



GIPSA *NEWS*

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

MARCH 2015

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Women in Agriculture

Susan Keith, Washington, DC

One of my great-great grandmothers emigrated from what is now Schleswig-Holstein, Germany, to Scott County, Iowa, in 1869. My great grandfather wrote about her, “She made all the mittens, socks and sweaters for the family from wool that she spun on her own wheel. The wool came from her own sheep.” Today, that flock of sheep would qualify her as a farmer. She may not have thought of herself as a farmer. She had eight children, so she probably did not have much time to think about her role at all, but she was a wife, a mother, and a farmer.



The Census of Agriculture did not begin asking farmers to report their gender until 1978. In April 2013, USDA’s Economic Research Service (ERS) reported on the “Characteristics of Women Farm Operators and Their Farms.” This study examined both public and confidential data from the Censuses of Agriculture and from the Agricultural Resource Management Survey (ARMS). Because the research preceded the release of data from the 2012 Census of Agriculture, the study identified trends between 1978 and 2007.

What is a farm? The USDA definition of a farm is “Any place that produced and sold, or normally would have produced and sold, at least \$1,000 of agricultural products during a given year.” Government payments count as sales. If the sales are less than \$1,000, a point system assigns points for acres of various crops and head of livestock. When sales, government payments, and points total more than \$1,000, the operation counts as a farm. Any place, includes ranches in the definition of farm.

“Women-operated farms” are those whose principal operator – the individual most responsible for the day-to-day decisions of the farm (or ranch)—is a woman. Between 1982 and 2007, the number of women-operated farms more than doubled while the number of men-operated farms declined. The number of women-operated farms with no sales, grew twelvefold. At the other end of the spectrum, women-operated farms with sales of \$1 million or more grew by 714 percent. Most of the

*Continued, see **Women** on page 2.*

Women from cover page

million-dollar farms operated by women in 2007 specialized in poultry and eggs (46 percent) or specialty crops (21 percent).

ERS found that, on average, women farmers are older than male farmers, but the gap in the age difference is declining. In 1982, the average age of women farmers was 56.3 years; the average age of men farmers was 50.2 years. By 2007, the age difference had declined to 2 years, 58.8 years for women and 56.8 years for men. Thirty-four percent of women principal farm operators are over age 65.

Women farm operators are more highly educated than are men

farm operators. A larger percentage of women farmers continued their education beyond high school compared to all U.S. householders 25 years of age or older. Women who operate farms with sales less than \$250,000 were more likely than their male counterparts to have at least some college.



About three-fourths of the women operators of farms with sales of less than \$10,000 worked off farm in 2007. For larger farms, about half worked off farm. More than half of women operators lost money farming in 2007 after accounting for expenses, including depreciation.

About 45 percent of women operators specialize in grazing livestock, primarily beef cattle and horses, and to a lesser extent sheep and goats. These three specializations make up only 16 percent of sales by women-operated farms. Farms specializing in poultry, specialty crops, grains and oilseeds, or dairy accounted for 72 percent of the sales by women-operated farms but only 21 percent of the farms.

Although the largest share of women farmers specialized in beef cattle, only 11 percent of the beef cattle ranches were operated by women. In contrast, women operated 31 percent of horse farms.

Four percent of women operated farms raised poultry for meat or eggs, but those farms generated 26 percent of the sales from women-operated farms. Ten percent of the farms raised specialty crops, but those farms produced 22 per-

Continued, see Women on page 3



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.

Women from cover page 2

cent of the sales. In contrast, 23 percent of the farms specialized in beef cattle farming and ranching and generated 12 percent of the sales. Seventeen percent of the farms specialized in horses and generated 3 percent of the sales. A majority of horse farms operated by women (59 percent) have no sales, and most of the remaining horse farms sell less than \$10,000 annually. Some operations may own five or more horses for recreational purposes with no plans for a sale but still be classified as a farm through the point system.

The 2012 Census of Agriculture reported that women were the principal operators on 14 percent of the 2.9 million farms that responded to the survey – 288,264 women principal operators. Another 626,108 women were listed as the second operator and, of these, 568,012 were married to the principal operator.

The ERS study also looked at women as secondary operators. The authors of the study wrote, “Considering secondary operators as well as principal operators, however, gives a much more complete picture of the involvement of women in farming.” These women may be less involved in the farming operation than those women who are principal operators, on average, a smaller percentage consider farming their major occupation, and more of them work off-farm at least 200 days per year.

The ERS study found that most women farm operators are on farms operated by men. In contrast, the overwhelming majority of male operators are principal operators. This held true for the 2012 Census of Agriculture which reported 288,264 women principal operators, and another 626,108 women listed as the second operator. Men were listed as the principal operator on 1,821,039 farms and the second or third operator on another 389,363 farms.

The ERS study found that many farms are run as joint operations by a married couple, with both spouses serving as an operator. Again, this held true in 2012, when 583,393 women and 90,893 men were identified as second and third operators married to the principal operator. With 2.1 million farms, almost one-third are operated jointly by married couples.

The joint operation run by a married couple epitomizes the traditional family farm. I expect that if my great-grandmother ever had time to think about it, she would have seen the farm as a joint project with the entire family working the land and tending the livestock to the extent that both parents and the children were able to contribute. That is how my grandparents operated their farms and it is certainly the way that my parents farmed. My father may have been most responsible for day-to-day decisions, but he relied on my mother’s advice and assistance.

March is a good month to reflect on the contributions of women to American agriculture. All of our GIPSA employees are involved in agriculture, so we GIPSA women are women in agriculture. Many GIPSA employees are more directly involved in production agriculture with their own farms and ranches. You all deserve a salute from the rest of us who daily enjoy the abundant supply of agricultural products in this country, but this month let’s give a special salute to the women who are operating farms, large or small or in between, crops or livestock or both, and on their own or with farming partners.

ONE HOUR DIVERSITY TRAINING CREDIT FOR ATTENDING PROGRAM

USDA

**WOMEN'S
HISTORY MONTH OBSERVANCE**

**WEAVING THE
STORIES OF
WOMEN'S LIVES**

Panelists:

		
<small>Rosie Rios Treasurer of the United States</small>	<small>Audrey Rowe Administrative PIO</small>	<small>Cheryl Cook Chief Information Officer, OIGIO</small>

**THURSDAY, MARCH 5, 2015
10:00 - 11:00 AM
JEFFERSON AUDITORIUM
USDA SOUTH BUILDING**

Reasonable Accommodations: Natalie.VeeneyFord@dm.usda.gov
Sponsored by DM-OHRM, OASCR, FSIS, NRCS, and OIGIO

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

FGIS Matters....!

Randall Jones, Washington ,DC

A Visit to the Lone Star State. On February 12, **Bob Lijewski, Director, Field Management Division**, and I traveled to the **League City Field Office** and were greeted with blue skies, bright sunshine and glorious temperatures near 70. What a welcomed change from the bitterly cold temps we have been experiencing this winter in **D.C.**

The first afternoon we had a very productive meeting with the managers and supervisors and the amount of wisdom and experience in the room was literally amazing. Let's take a look at 8 of the 10 in attendance: **Dave Grady, Office Manager** – 38 years; **Alan Wadyko, Assistant Office Manager** – 38 years; **Alfred Broussard** – 39 years; **Miguel Ceballus** – 39 years; **Myron Hall** – 39 years; **Joe Hearn** – 42 years; **Jeff Joseph** – 42 years; and **Perry Smith** – 39 years. Certainly this is an impressive group and we are fortunate to have such a collection of talent and experience leading the **League City Field Office**.



We spent a considerable amount of time talking about the “**FGIS brand**” that has been developed in the past 3 decades by this group and other FGIS team members around the country as well as those that dedicated their careers to FGIS and have since retired. Collectively, as a team, FGIS has developed a reputation in the U.S. and around the world as the gold standard in grain inspection. When a country wants to create and implement a grain inspection system, they turn to FGIS for guidance and expertise. This we can be proud of.

While it is important to remember the past, it is equally important to focus on the future. Warren Buffet is credited as saying “It takes 20 years to build a reputation and five minutes to ruin it. If you think about that, you'll do things differently.” As we approach our daily tasks, I would challenge each of you to keep Buffet's words in mind and continue to strive to maintain FGIS as the gold standard in grain inspection.

The second day of our visit, we had an all-employee meeting that provided a special opportunity for **Bob** and me to gain a better understanding of the needs and challenges of the **League City** team. We again discussed the necessity to focus on the quality of our services and desire to maintain our Program as the gold standard. We talked about how essential it is to ensure that our workplaces must always be professional and that our team members must always present a professional image. To that end, Bob announced that this year we will be able to provide an increase in the clothing allotment which will include a specific amount for boots. We are excited about this opportunity to help our FGIS team members present a professional appearance for our customers.



Front: Julian Biley, Sheryl Cobbs, Melanie Nichols, Randall Jones, Dave Grady, Venice Tony, Anna Trujillo . Back: Walter Lasley, Robert Lijewski, Alan Wadyko, Adel Ibrahim

Reauthorization. We continue to spend a considerable amount of time working closely with **USDA Office of General Counsel** to identify the possible impact of a lapse in the reauthorization. In 2005 during the last reauthorization, Congress held hearings that allowed industry stakeholders and USDA officials to provide input and state their positions. To date Congress has not scheduled any hearings but we anticipate that there is a good possibility that hearings

Continued, see FGIS on page 5.

FGIS from page 4

will be held later this spring or summer.

2015 Budget Update. I would anticipate that by the time you read this Newsletter that **Marianne Plaus, Director, Management and Budget Services**, and her team will have issued the full-year FY15 allocations to all of the Divisions and offices. A substantial challenge that we face within FGIS is that we have an “obligation cap” on the amount of our user-fee funds that dates back to the early 1980s. Each year our budget has specific language that limits the amount of user-fee funds that we can spend in the current fiscal year. For FY15, we are limited to \$50,000,000 which is subject to sequestration which reduces the amount to approximately \$47,000,000. In FY14, we spent approximately \$46,000,000 which left us with about \$1,000,000 of room under the cap. This year we were fortunate to have a salary increase of 1% which will mean that we will spend about \$300,000 more in salary payments.

We also have the **O’Dock export facility in Portland** running again that will require more resources. Add to this that in the first 4 months of FY15 we had record levels of grain exports which required more resources/money and you can see that we are quickly approaching the FY15 obligation cap. We will have to manage our resources effectively and efficiently as we always do and we will keep a keen eye on the obligation cap.

Focus on Quality. Last month, the **Executive Management Team (EMT)**, met at the **National Grain Center** and discussed FGIS’s Global Quality Program and the roles and responsibilities of each Division. **Samantha Simon, Director, Quality Assurance and Compliance Division**, led the work group that reviewed all FGIS quality programs and presented a plan to the **EMT** that will best position our Program to succeed and meet the needs of our stakeholders. On February 19, the **EMT** will reconvene in **Washington, D.C.**, to continue the discussion.

Advisory Committee Meeting. The next **Grain Inspection Advisory Committee** meeting will be held April 7-8 at the **National Grain Center**. Some topics for discussion are service delivery updates, quality updates, utilization of new technology for inspection purposes, and reauthorization. For more information from the past meetings and current resolutions visit: <http://www.gipsa.usda.gov/fgis/advisorycommittee.aspx>.

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

Coming Soon!!!



WHITE HOUSE SUMMIT
on ASIAN AMERICANS and PACIFIC ISLANDERS

MAY 12, 2015

WASHINGTON, DC

bit.ly/AAPISummit

Names in the News

New Hire



Catherine Deren is the new administrative assistant for the Office of the FGIS Deputy Administrator.. Catherine has served in the military for seven years in both the active and reserve status. As a commissioned Army Officer she served as a healthcare administrator/medical operations planner. She attended college at the State University of New York at Buffalo, NY, where she attained her Bachelors of Science. Catherine currently resides in Virginia with her fiancé, Matthew. She thoroughly enjoys exploring culture, trying new food, sightseeing, the outdoors, and playing with her ten month old English bulldog, Rajah.



Carlos Vazquez is a Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) Intern with the Inspection Instrumentation Branch (IIB) at GIPSA's National Grain Center through May. Carlos is working on his Masters degree in Mechanical Engineering at the University of Texas-Pan American (soon to be the University of Texas-Rio Grande Valley), Edinburg, Texas. Carlos will be assisting the IIB on their rice imaging (USDA Rice Studio), LED lighting requirements, and potential use of a drone for ship hold inspection projects.

New position



Terri Liberty has been selected as an Administrative Support Assistant within the Technology and Science Division. The Administrative Support Assistant position was recently vacated by Marsha Schwartz. Terri has been providing backup support to Marsha for several years, and has been primarily responsible for certification and billing processes, file management and timekeeping. Prior to joining the administrative staff in the Office of the Director, Terri got her start with TSD in a temporary position as an Office Clerk. She then worked as an Agricultural Commodity Aid in TSD's Commodities Testing and Reference Lab and as a Physical Science Technician in the Biotechnology Lab. She has been with the Office of the Director for 10 years.

35 years of Service



Dawn Cowan, EEO specialist was presented with a certificate and pin for 35 years of Service with the United States Government.



Timothy Hansen, Program Analyst, was presented with a certificate and pin for 35 years of Service with the United States Government.

30 years of Service



Randall Jones, FGIS Deputy Administrator was presented with a certificate and for 30 years of Service with the United States Government

FY2015 GIPSA Mentoring Program Rolls Out —

Meeting Virtually and In Person



GIPSA's FY2015 Mentoring Program is off and running with 60 participants (10 in P&SP, 48 in FGIS and 2 in Shared Services), or 30 pairs. This is about 10 percent of the eligible employees who are sprinkled throughout the agency. There are participants from 15 different offices and at least 10 different localities who will be partnering by phone over different time zones. A smaller percentage of participants will be paired in the same office.

While virtual mentoring may present a challenge, this allows some of the best mentor and mentee pairs to be assigned based on the identified needs of the mentees and the skills of the mentors. This may help those who meet virtually, especially in strengthening skills required to work closely with someone from a distance and from different offices, increasing the likelihood of partnering with a more diverse population. We have listed below some suggestions on connecting, whether in a mentoring program or working at a distance in your regular work.

Lock-in your meeting times. You cannot just run into you mentee or mentor in the hall.

Time and distance can prove to be obstacles. By locking in your meeting times, you address the “out of sight, out of mind” tendency.

Set goals to ensure focus. You may be less familiar with a person from a distance.

Help your mentee set relevant goals for development.

- Clarify what s/he does and does not know.
- Assess any development gaps.
- Write specific goals.
- Select indicators for measuring progress.
- Uncover barriers to performance success.
- Define success.

Be prepared.

Prepare agendas or purpose statements for your formal sessions to make them productive.

Allot an appropriate time frame for the topic. Change the purpose of the meeting only with mutual consent.

Follow up. (You may not talk again until the next meeting)

Conclude each meeting with a verbal summary and specific action items. Follow up with an email to ensure a mutual understanding and a record of the meeting.

Reflect for growth.

To improve your effectiveness as a mentor, use a “Stop, Start, and Continue” framework to reflect on your interaction. By journaling this immediately after each meeting, you can plan your learning and growth.

Talk frequently in the first few months. (As with any new relationship)

Frequent communication is vital to building a relationship (along with trust) and clarifying roles and responsibilities. It also helps avoid misunderstandings.

Mentor from page 7

Check your vital signs.

A good mentoring relationship needs respect, responsiveness, and accountability. When these three vital signs are present, you will find that the mentoring, relationship will be rewarding to both of you. It is important to schedule a periodic review of these signs. Watch for plateaus after a few months.

Measure the progress.

Reflect back to the goal-setting periodically to see if your mentoring partnership is on track and readjust if necessary.

For further information contact:

Tony Goodeman, Deputy Director FGIS-FMD at: Anthony.T.Goodeman@usda.gov or Phone: 202-720-0291; or

Gale Mason, Deputy Director of LEAD at: Gale.L.Mason@usda.gov or Phone: 202-690-2215; **Caroline Thorpe**, Training Officer at: Caroline.C.Thorpe@usda.gov or Phone: 202-690-2332.

Florida International University (FIU) Onsite Pathways Hiring Event



On Monday February 9, 2015, as a component of USDA's goal to increase diversity hiring among Student Interns and Recent graduates and in response to several White House (WH) and USDA initiatives, including: Cultural Transformation; My Brother's Keeper; Generation Indigenous (Gen-I); Strike Force; WH Task Force on Puerto Rico; 1890, Hispanic Serving Institutions, and 1994 Higher Education Initiatives; and Diversity Roadmap the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, the Center for Faith Based and Neighborhood Partnerships and the Deputy Secretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs collaborated to host an onsite pathways hiring event at FIU in Miami, FL. USDA agencies including: Rural Development, Natural Resource Conservation Services, Farm Service Agency, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, and Agricultural Research Services provided 53 Pathways interns and recent graduate vacancies for this event. The jobs were advertised on USAJobs prior to the event, however applicants were required to apply in person as per OPM's protocol for hosting onsite pathways hiring events.

Over the course of 8 hours, USDA agencies received applications for the positions from 238 individuals, all of which applied in person. The applicants were from FIU and 14 other colleges and universities in the south Florida area and abroad. We will know the total number of accepted offers within 2 weeks along with the compiled diversity data of all the applicants. Over the course of the event USDA received applications from Hispanic Americans, African Americans, Native Americans, Asian Americans, Veterans and Persons with disabilities. Florida International University has an enrollment of 54,000 students. Their student body consists of 80% minorities and they are the 5th largest college in the US. This event was the first in a series of targeted onsite pathways hiring events in support of the aforementioned initiatives. The next event is scheduled for March 14 - 17 at the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC) student conference in Albuquerque, NM.

A Shout-Out Goes to...

The Change Control Working Group (CCWG) would like to give a shout-out to Kathy Boyd for her proposal to enhance the check weigh review sub-process module. Her suggestions have been implemented and several employees have expressed appreciation for the changes. Thank you Kathy!

USDA Winter Olympics



The Department of Agriculture is committed to providing opportunities for employees to ‘get fit–stay fit’ thereby reducing absenteeism and increasing productivity throughout the Department. One such activity is the USDA Winter Olympics that was first offered in the winter of 2013-2014. This event engaged employees USDA wide and was a huge success. Due to the overwhelming requests from employees, USDA will once again offer this opportunity.

The Olympics started January 12, 2015 and will run thru March 9, 2015. Olympians will track their minutes of activity each week beginning on Monday, January 12, 2015 and submit weekly reports. Each week’s minutes will be tallied for the final count on March 16, 2015. The Olympians with the most minutes at the end of the competition will be declared winners in their respective category (Turtle: 30 – 120 minutes per week, Fox: 121 – 240 minutes per week, Lion: 241 and above minutes per week).

There will be a total of 9 winners – 3 each Gold, Silver and Bronze. Winners will be announced in the Worklife and Wellness Weekly Newsletter, highlighted in the Secretary’s MyUSDA Newsletter and receive a certificate. But, most importantly, this event will help you to keep moving during those cold, winter months and lead to improving or maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

At the end of week one GIPSA’s own **Susan Fall** was leading the pack at the Fox level with 621 minutes. There are a couple more weeks left in the competition please support all of the GIPSA participants. Look out for Terri Henry’s Work life and Wellness emails that include the leader boards for the Winter Olympics.

GIPSA Winter Olympics Participants

Simon, Samantha	GIPSA/DC	Fox
Kline, Kendra	GIPSA/DC	Turtle
Pounds-Barnett, Gayle	GIPSA/IA	Turtle
Fall, Susan	GIPSA/MN	Fox
Alonzo, Mary	GIPSA/MO	Fox
Jabs, Eric	GIPSA/MO	Fox
Williams, Shayle	GIPSA/MO	Lion
Lathrop, Sharon	GIPSA/MO	Turtle
Ruggles, Denise	GIPSA/MO	Turtle
Wooden, Mark	GIPSA/MO	Turtle

China and U.S. Vessel Comparison Study (VCS)

Scott Cooley, AFM/QAS, Olympia, Washington

In 2010, The Chinese and U.S. governments agreed to conduct a joint vessel comparison study on four soybean shipments to China. For several years Departmental Initiatives and International Affairs (DIIA) received many complaints from our Chinese customers reporting their findings of treated soybeans in their commodity shipments. In many cases the complaints were unfounded or based on their interpretation. Soybeans of other color have been identified as heat damage, purple mottled stained beans with poke berry juice on them were called treated beans, and foreign material values were measured using different sieve sizes. The intent of the study is to work in a cooperative fashion to gain a better understanding of each other's sampling and inspection systems, identify similarities and differences, address China's quality concerns, and try to eliminate some of the interpretive differences.



In March of 2013, the first of four vessel was loaded out of Tacoma, Washington, and successfully discharged in Zhejiang, China. The loading was observed by members of the Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine of the People's Republic of China (AQSIQ) and the Chinese equivalent of our Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), China Inspection and Quarantine (CIQ). The U.S. participants included representatives from the North American Export Grain Association (NAEGA), U.S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC), Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS), APHIS, and GIPSA. Samples were acquired using a probe sample at both loading and discharge ports and were shared between AQSIQ and FGIS the inspection entities for their independent analysis.

In October 2014, FGIS began the second phase of the collaborative study. Two more vessels were loaded out of New Orleans ports destined for discharge in Dalian, China. The discharge of both vessels were completed in mid-December 2014. The difference in this second phase was that both vessels were sampled using a Diverter Type Sampler (D/T) at both the loading and discharge ports. China only has three discharge ports that employ a D/T sampler and Dalian Port claims two of those berths. Again, the samples were shared between the inspection entities from each country for their independent analysis.

A fourth and final vessel is in the planning stages for loading in the fall of 2015 with the proposal that the sample acquired in the U.S. will be via a D/T and the destination sample will be acquired using a probe. The logic is that these methods are currently how the sample is taken in each system and the comparison will be done on those terms. Again, the samples will be shared between the inspection entities from each country for their independent analysis.

In all cases, the inspection procedures were observed by both parties at loading and discharge and the shared samples provided to the U.S. group were analyzed by the Board of Appeals and Review (BAR) in Kansas City. Results so far look good and the results at loading are very close to the results at the BAR.

I believe that the VCS has been a successful endeavor and has already brought clarity in some of the differences in interpretation between the two systems. The VCS has helped strengthen our relation and cooperation with the Chinese Government.

The National Grain Center (NGC) Report

Black History Month Observance at the National Grain Center



Valerie Collins coordinated a luncheon and program observing Black History Month February 19th. The theme for this year's program was "A century of Black life, history and culture",. NGC employees listened to two of our own (James McLaurin and Dempsey Lewis) speak to the subject "From FGIS to GIPSA: How the agency has changed over the past 39 years". One of our newest employees, Brian Wood, shared his viewpoint. There was a photo collage of black employees who have passed through the National Grain Center and the video, "Still I Rise" by Jules Dynasty. As always, Valerie coordinated a delicious menu to go along with the program. This year it was soul food—including ham, meatloaf, chicken, kebabs, salad, mac-n-cheese, potatoes, green beans, greens, corn bread, red beans and rice, jambalaya, peach cobbler and other desserts, along with drinks.

Trail Blazers We Know

James McLaurin



Dempsey Lewis



The National Grain Center (NGC) Report (cont.)

US Wheat Crop Quality Meeting & Tour

The U.S. Wheat Associates met at the National Grain Center on February 17th to discuss their annual Crop Quality Reports. Every year, U.S. Wheat Associates (USW) produces Crop Quality Reports that include grade, flour and baking data for all six U.S. wheat classes. The reports are compiled from sample testing and analysis conducted during and after harvest. GIPSA contributes to the Crop Quality Reports by collecting samples of wheat from export cargoes and analyzing them for hardness and Deoxynivalenol at the National Grain Center.



USW shares the data with customers in person or at a series of annual Crop Quality Seminars around the world from September through December. The reports are also posted on the U.S. Wheat Associates [website](#). The reports provide helpful information to buyers as they specify their needs to get the best value in their purchase contracts.

Concur Travel Training

NGC hosted training for the new Concur Travel System on February 3rd & 4th. Participants included field and HQ personnel.



Back Row (left to right): Valerie Hills, Heather Schlecht, Randall Deike, Myron Simmons, Tim Johnson, Pam Lake
Middle Row (left to right): Marsha Schwartz, Lynn Thomas, Steve Mason, Angela Roper, Tina Crane, Laurie Teague
Front Row (left to right): Catherine Deren, Ladondra Taylor, Jeremy Miller, Kristi Pirtle, Sherri Murphy



Back Row (left to right): Gabby Gadson (Concur Presenter), Lisa Fyall, Ana Trujillo
Front Row (left to right): Pamela Bourque, Sara Ludwig, Rose Fremin

Unified Grain Moisture Algorithm (UGMA) Training



NGC hosted a joint Unified Grain Moisture Algorithm (UGMA) Moisture Meter Technical Training with the Canadian Grain Commission (CGC) February 9th – 11th. The CGC has approved the use of UGMA-compatible moisture meters in Canada and attended the training with TSD personnel conducted by Dr. Dave Funk from Grain Quality Analytics. Dave may have retired from GIPSA but he is still sharing his

knowledge about all things UGMA. The training started a relationship with the CGC for future moisture meter collaborations.

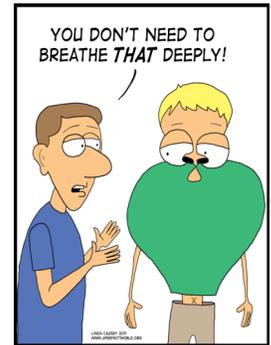


The National Grain Center (NGC) Report (cont.)

Excessive Respiration?

Grain developing a high temperature from “excessive respiration” is considered heating and graded U.S. Sample Grade. But what is *Excessive Respiration*? Respiration is a metabolic process common to all living things. In order to use energy obtained from food, several chemical reactions occur within cells that turn the food into biological activity. This biological activity is a major influence on heat levels in stored grain. So what are the sources of respiration in stored grain?

1. Fermentation (fungi and bacteria) accounts for most of the heating in stored grain. This is also results in damage by heat (germ damage), heat damage (other than dryer), and sour/musty odors.
2. Insect Infestation.
3. Germination (sprouting) of the grain itself.



Respiration in the grain itself is a chemical reaction where grain's carbohydrate portion combines with the oxygen in the air to produce water, carbon dioxide and heat; the respiration process is accelerated by high grain moisture and temperatures. Respiration in microorganisms and insects also produces water and heat, which is a more significant factor than respiration of the grain itself. Spoilage caused by fermentation has always been a problem in stored grain. Here is how it was described in the USDA Grain Grading Primer published in 1953:

“When high temperatures develop in grain as the result of fermentation, such grain is “heating” or “hot” and is graded Sample grade. Heating or hot grain usually gives off a sour or musty odor which indicates fermentation within the mass of grain. Care should be taken never to confuse grain that is heating or hot from fermentation with sound grain that becomes warm due to storage in bins, cars, or other containers during hot weather.”

USAJobs Briefing



The 2014 Federal Employee Viewpoint Results (FEVS) for the Technology and Science Division showed that employees were interested in more information about career advancement within GIPSA. “Realtalk” listening sessions clarified that employees wanted more information about human resources issues in general, and that they often did not know where to get basic information about topics like their employment status and the merit promotion process.

Continued, see USAJobs on page 14.

The National Grain Center (NGC) Report (cont.)

USAJobs from page 13

A pilot version of a briefing was held on February 5, 2015 entitled “USAJobs Briefing”. The briefing was intended to be a follow up to a seminar held last year for employees located in the National Grain Center on “Interviewing Skills”. After that session, TSD Director Mary Alonzo, who conducted the session, was asked several questions about the application process. That led to the development of the “USAJobs Briefing”. Given the interest expressed in general HR information, Mary covered many of the terms used in the USAJobs vacancy announcement, how they applied to employees, and where more HR information can be found. Participants were invited to offer feedback about the session. Most employees noted that the session offered valuable information for both new and seasoned employees, but suggested that the session be longer. The feedback will be used to improve the material covered. GIPSA is considered using the material for a broader session applicable to all GIPSA employees.

Spring Bulbs and Tubers

Gail Parish, National Grain Center



There is a saying; “The promise of spring’s arrival is enough to get anyone through the bitter winter.” It is time to inspect, clean, oil, and sharpen your gardening tools as the growing season is almost upon us! Nothing says spring like a beautiful garden full of flowers!

The time to plant flowering bulbs and tubers is AFTER the last frost date in your area.

“Spring” flower bulbs, also known as tender bulbs (they don’t survive cold ground temperatures), are planted in the spring and flower throughout the summer. Some varieties include dahlias, gladiolas, cannas, and calla lilies.

They do best in well-drained soil although they require a great deal of water immediately after planting. Also maintaining a pH level of 6 to 7 brings out the best colors of the flower bulbs. Plant them in full sunlight to provide the best growth. Additional fertilizer is not necessary for the bulbs and tubers.

Many spring flower bulbs are well suited for patio containers. However, some of the taller varieties may require staking to prevent them from falling over from heavy blooms. A variety of bulbs make great cut flowers to enjoy indoors.

If you live in a harsh winter climate, during the fall you may need to remove your bulbs and tubers from the ground to store through the winter and replant next spring. Shake off any soil and air dry for several days before storing in a cool, dry, well ventilated location. Do not store in plastic; plants need to breathe.

“It was such a pleasure to sink one’s hands into the warm earth, to feel at one’s fingertips the possibilities of the new season.” — Kate Morton, *The Forgotten Garden*

The National Grain Center (NGC) Report (cont.)

St. Patrick's Day

Lá fhéile Pádraig sona dhuit! Excuse me?



“Lá fhéile Pádraig sona dhuit!” is Irish-Gaelic for Happy St. Patrick’s Day. (Gaelic is difficult to pronounce-I recommend saying Happy St. Patrick’s Day.)

St. Patrick was born in Roman Britain in the late 4th century, the son of a Roman administrator. He was kidnapped, sold into slavery in Ireland, escaped after six years and returned home, later joining a French monastery. He then returned to Ireland to convert the pagan (Druid) native Irish to Christianity. March 17 is celebrated as the feast of St. Patrick, on the date of his death in 461. St. Patrick did not chase the snakes out of Ireland-Ireland never had snakes.

Originally a religious day commemorating the Apostle of Ireland, it is now a celebration of Irish culture wherever those of Irish ancestry (and the Irish at heart) are. Irish immigrants to the American colonies in the 1700’s, brought the feast day to America celebrating Ireland’s fight for independence from England on March 17th. After blight ruined the potato crops in the 1840’s, Irish left in droves for America, Australia, Canada and other countries to escape starvation. In America, they brought their culture with them to cities such as New York, Boston, Chicago, Kansas City, and Philadelphia, as well as smaller towns like Butte, MT and Savannah, GA. Because these immigrants were primarily Roman Catholic, St. Patrick’s Day was celebrated but not just as a solemn religious event (as it was in Ireland).

Across America, cities large and small host St. Patrick’s Day celebrations. These celebrations encompass parades with bagpipe bands and Irish dancers, the “wearing of the green”, dying the Chicago River green, corned beef and cabbage, Shepherd’s pie, and maybe a wee beverage or two.

If you would like to make a contribution to “The National Grain Center (NGC) Report” please send information to Roger Friedrich, Leader, GIPSA, Digital Media Group
roger.l.friedrich@usda.gov

**NGC
Report**

Weaving the Stories of Women's Lives

March is National Women's History Month. If you are in the Washington D.C. area, I urge you to attend this year's USDA observance on March 5th in the South Building's Jefferson Auditorium at 10:00 AM EST. There is a panel of 3 very distinguished women on the program: Rosie Rios, Treasurer of the United States, Audrey Rowe, Administrator, Food and Nutrition Service and Cheryl Cook, Chief Information Officer, OCIO. At the end of the program, the Treasurer will be available to sign one U.S. currency bill, of any amount, per person. Make sure to bring a bill with you, if you'd like for her to sign it; the bill must have her signature, "Rosa Gumataotao Rios," on the lower left side. There will be other exciting surprises during this event. For those of us who are not in the D.C. area, the observance will be recorded and available at a later date here: <http://www.dm.usda.gov/employ/observances.htm>



Preventive Health Services and Screenings

Executive memo (dated 1/4/01) from former President Clinton directed agencies to grant 4 hours of administrative leave (TC 66) each leave year to employees **with less than 80 hours of accrued sick leave** to participate in preventive health screenings.

Health screenings include: prostate, cervical, colorectal, and breast cancer; screening for sickle cell anemia, blood lead level, blood cholesterol level, immunity disorders such as HIV; and blood sugar level testing for diabetes.

The **4 hours may be used intermittently or all at once**. The administrative leave (TC 66) is in addition to other available family friendly leave benefits and alternative work schedules. **Administrative leave may not be used to accompany family members receiving preventive health screenings.**

Issuance Report

Negative Report

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



Have an idea?



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

Training Updates

Caroline Thorpe, Washington, DC

Mandatory Training Due

Course	Due Date	Trainees
Civil Rights: No Fear Act Comprehensive	Within 30 days of hiring (USDA)	New Employees (About 50 Employees need to complete-Report was run and offices notified)
Civil Rights: Reasonable Accommodation For the Federal Workforce	December 15, 2014 (<i>Past due</i>)	All employees (95 Employees are incomplete)
Cultural Transformation: Maximizing Employee Engagement	September 30, 2015	All Supervisors, Managers, and Executives
Cultural Transformation: Two courses TBD	September 30, 2015	Hiring Managers and all Employees
CyberSecurity: FY2015 Informational Security Awareness	March 31, 2015	All Employees
Ethics Training: 2015 Ethics Curriculum , all required to complete one course	June 30, 2015	All Employees-Assigned as a Curriculum with instructions released 2/26/2015 via E-mail.
LincPass Training	December 15, 2014 (<i>Past due</i>)	All Employees w/computer access (164 employees are incomplete)
Performance Training: Performance Management in USDA. The Course Performance Management in MRP was replaced by this course.	<u>Due: May 15, 2015</u>	All Employees whose Performance Training was incomplete for FY2014 due to technical issues (239 Employees and 26 Supervisors need to complete)
Safety Course: General Security and Situational Awareness Training in AgLearn	October 15, 2014 (<i>Past due</i>)	All Employees (69 Incomplete)
Safety-New Course: Active Shooter: What You Can Do. This is on AgLearn and replaces the Youtube video.	April 30, 2015	All Employees

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 coaches identify their next best moves. This is for usually a

Continued, see Training on page 18.

Training from page 17

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 opportunity 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
By December 16, 2014



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.

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