

Northern Plains Area EEO/Civil Rights Policy Statement

February 4, 2004

SUBJECT: Northern Plains Area EEO/Civil Rights Policy Statement

TO: All NPA Employees

FROM: W. H. Blackburn, Director /s/

The Northern Plains Area is firmly committed to equal employment opportunity for all current employees and for all applicants for employment. It is the policy of the USDA, ARS, and the NPA to provide equal opportunity in employment without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, disability, political belief, sexual orientation, or marital or family status. The NPA also remains committed to promoting employment of disabled individuals, including disabled armed forces veterans.

As NPA Director, I affirm that the NPA will continue to apply affirmative employment programs, with the objective of obtaining, promoting, and retaining a talented diverse workforce that is culturally and gender diverse. Diversity benefits everyone, and every employee has the expectation, and the right, to be treated with respect and to receive fair treatment in all aspects of employment.

Secretary Veneman has emphasized her firm commitment to the principles of civil rights, and the NPA embraces those same commitments. The NPA enforces a zero tolerance policy for any form of discrimination or harassment to any employee, contractor, or member of the public who interacts with area personnel. Establishing a climate of equal opportunity and mutual respect is a responsibility shared by all of us. Each employee, at every level, is responsible for her or his performance in ensuring equal opportunity and promoting civil rights. We must all consistently demonstrate fairness, cooperation and respect toward colleagues and customers, and diligently strive to maintain a productive and non-discriminatory work environment. By so doing, we will continue to maintain a workplace which values employees and is free from discrimination and harassment.