UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FOOD SAFETY AND INSPECTION SERVICE
WASHINGTON, DC

FSIS NOTICE	28-08	4/18/08

CIVIL RIGHTS PROGRAM POLICY STATEMENT

I.   PURPOSE

This notice assures employees of FSIS' commitment to:

A.   Ensure the civil rights of all customers.

B.   Maintain professional and personal responsibility for fair and equitable treatment.

C.   Non-discriminatory delivery of Federal and state inspection programs. Non-discrimination in program delivery extends to state inspection programs receiving Federal financial assistance.

II.   POLICY

A.   The Agency will not tolerate discrimination toward any person or entity in the delivery of:

    1.   Federal meat inspection.

    2.   Poultry inspection.

    3.   Egg products inspection.

    4.   Import inspection and associated compliance activities.

B.   All Agency programs and services must ensure:

    1.   Fairness.

    2.   Equity.

    3.   Accessibility.

4.   Non-discrimination with regard to race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, sexual orientation, marital or family status, or retaliation.

5.   Freedom from retaliation against applicants or customers who seek to address their concerns.

III.   **RESPONSIBILITIES**

FSIS officials must:

A.   Maintain a program that ensures non-discrimination.

B.   Assure state inspection programs, receiving funding or other forms of Federal assistance operate within applicable civil rights laws, regulations, and guidelines prohibiting discrimination in program delivery.

C.   Notify industry personnel and inspection services applicants of their right to file discrimination complaints and the applicable procedures.

D.   Assure program services are accessible to applicants and recipients.

E.   Provide information relevant to civil rights inquiries, investigations, and on-site reviews.

F.   Periodically discuss the contents of this notice with supervisors and employees.

IV.   **PUBLIC NOTIFICATION**

FSIS officials must inform the public of their right to receive inspection and compliance services in a non-discriminatory manner. FSIS officials must also ensure program services applicants and recipients are aware of their right to file a discrimination complaint and the applicable procedures. This includes:

A.   Posting the USDA non-discrimination statement on public information sources such as:

1.   The FSIS Internet Web site.

2.   A "footer" on official Agency correspondence.

3.   Inspection services applications and other appropriate brochures, or publications that are intended for public distribution.

B.   Prominently displaying the USDA "And Justice for All" poster (Form AD-475A, Revised 9/2006) in all FSIS-controlled spaces (**examples**: headquarters and district offices, and in-plant locations where there is designated FSIS space) where program services applicants and recipients visit.

V.   **CIVIL RIGHTS PROGRAM COMPLAINTS**

FSIS officials who interact with the regulated industry should periodically remind them of the rights and procedures contained in the USDA "And Justice For All" poster. When an FSIS official receives a verbal or written discrimination allegation from a program services applicant or recipient, the official should:

         A.   Immediately notify the individual of their right to file a civil rights complaint with the USDA Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights.

         B.   Advise the individual of the 180-calendar day time frame for filing a program complaint, and provide the address to the USDA Office of Adjudication and Compliance.
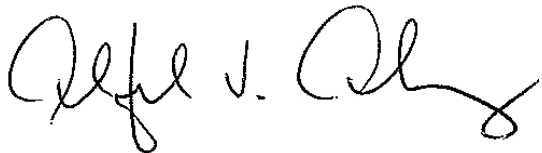
         C.   Provide pertinent information related to any FSIS or USDA civil rights inquiry, investigation, or on-site review.

VI.   **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

For additional information, contact the Civil Rights Division at:

         Telephone: (301) 504-7755 (voice and TDD)
                               (800) 269-6912 (toll-free)

         Web site: http://www.fsis.usda.gov/About_FSIS/civil_rights_programs/index.asp

Administrator