



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Grain Inspection,
Packers and Stockyards
Administration

Stop 3601, Room 2055-S
1400 Independence Ave., SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-3601

NOV - 7 2012

Dear Colleagues:

In fiscal year (FY) 2013 agencies within the USDA, including GIPSA, are faced with unprecedented budget reductions. It is anticipated that reduced budgets will continue for some time. To prepare for such reductions, GIPSA undertook significant cost-cutting measures aimed at reducing our spending, assuming the real possibility that sequestration (i.e., 8.2 percent reduction) may occur. These measures, while helpful, will not reduce spending to the level anticipated as part of sequestration. As a result, the Agency sought additional help by requesting a Voluntary Early Retirement Authority (VERA, or "early out") for certain occupational series.

The GIPSA request to use the VERA authority was granted by the Department, Office of Human Resource Management. This authority does not include a Voluntary Separation Incentive Payment, also known as "buyout. The VERA opportunities will be extended to positions in Management and Budget Services, Civil Rights, Information Technology excluding security staff, and the Packers and Stockyards Program. The VERA authority received allows employees in the covered positions to apply between November 13 and December 7, 2012 for an early retirement. Employees who decide to participate will be required to retire no later than December 31, 2012. It is our hope that the voluntary program will help us manage our FY 2013 funding reductions, while positioning the Agency to better tolerate future budget changes.

Employees in the eligible occupational series will be receiving information from Human Resources (HR) by email within the next week. The email will include a letter detailing the basic VERA eligibility requirements, frequently asked questions, and a HR contact should there be additional questions. HR will be posting this information on its VERA web site in the near future. Please check the following address for updates:

http://www.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/hr/benefits/vera_vsip.shtml

Our goal in GIPSA is to minimize to the greatest extent possible the effects these fiscal uncertainties have on our employees. Again, I thank you for your continued hard work and dedication to the mission of this Agency.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Larry Mitchell".

Larry Mitchell
Administrator