



**United States Department of Agriculture**

Research, Education and Economics  
Agricultural Research Service

February 12, 2008

**SUBJECT:** FY 2008 Northern Plains Area EEO/Civil Rights/Diversity Policy Statement

**TO:** All NPA Employees

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

As Director of the Northern Plains Area, I remain committed to the principles of civil rights, equal employment opportunity, and appreciation of diversity. I expect that all employees will join me in ensuring that all workplaces in the NPA are free of illegal discrimination, harassment, and reprisal. Discrimination or harassment based on race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, sexual orientation, marital or familial status, political beliefs, parental status, protected genetic information, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program is illegal.

Supervisors are expected to monitor the work environment to ensure that discrimination, harassment or reprisal is not occurring, and to take immediate corrective action if such behavior does occur. As Area Director I will take immediate action if illegal conduct occurs. Additionally, supervisors are responsible for ensuring that all vacancies and promotions are conducted within the spirit and guidelines of EEO, and that diversity is sought and appreciated.

Respectful workplace environments, along with adherence to civil rights and equal employment opportunity, as well as an authentic appreciation of the diversity among us are essential ingredients to continuing the enormous success and reputation of NPA and ARS. As our nation becomes increasingly diverse, having a workforce that reflects the immense diversity of our nation is critical. To achieve a more diverse workforce, we need the support and active involvement of every employee working together to reach out to new and continuing employees to ensure a workplace environment that is truly welcoming and fair to everyone.

