -- Allows designated agencies to probe sample and inspect grain in barges that are located outside the geographic areas assigned to them. GIPSA will continue to monitor and to evaluate the pilot programs.

If, at any time, GIPSA finds that any pilot program is having a negative impact on the official system or is not working as intended, the program may be modified or discontinued.

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End GIPSA Release #68-98

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