



MAY 18 2016

AGRICULTURAL MARKETING SERVICE  
CIVIL RIGHTS ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICY STATEMENT

AMS strives to maintain a working environment free of harassment on the basis of a person's protected status--race, color, religion, sex (including gender identity and expression), national origin, age (if 40 or over), disability, reprisal (for prior participation in an EEO activity or having opposed discrimination), political affiliation, sexual orientation, marital status, parental status, or genetic information.

Harassment is defined as unwelcome conduct (whether physical, verbal, or otherwise) that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual based on a person's protected status. Sexual harassment is defined as: (a) participating in coercive or repeated unsolicited and unwelcome verbal comments, gestures, or physical comments of a sexual nature; (b) using implicit or explicit coercive sexual behavior to control, influence, or affect the career, salary, or job of an employee; or (c) displaying material in the office or via e-mail or the internet that contains offensive images or textual references that are of a sexual nature. Harassment (sexual or otherwise) adversely affects an individual's employment opportunities and/or work performance by creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

Along with informing their managers of inappropriate activity, employees should inform the alleged harasser to cease the inappropriate comment or action, whenever possible. Studies have shown this is the most effective means for addressing problems in the initial stage. As well, employees are responsible for managing their behavior and immediately reporting any allegations of harassment/sexual harassment, misconduct or violations to any of the following: (a) their supervisor; (b) AMS's Civil Rights Program (CRP) (202-720-0583); or (c) AMS's Compliance and Analysis (C&A) Program (202-720-6766).

AMS may be responsible for acts of harassment in the workplace where the managers or supervisors knew or should have known of the conduct. Therefore, managers and supervisors are expected to take immediate and appropriate corrective action when harassment occurs. The Agency may also be responsible for the acts of individuals not employed by AMS with respect to harassment of employees in the workplace (or vice versa), where supervisory employees knew or should have known of the conduct and failed to take immediate corrective action. Managers and supervisors who participate in or fail to take appropriate action on harassment incidents, or retaliate against people who report such incidents, jeopardize their careers for failure to perform their assigned duties. Managers and supervisors must report incidents involving harassment to the CRP and/or to C&A to discuss the appropriate action(s) required. The Agency will protect the confidentiality of individuals who bring harassment claims against the Agency to every possible extent governed by federal, state, and local laws.

If an employee believes that he/she has been discriminated against on any protected basis, he/she should contact the AMS Civil Rights Staff within 45 calendar days of the alleged incident. Failure to do so may result in dismissal of the complaint for untimeliness. Complaints of harassment may be expressed without fear of retaliation. All allegations will be taken seriously, and any individual(s) found to have violated prohibitions on harassment will be subject to disciplinary action.

Please join me in promoting a workplace of excellence--a workplace that is free from discrimination and harassment.

  
Elanor Starmer  
AMS Administrator