

USDA *news*

USDA's Employee News Publication—For You & About You!

We're Shining The Spotlight On "5-A-Day" Changing Habits Of Kids—And Their Parents

by Diana Callaway
FNS Public Affairs Staff
Western Regional Office,
San Francisco, Calif.

They weren't inclined to shy away from a challenge, so USDA staffers across the nation recently pondered—and then put into action—creative ways to get Americans to eat more fruits and vegetables.

Their efforts were in support of an initiative titled "5-A-Day for Better Health," or "5-A-Day" for short, which is a national program to encourage American adults—and kids—to eat five servings of fruits and vegetables every day for better health. The program is jointly sponsored by the National Cancer Institute and the Produce for Better Health Foundation, a nonprofit consumer education foundation representing the fruit and vegetable industry. USDA is part of a new federal 5-A-Day Partnership with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that was launched last spring by Secretary **Ann M. Veneman** and HHS Secretary **Tommy Thompson**.

In the last 20 years the percentage of overweight children ages 6 to 11 has nearly doubled and the number of overweight teens has nearly tripled. In addition, an estimated 60 percent of

adults are considered overweight.

Accordingly, what made the recent efforts of USDA staffers unique was that they relied on USDA's 5-A-Day Partnership to accelerate their activities—in creative ways—to entice Americans to make healthy food choices and get plenty of exercise.

For instance, as part of National 5-A-Day Week in mid-September, Food and Nutrition Service staff at the agency's Western Regional Office in San Francisco took an unprecedented step. "For the first time," explained **Marisa Cheung**, an FNS Food Stamp Program regional nutritionist, "we brought the 5-A-Day message directly to a large representation of our nutrition program participants through food demonstrations taught by professional chefs." The demos were held at a school, a WIC Clinic, and a Food Stamp Office in the San Francisco Bay Area and reached more than 150 program participants—both kids and adults.

Cheung, who was the originator of the community events, tied nutrition lessons into the fruit and veggie-laden food demos. "We need to get the word out that meeting 5-A-Day is simple, and that a serving can come from fresh, canned, frozen, or even dried fruits and vegetables," she said.

"It's the original fast food."

Registered dietitians in Massachusetts participated around the state in a series of cooking classes using fruits and

continued on pg. 2...



"OK, students, throw your bean bags at your favorite food on this Pyramid—and then tell me why you made that choice," says **Mark Durma** (left) a food program specialist with FNS's Mid-Atlantic Regional Office in Robbinsville, N.J. He and "**Produce Man**" (center) are employing a bean bag game and the Food Guide Pyramid to teach elementary school children (right, dressed in chef hats) about the importance of consuming more fruits and vegetables daily. It was part of USDA's recent effort to promote "5-A-Day for Better Health," an initiative to encourage kids—and their parents—to eat five servings of fruits and vegetables every day for better health. Note **Diana Callaway's** story on this page.—**PHOTO BY KIM JABAT**

Your Long Term Plans May Be Helped By Long Term Insurance It Isn't Only For Seniors

by Ron Hall
Office of Communications

Growing old is not for wimps!" **Denise Leger-Lee**, director of the Personnel Policy and Partnership Division in the Office of Human Resources Management, made that observation during a recent discussion about long term care. For many aging baby boomers at USDA—and many other employees, for that matter—it's a topic that has moved to center stage.

What's driving many discussions about this subject of late is the fact that the federal government came out with a Federal Long Term Care

Insurance Program. Many USDA employees already made a decision about whether to enroll in that program during the "open season" from July through December 2002, while many other employees opted to defer their decision until a later time. "Nonetheless," advised **Eleanor Ratcliff**, USDA's benefits officer in OHRM, "it's never too late to get some helpful information about that subject."

Long term care insurance is designed to help cover the cost of services for people who need assistance with the activities of daily living—custodial care—such as eating, dressing, and bathing, or who have a severe cognitive impairment such as Alzheimer's disease. Care can be received at home, an adult day care center, a hospice, an assisted living facility, or a nursing home.

continued on pg. 3...



Ann M. Veneman

Secretary of Agriculture

This holiday season I again want to thank all USDA employees for your continued dedication and hard work. Once again, through your dedication and team spirit, we accomplished a great deal and made remarkable strides in serving our diverse constituencies.

As we reflect on all that happened in 2002, I am constantly amazed at all that you do to help so many people not only here in the United States, but around the world. Together, you have helped implement a new Farm Bill in record time; provided increased support to families who utilize child nutrition and food assistance programs; kept our forests and communities safe from one of the most devastating fire seasons; strengthened food safety programs for consumers; ensured vigilance to protect the homeland from potential threats; provided food aid to nations in need; developed new research tools to assist agriculture; and

provided jobs and economic development in our rural communities.

But the work USDA does on behalf of so many people didn't stop there. Everywhere you look, our employees are helping their communities in so many different ways. Through mentor programs, volunteerism and charitable work and contributions, USDA employees are literally making a difference in the lives of fellow neighbors, families in need, and people who need a helping hand.

This kind of generosity, kindness, and giving has made USDA a federal agency that bonds with the communities it serves. That wouldn't be the case if not for the people who work here.

As we enjoy this holiday season and look forward to a new year filled with many hopes and opportunities, I hope we will all continue these acts of kindness and continue to open our hearts to others.

May this season of peace and goodwill bring you, your families, and friends a spirit of renewal and happiness. ■

"5-A-Day"...continued from pg. 1

vegetables. Those classes, sponsored by the state of Massachusetts, originally were planned to be held only in Boston. But because of efforts by staffers with FNS's Northeast Regional Office in Boston, those cooking classes were expanded beyond the 5-A-Day classes in the Boston area.

Candice Stoiber, an FNS Supplemental Food Program regional nutritionist for that office, summed up the goals of the 5-A-Day coalition in Massachusetts. "Partnerships are key to making quality fruits and vegetables accessible and affordable to families and their children," she said. "As we did with those cooking classes, we're looking for additional ways to work together to bring the 5-A-Day message to the community level around the state."

Mark Durma, a food program specialist with FNS's Mid-Atlantic Regional Office in Robbinsville, N.J., pointed out that the 5-A-Day program has its own mascot: "**Produce Man**." So, during the recent commemoration of National School Lunch Week in mid-October, Durma and Produce Man teamed up to teach elementary school children about the Food Guide Pyramid and the importance of loading up on fruits and vegetables every day.

Durma later observed that community events like this, to promote 5-A-Day, may just be the key to changing behavior. "But, although there has been progress," he advised, "studies show that most Americans—both children and adults—are falling short of the recommended five daily servings of fruits and vegetables."

During still another event to promote 5-A-Day during National School Lunch Week, several USDA mission areas joined forces—and brought along some mascots—to create an event for children, at an elementary school in Denver, that specifically focused on nutrition and food safety.

The mascots included FNS's "**Power Panther**," a purple panther wearing a T-shirt who encourages youngsters to make health food choices and be physically active, with the message "Eat Smart, Play Hard;" the Food Safety and Inspection Service's "**Thermym**," who encourages consumers to use food thermometers to ensure that foods are cooked to safe internal temperatures, with the message "It's Safe to Bite When the Temperature Is Right;" and FSIS's "**Fight BAC**," an ugly green bacteria, whose purpose is to educate the public about safe food handling and preparation to reduce the incidence of foodborne illness, with the message "Fight BAC! Keep Food Safe from Bacteria."

Stella Nash, the regional nutrition director for FNS's Mountain Plains Regional Office in Denver, explained that, "We really want to encourage children to eat nutritious foods and to exercise more. And besides giving them nutrition information so they can make informed choices, the children also need to keep their meals safe by cooking to the proper temper-

ature and washing their hands."

While 5-A-Day activities were being celebrated across the country, the Department announced on September 26 that \$6 million in grants would be awarded to a total of 100 schools to improve fruit and vegetable consumption among school children. A mix of rural and urban schools in Indiana, Iowa, Ohio, and Michigan, plus six schools in the Zuni Pueblo in New Mexico, were selected as grant winners.

The project relies on a variety of methods such as free standing kiosks, snacks of fresh and dried fruits and fresh vegetables both in the classroom and in after-school care programs, and a "grab and go" option for children before or after school.

Three of the selected sites come under the jurisdiction of FNS's Midwest Regional Office in Chicago. **Mavia Fletcher**, the agency's regional nutritionist in that office, is providing technical assistance to the states.

"This project," she affirmed, "like other 5-A-Day initiatives, has the potential to change the mindset and habits of school children, plus their parents as well, and improve the students' dietary habits after the school day ends—above and beyond the healthy choices that are available at the schools."

"We want these lifelong efforts to continue to grow—and we're seeing that happen already. We'll continue to work to that end." ■



Marisa Cheung (2nd from right), a regional nutritionist with FNS's Western Regional Office in San Francisco, gets ready to supplement comments, by volunteer chef **Steve Seligman** (right), about the nutritional value of the pot of vegetable soup he is busy stirring. They were teaching a class of elementary school students in Oakland about the benefits of the "5-A-Day" program.—
PHOTO BY DIANA CALLAWAY

Administrative *nuggets*

You, Too, Can Attend “Ergo U.”

That was **Michelle McGrath's** introductory line as she began her recent training session on “Office Ergonomics”—dubbed “Ergo U.”—for a classroom of USDA employees. McGrath, a trainer with USDA's TARGET Center at USDA headquarters in Washington, DC, was teaching the hour-long course to help employees avoid “Repetitive Strain Injuries,” or RSIs, at their workplace.

“Office ergonomics is the study of fitting the job to the worker to maintain a safe work environment,” she pointed out. “It focuses on designing equipment and office configurations that reduce fatigue, discomfort, and injury—and thereby help the worker to feel more comfortable and healthy, and be more productive, at work.”

RSIs, she added, are the result of wear and tear on tendons, connective tissue, and muscles caused by repetition, force, and awkward body postures over time. Two common types of Repetitive Strain In-

juries are carpal tunnel syndrome and lower back pain.

“A whole lot of us have experienced those symptoms,” McGrath advised, “such as tingling, pain, numbness, or weakness in the hands, wrists, legs, or lower back—that tend to worsen over time if they aren't corrected.”

“So, through our quick course here at ‘Ergo U.’ we try to help employees identify those activities and conditions that cause RSIs—and then help employees make appropriate changes in their work environment to prevent them.”

That's pretty important—because Repetitive Strain Injuries are a significant problem at USDA. **Mark Wilner**, a TARGET Center program manager who oversees the training, noted that the Department spent over \$2.5 million on carpal tunnel syndrome cases alone in FY 2002. He said that expenditure usually took the form of workers compensation payments, plus related medical expenses, for USDA employees who

missed work because of that injury. “A typical carpal tunnel syndrome injury to a USDA employee cost the Department about \$7,667 per case in FY 2002,” he pointed out.

“So our ergonomics training helps reduce on-the-job risk of at least some occupational disabilities—and thereby can save USDA millions of dollars in workers compensation costs,” Wilner said.

Three quick and easy ergonomically-based tips which McGrath mentioned in her course included: use arrow keys, not the computer mouse, when scrolling through long documents on your computer; keep your mouse as close to the keyboard as possible to avoid stretching your arm while using it; and if your feet don't touch the floor while you're using your computer, place a footrest under them.

Bruce McFarlane is acting director of USDA's Washington, DC-based TARGET Center, which is a state-of-the-art demonstration facility featuring the latest in technolo-

gies which enhance accessibility for employees with disabilities. He noted that in the last year his office has provided its Office Ergonomics training—often in combination with individual office assessments—onsite to USDA employees in such field locations as Orlando, Phoenix, and Decatur, Texas.

Betty Gahn, acting director of USDA's Midwest TARGET Center in St. Louis, added that her office has provided similar training to USDA employees in the midwestern and western parts of the country.

“Employees should feel free to contact either of our TARGET Centers, at www.usda.gov/oo/target.htm, or work through their agency's Safety Officer, to arrange for this instruction at their field location,” McFarlane emphasized. “By ensuring that our work environments are ergonomically sound and supportive,” he added, “we do a better job of carrying out USDA's mission more efficiently, effectively, and safely.”

—**Ron Hall**

Long Term Insurance...continued from pg. 1

According to Ratcliff, studies show that 60 percent of people who reach age 65 will need long term care at some point in their lives. In addition, more than half of all women and one-third of all men who survive to age 65 are expected to spend at least some time in a nursing home during the remainder of their life. “Another twist to those numbers,” she advised, “is that 40 percent of the people who use long term care are less than 65 years old—so this insurance coverage isn't only for seniors.”

For care in a nursing home, the national average annual cost is \$52,000 for a semi-private room. If a person can receive health care at home instead, the national average annual cost of home health care is estimated at over \$20,000.

Ratcliff emphasized that Medicare and health insurance don't routinely pay for many long term care expenses. In addition, Medicaid—which is the federal program designed to help those who meet their state's poverty guidelines—won't kick in until virtually all of a person's assets—and his/her spouse's assets, if the individual is married—have been depleted. “For those not using Medicaid benefits, most of the cost of long term

care comes out of their own pockets,” she said.

OHHR employee relations specialist **Marjorie Rawls** noted that Congress approved the Federal Long Term Care Insurance Program two years ago as a way to help federal employees and federal retirees obtain coverage for such services as nursing home care, assisted living care, and adult day care. The Office of Personnel Management selected LTC Partners—formed by the Metropolitan Life and the John Hancock insurance companies—to provide that coverage.

“The Federal Long Term Care Insurance Program—and virtually all reputable programs, for that matter—require ‘underwriting,’” she explained. “That means the program will evaluate the health of the applicant to determine if he/she qualifies for coverage.” During the ‘open season’ for the federal program, applicants were asked seven specific questions about their health. “Those applying after completion of the open season face more questions about their health, and presumably tougher standards, to get coverage under the federal program,” Rawls said.

At USDA, persons eligible to apply for the Federal Long Term Care Insurance Program include current and retired employees—plus

many qualified relatives, to include many adult children and parents—of those employees.

The federal program offers a gradation of services and benefits, so enrollees can customize their long term insurance to meet their own needs.

Concerning cost of the program, she said the rule of thumb is “The higher the benefits, the higher the premiums. And the younger the policyholder, the cheaper the premiums—but the longer you pay them. Plus, enrollees pay the full cost of the premiums—but at group rates.”

Many aspects of the Federal Long Term Care Insurance Program are spelled out on OPM's website at www.opm.gov/insure/ltc, and a toll-free telephone line at 1-800-582-3337 is provided by LTC Partners.

In addition, during October USDA sponsored eight presentations on the Federal Long Term Care Insurance Program at USDA headquarters in Washington, DC. A number of USDA field locations also held their own sessions.

“Long term care insurance policies,” Ratcliff advised, “Should be evaluated against an individual employee's anticipated health needs, personal assets, family assets as appropriate, and overall financial planning goals.” ■

Employees *make these things happen*

Marketing and Regulatory Programs

Sharing What Works

What does a poultry disease have in common with a forest fire? At first glance, not much. But managing an emergency event—whether it's a forest fire or a disease outbreak—requires a lot of the same approaches and skills.

That's why the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service turned to the Forest Service for help in combating the avian influenza outbreak that hit chicken and turkey farms in Virginia this past summer.

"When the state of Virginia asked our APHIS Veterinary Services Office for help, we, in turn, asked the Forest Service to assist us in putting its well-known 'Incident Command System' to work to help us manage the emergency," explained **Tom Holt**, the APHIS Veterinary Services Eastern Region associate director, based in Raleigh, N.C. He served as the first Veterinary Services incident commander for the multi-agency Avian Influenza Task Force, which was under joint federal-state command. The Task Force was set up to help officials assist with early detection of the virus and destruction of flocks, plus control the spread of the virus as much as possible.

Avian flu is a highly contagious viral infection that hinders the birds' growth and limits their capacity to lay eggs, diminishing their market value. Although this was a mild form of the disease, if left alone in commercial poultry this virus has been known to convert to a highly pathogenic, or deadly, strain, and can kill as many as 90 percent of the birds in a flock. Infected poultry are generally droopy, wheezy, hacking, unsteady and listless, and they stop eating. Birds must be destroyed and farms must be quarantined to prevent the disease from spreading. But the disease isn't harmful to humans.

The avian flu outbreak struck six counties in Virginia between March and July. Over 4.7 million chickens

and turkeys were slaughtered during the outbreak to stop the flu's spread. It was regarded as the worst avian flu outbreak to strike the poultry industry in Virginia in recent history.

But this story isn't about the disease; it's about the use of FS expertise in incident management, using the Incident Command System approach, combined with the expertise of APHIS specialists and others, to combat the disease.

Ivan Cupp, a retired Forest Service fire and land officer who served as an FS liaison officer to the Task Force, said the Forest Service Incident Command System was conceived in the 1970s by a group of federal, state, and local agencies to respond to the increasingly complicated requirements for effective wildland fire protection and suppression.

"Too many multi-agency emergency responses in the past had been hampered by the lack of reliable incident information, inadequate and incompatible communications, unclear lines of authority, different emergency response organizational structures, and terminology differences between agencies," advised FS fire ecology specialist **Lindon Wiebe**. "The Incident Command System structure was designed to overcome those obstacles and provide a more effective response in an emergency."

FS's **Greg Sanders**, manager of the Virginia Interagency Coordination Center, based in Charlottesville, Va., managed the ordering and tracking of FS resources assigned to the Task Force. He explained that the Incident Command System is a

system used in obtaining, tracking, and managing necessary resources, including equipment, personnel, and supplies. It organizes the management of these resources into five categories: command and control, operations, planning, logistics, and finance. "This system allows many organizations to respond to any emergency," he said.

Wiebe added that a big strength of the Incident Command System structure is that people throughout the emergency can organize and communicate with each other more quickly, effectively, and in real-time through such methods as cell phones, handheld radios, and satellite phones.

"In addition, during our emergencies we go through a lot of supplies," Cupp added. "We need a lot of equipment and we need everything quickly—so we had to put a system in place to make that happen."

"The Incident Command System structure provides a single standard system that can be used by all emergency response disciplines—and that's what happened in Virginia," Wiebe underscored.

Numerous federal and state agencies, plus five poultry companies, were part of the Avian Influenza Task Force, including APHIS, FS, the U.S. Army, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, and the Virginia Department of Environ-



This APHIS veterinarian is doing "barrel surveillance." New, clean trash cans were placed outside farm entrances. Poultry producers then deposited into them the carcasses of birds that had died in the past 24 hours, so those carcasses could be checked for avian flu. This meant that veterinarians and animal health technicians didn't have to actually go onto farm property. Nonetheless, they wore full protective gear—which they changed between stops.

mental Quality. Over 800 people rotated through the Task Force's headquarters in Harrisonburg, Va., and they came from more than 45 states plus the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.

Using an Incident Command System structure, APHIS's Veterinary Services Office and the state of Virginia shared oversight responsibilities of the Task Force.

According to **Joseph Anelli**, director of the Veterinary Services Emergency Programs for APHIS, there was general agreement that the collaboration among the federal and state agencies and the affected industries made a difficult situation work out smoothly.

"In my 33 years of experience in emergency response activities," declared **William Buisch**, APHIS's Veterinary Services Eastern Region director based in Raleigh, N.C., who reviewed Task Force operations, "that was the best organized Task Force I've ever seen."

—**MADÉLAINE FLETCHER**

Some Of Our Recent USDA Initiatives

- *USDA Issues Directive To Reduce Listeria Monocytogenes In Ready-To-Eat Meat And Poultry Products At Scientific Summit* (USDA News Release No. 0478)
- *USDA Helps Launch Free, Portable Nutrient Database* (No. 0454)
- *Veneman Marks Implementation Of USDA National Organic Standards* (No. 0453)
- *Veneman Pledges Commitment To Increase Minority Homeownership In Rural America* (No. 0440)
- *USDA Strengthens Food Safety Policies* (No. 0405)

EDITOR'S NOTE: For more detail, go to USDA's News Releases, by clicking onto USDA's Web site at www.usda.gov/newsroom.html

Editor's Roundup *USDA's people in the news*



Rodney Brown was appointed deputy under secretary for research, education, and economics.

From 1979 until his appointment to this position Brown served in a number of capacities at Utah State University. He was the dean of agriculture and a professor of food chemistry from 1991 until joining USDA, and from 1993-94 he served in those two positions as well as acting vice president for research. He was head of the Department of Nutrition and Food Sciences from 1985-91, while also working in that Department as a professor from 1987-91, an associate professor from 1983-87, and an assistant professor from 1979-83. During that time, from 1984-85 he was on sabbatical leave in Wheldrake, Yorkshire, England, developing biological testing procedures for foods. He worked as a research associate in the Department of Biophysics at the Weizmann Institute of Science in Rehovot, Israel, from 1977-79.

From 1998-99 Brown chaired the Board on Agriculture of the National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges (NASULGC), during which time he established formal links with the Interuniversity Council on Agriculture in Europe. During 2001 he served as senior program liaison between the Earth Science Enterprise of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and USDA's Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service, where he facilitated linkages between those two agencies.

A native of Coalville, Utah, where he was raised on a dairy farm, Brown holds a B.S. degree in food science and nutrition from Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah, an M.S. degree in nutrition and food sciences from

Utah State University, and a Ph.D. degree in food science from North Carolina State University.

Eileen Kennedy, the previous deputy under secretary for research, education, and economics, held that position from March 1998 until January 2001, and is now the first global executive director of the Washington, DC-based International Life Sciences Institute, a nonprofit organization which focuses on such public health issues as nutrition, food safety, and biotechnology. ■



Merle Pierson was named deputy under secretary for food safety.

Before rejoining USDA, from 1970 until his appointment to this position Pierson was a professor of food microbiology and safety at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in Blacksburg, Va. During his tenure at VPI, he also served as head of the Department of Food Science and Technology from 1985-94 and acting superintendent of the Center for Seafood Extension and Research from 1992-94. From 1998-99 he also served as acting national program leader for food science with the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service at CSREES's headquarters office in Washington, DC.

Pierson served as a member of the National Advisory Committee on Microbiological Criteria for Foods from 1990-97, and from 1995-97 he chaired that Committee's Subcommittee on Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP), which is a science-based process control system used in managing food safety. During that time the Subcommittee developed the Advisory Committee's most recent document on HACCP principles and their application. Additionally, he has been actively involved in various capacities with the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission—an international body that seeks to protect the health of

consumers and ensure fair practices in food trade through adoption and implementation, by governments, of food standards, codes of practice, and other guidelines.

A native of Mitchell, S.D., Pierson holds a B.S. degree in biochemistry from Iowa State University and an M.S. and Ph.D. degree, both in food science and both from the University of Illinois.

Caren Wilcox, the previous deputy under secretary for food safety, held that position from November 1997 until January 2001 and is now a Washington, DC-based organizational and strategic consultant for food-related organizations. ■



Roberto Salazar was named administrator of the Food and Nutrition Service.

From April 2001 until his appointment to this position Salazar served as the New Mexico State Director of the Rural Development mission area, based in Albuquerque. He was the Santa Fe-based director of science and technology for the state of New Mexico from 1998-2001, where he helped to create an economic environment in the state that was friendly to technology-based industry. He was also responsible for advancing the telecommunications infrastructure in New Mexico and served as the policy advisor in this subject area to New Mexico Governor **Gary Johnson** (R). During 1998 he served as executive director of the Hispanic Radio Network, [then] headquartered in Santa Fe, where he supervised the development, production, and international syndication of educational radio programs to over 160 stations in 18 countries.

From 1995-98 Salazar worked in the New Mexico Human Services Department, serving first as director of its Income Support Division and then as director of its Child Support Enforcement Division. In those

positions he administered the Food Stamp, Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), and Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) programs statewide. He was a special assistant to the director of the Minority Business Development Agency in the U.S. Department of Commerce in Washington, DC from 1991-92. From 1989-91 he served as assistant commissioner of public lands for the state of New Mexico.

A native of Las Vegas, N.M., Salazar holds a B.A. degree in business administration, with a concentration in management and finance, from New Mexico Highlands University.

Samuel Chambers, the previous administrator of FNS, held that position from September 1998 until January 2001 and is now acting director of the state of Michigan's Family Independence Agency (previously known as the state-level Department of Social Services) in Oakland County, Mich. ■



Donna Reifschneider was named administrator of the Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards

Administration.

Before joining USDA, since 1971 Reifschneider has owned and operated, with her family, a 600-sow, 1,000-acre hog and grain farm in southern Illinois. During that time she served as an executive committee member of the Meat Export Federation from 1999-2001.

From 1996-2000 Reifschneider also served as an officer with the Des Moines, Iowa-based National Pork Producers Council, including serving as president from 1998-99 and vice president from 1996-97. During those four years she worked at coordinating that organization's state and national policy and strategy and negotiating with U.S., Canadian, and Mexican pork organizations on trade issues. She chaired the

continued on pg. 6...

Council's Pork Quality Assurance Committee from 1992-98 and its Food Safety Committee from 1995-98, and served on its Pork Trade Committee from 1999-2002, participating in trade missions to China, Japan, Argentina, and Brazil.

A native of Belleville, Ill., Reifschneider holds a B.S. degree in education from Southern Illinois University.

Jim Bob Baker, the previous administrator of GIPSA, held that position from November 1994 until January 2001, and is now vice president for business development with the National Bank of Arkansas in Conway, Ark. ■



Jim House was named director of the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization.

Before rejoining USDA, for nearly 30 years—from 1993 until his appointment to this position and, earlier, from 1971-91—House worked as an entrepreneur and an economic development consultant as president of the Eckenberge Group, a professional services firm based in Bowie, Md. It provided primarily marketing assistance services to small businesses, large federal prime contractors, state governments, and historically black colleges and universities. From 1991-93 he served as associate director of USDA's [then] Office of Advocacy and Enterprise, responsible for the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization. The March 1992 issue of the *USDA News* carried his complete biographical sketch, following his selection to that position.

In 1976 House served as a national minority association member of a task force of trade association representa-

tives which drafted the subcontracting provisions of Public Law 95-507. Signed into law in 1978, this amended the Small Business Act and subsequently created the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization in USDA and in all federal departments and agencies with significant federal procurement responsibilities. He began his career in 1963 as an engineer in the aerospace industry, where he worked on the design, development, and testing of military fighter aircraft, commercial airplanes, and space vehicles.

A native of Goldsboro, N.C., House holds a B.S. degree in mechanical engineering from Howard University in Washington, DC.

Sharron Harris, the previous director of OSDBU, held that position from July 1993 to January 2001, and is now a senior manager, specializing in organizational

improvement consulting, for Thompson, Cobb, Bazilio, & Associates, a small business certified public accounting and management, systems, and financial consulting firm in Washington, DC. ■



Howard Magwire was selected as the deputy administrator for poultry programs in the Agricultural Marketing Service.

From February 2001 until his selection Magwire served as the acting deputy administrator for poultry programs in AMS. He was the associate deputy administrator for poultry programs from 1989-2001. From 1986-89 he was assistant chief of the Grading Branch in

PROFILE PLUS *More About: Joseph Jen*



As a child **Joseph Jen's** passion was studying Chinese literature. As an adult, Jen finds satisfaction in tweaking scientific problems with business sense solutions. What drove a child born in mainland China, who spent his formative years growing up in Taiwan, to decide to mix a bent for science with business and devote it to improving agriculture?

In a word: strawberries.

Jen, the under secretary for research, education, and economics, was in high school in Taiwan when his father retired from the government and started a strawberry farm on the island. "A friend in Okinawa had complained to my father that there was no strawberry jam anywhere in East Asia," he said. "So my father located a source for seeds—bought a whole mountain head, something like 300 to 400 acres—and began a strawberry farm. By Chinese standards at the time, that was very big because most people there only have one or two acres."

After high school and college in Taiwan, Jen came to America to continue his education, earning an M.S. degree in food science and a Ph.D. degree in comparative biochemistry. Later, he also earned an MBA degree while working in the food industry.

"I started off just like any other Ph.D., with teaching and research at a land grant university for eleven years. But because of my experience with my father's farm I always had this urge to be more hands-on, to get closer to the real thing," Jen said.

That led him to a six-year stint at the Campbell Soup Company where his research centered on improving the texture of food products. "One day I had a conversation with the vice president of the company," he said. "He was complaining about their Ragu spaghetti sauce. It was too watery and he wanted it made thicker, kind of like ketchup. I said, 'That's easy!'" The result was Prego spaghetti sauce, which captured 30 percent of the national market in the first month after its debut.

Jen returned to academia in 1986, serving as chairman of the Food Science and Technology Division at the University of Georgia. From 1992 until his appointment as under secretary for REE in July 2001 (the August 2001

issue of the *USDA News* carried his complete biographical sketch, following his swearing in to that position), he was dean of the College of Agriculture at California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo, where he oversaw eleven departments. Good training for his current job leading the Agricultural Research Service, the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service, the Economic Research Service, and the National Agricultural Statistics Service—the center of USDA's scientific, economic, and statistical brain trust.

"I think this is the first job where I can use all the tools in my toolbox. Because there are so many diverse issues, I'm able to have a more integrated approach," Jen said. He pointed to a deal he made with the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Eager to tap into USDA's work on animal and plant genomic research, NIH had approached Jen about collaborating on sequencing the honeybee. "Nobody would believe you can negotiate this—but NIH agreed to pay 90 percent of the costs. I was able to talk to the scientists and say how important is this, it needs to be done, but I don't have the money," he said.

Last Book Read: *"Fast Food Nation: The Dark Side of the All-American Meal,"* by **Eric Schlosser**

Hobbies: Long-time stamp and coin collector. Duplicate bridge (was national champion in his youth in Taiwan)

Favorite Food: Chinese, especially sea cucumber and duck feet. "But I like steak too."

Last Movie Seen: Nothing recent, but loves **James Bond** reruns

Favorite Weekend Breakfast: Soupy rice (A Chinese dish to which you can add anything for flavor or let it stand alone)

Priorities in the Months Ahead: "I want to continue building new relationships with agencies outside USDA and within USDA. All four of my agencies have a lot to offer and they do provide services to other agencies, but I think there is more that we can do. I've been pleasantly surprised by the quality of our scientists. When it comes to work, one plus one equals more than two—that's my concept on teamwork. In the coming months, budget will still be a constraint—but on the other hand we have to couple budget with performance. I hope to create an environment where people are happy, because that usually brings out the best in them."

—PATRICIA KLINTBERG

AMS's Poultry Programs. From 1976-86 he served at AMS headquarters in Washington, DC, as the national supervisor of the agency's egg products inspection program, a function which is now part of the mission of the Food Safety and Inspection Service.

Magwire worked as a supervisory egg products inspector in AMS's regional office in Chicago, Ill., from 1972-76. He began his full-time career with AMS as an egg products inspector in Oskaloosa, Iowa in 1971, after having worked for AMS during 1968-69 as a part-time and seasonal lab technician in Wakefield, Neb., while still in college.

A native of Wakefield, Neb., Magwire holds a B.S. degree in chemistry from Wayne State College in Wayne, Neb.

Michael Holbrook, the previous deputy administrator for poultry programs in AMS, served in that position from 1988 until he retired in February 2001, following 31 years of federal service. ■



Barbara Robinson was selected as the deputy administrator for transportation

and marketing programs in the Agricultural Marketing Service.

From February 2001 until her selection Robinson served as the acting deputy administrator for transportation and marketing programs in AMS. She was the agency's deputy associate administrator from 1992-2001, where she helped to oversee program management and direct marketing services in AMS. While in this position, in 1996 she also served as executive director for the USDA Advisory Committee on Agricultural Concentration.

From 1991-92 Robinson was economics editor for the Economic Research Service's monthly *Agricultural Outlook* magazine. She served on a detail as an agricultural economist with the President's Council of Economic Advisors from 1988-89. From 1985-88 she was the assistant director of ERS's National Economics Division. She began her career with

USDA in 1980 as an agricultural economist in ERS, working in domestic and international policy areas.

A native of Rochester, N.Y., Robinson holds a B.S. degree in economics from Oswego State University in Oswego, N.Y., an M.S. degree in agricultural economics from Clemson University in Clemson, S.C., and a Ph.D. degree in agricultural economics from the University of Maryland.

Eileen Stommes, the previous deputy administrator for transportation and marketing programs in AMS, served in that position from 1995 until February 2000 and is now a sociologist in the Food Assistance Branch with the Economic Research Service's Food and Rural Economics Division. ■



Several new law enforcement-oriented dramas were added to the TV schedule for the 2002-03 viewing

season. But if some of those new shows want to be accurate examples of "reality TV," they'd be smart to confer with **Lisa Purdy**—because she can provide some good firsthand tips on how to track down and catch a crook.

Purdy, a loan technician with the Rural Business-Cooperative Service's State Office in Yakima, Wash., had just driven into the USDA Service Center's parking lot one morning, on her way to the office, when she noticed that the driver's-side window of a colleague's truck, parked in the lot, had been smashed. She walked over to inspect the damage—and then noticed that the trucks of two other colleagues were not in their normal parking spaces.

Since those three colleagues were attending a three-day training session in a nearby town, and since they had all traveled from the office to that site using government vehicles, Purdy became suspicious. "So I went to my desk, made a few phone calls to see if the missing trucks were merely not around or were actually missing," she recounted. "To make a long story short, my office mates and I concluded that the trucks had been stolen—and that's when I called the police, on behalf of my three colleagues, to report the thefts."

That afternoon Purdy left the office

for lunch and, while stopped at a stop sign a few blocks away, she saw a green truck that looked like the green truck which had been stolen. "As the truck passed me, I noticed that it had Idaho plates—and so did the missing green truck," she said. "So, to me, it was pretty obvious that I was looking right at the stolen truck."

Purdy followed that green truck—which turned into a local cemetery and parked. She then called 911 on her cell phone and explained the situation to a police dispatcher with the Yakima Police Department, who verified that the truck's license plate number matched that of the stolen green truck. "The dispatcher asked me to keep an eye on it, and to follow it inconspicuously if it took off, since no police officers were available near that location to take over the surveillance," she explained.

The stolen truck then went on the move again, but exited the cemetery before Purdy could see which way it had turned. "I called the dispatcher back, and she advised me to pick a direction and look for the truck," she said. "So I drove back into the nearby residential area—and when I passed the back of the cemetery I spotted the *second* missing truck, a gray one, parked on the side of the road."

Purdy called the dispatcher back again, provided details on her latest sighting, waited at the site of the second truck until a police officer arrived on the scene, and then drove to a local grocery store to continue her lunch plans.

"When I got there, I couldn't believe my eyes," she recalled. "There, in that grocery store parking lot, was the stolen green truck I'd followed into the cemetery, and the driver was still behind the wheel."

Purdy got back on the phone with the police dispatcher. "They definitely recognized my voice by now," she quipped. The dispatcher advised that police officers were in the area, and asked her to keep an eye on that truck in the interim. Then, as they both stayed on the phone, the driver left the truck and entered the grocery store.

As it turned out, at that very moment two officers were parked on the other side of the grocery store parking lot. So those officers followed the driver into the store and appre-

hended him. According to **Tuana Jones**, a public affairs specialist with the Rural Development mission area State Office in Olympia, Wash., the driver subsequently confessed to stealing the two trucks and breaking the window on the third truck. Accordingly, along with evidence of other crimes that the driver had committed, he faced an estimated three years of incarceration.

"My three colleagues later presented me with a homemade 'Certificate of Merit,' for helping to 'track down the perp,'" Purdy laughed. "It's hanging on my partition—and I think it's great." ■

The **USDA News** is published by the Office of Communications, the U.S. Department of Agriculture. This employee news publication, which is prepared by, for and about this Department's employees, is distributed to USDA's 114,900 federal employees—full-time, part-time and temporary—by order of the Secretary of Agriculture. Mailing address is Rm. 430-A Whitten Bldg., OC, USDA; 1400 Independence Ave., SW; Washington, D.C. 20250-1350.

To update your mailing address or change the quantity of **USDA News** copies received in your USDA office, please contact your agency's mailing/distribution specialist.

Ron Hall	Editor
Arabella Juarez	Art Director
Cedric Drake	Printing and Distribution Coordinator
Charles Hobbs	USDA News Internet Coordinator
Gayle Turner	USDA News Internet Assistant

The **USDA News** is also available on USDA's Home Page within the Internet. Use the World Wide Web to access that Home Page version. Simply type the Home Page address—or Universal Resource Locator (URL)—of the **USDA News**, which is

<http://www.usda.gov/news/pubs/newslett/cover.htm>

In addition, USDA employees may access the Department's Intranet for information that is internal to USDA and for its employees only. Employees will need to use a USDA computer, plus a USDA server that permits Intranet access. The Intranet's URL is

<http://www.hqnet.usda.gov/intranet/intranet.htm>

USDA prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation and marital or family status (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs). Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY).

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Ave SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, or call (202) 720-5964 (voice and TTY). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

The **USDA News** is printed on paper containing a minimum of 50 percent waste paper. The **USDA News** is recyclable.



*"Time To Suit Up" was the modus operandi of members of the multi-agency Avian Influenza Task Force, as they donned full protective gear. They then headed out to collect samples or euthanize turkeys and chickens to combat the avian influenza outbreak that hit chicken and turkey farms in Virginia this past summer. To more effectively manage this multi-agency operation, specialists from APHIS worked with specialists from FS to institute an "Incident Command System" approach, which was originally conceived by FS to better fight wildland fires. Note **Madelaine Fletcher's** story on page 4.*



**HELP US FIND
Savannah Jo Lockhardt**

Missing: 6-29-2002 From: San Diego, CA

D.O.B. 2-17-1999 Sex: Female

Hair: Black Eyes: Brown

Height: 3 ft. 6 in. Weight: 45 lbs.

If you have information, please call

1-800-843-5678

NATIONAL CENTER FOR MISSING AND EXPLOITED CHILDREN

USDA-Sponsored Calendar Highlights

■ **Months of October 2002 to January 2003**

Combined Federal Campaign

USDA headquarters and some field offices
(202) 720-3718 or 1-800-877-8339 (TTY)

■ **February 20-21, 2003**

Agricultural Outlook Forum 2003

Arlington, Va.
(202) 694-5118 or 1-800-877-8339 (TTY)

■ **Month of February 2003**

Black History Month

USDA headquarters and field offices
(202) 720-7314 or (202) 720-6382 (TTY)

U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave, SW
Washington, DC 20250



OFFICIAL BUSINESS
PENALTY FOR PRIVATE USE, \$300