



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

May 22, 2020

USDA Civil Rights Policy Statement

The hallmark of my tenure as Secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is to do right and feed everyone and I don't intend for that to be just a hollow creed. This pledge is at the heart of our work, which includes our commitment to protecting the civil rights of all USDA employees and customers.

Doing right means treating all people equally, regardless of an individual's race, color, national origin, religion, sex (including pregnancy, gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, genetic information, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). We are part of the same human family, imbued with dignity and worthy of respect. I expect every USDA employee to foster a workplace free from discrimination, harassment, and retaliation so everyone can reach his or her full potential. Workplace harassment will not be tolerated, and managers and supervisors will correct the harassing conduct before it becomes severe or pervasive. Our workplace will be a model for proper enforcement of civil rights protections, not only because it's the law, but also because it's the right thing to do.

Equal employment opportunity covers all personnel/employment programs, management practices, and decisions, including, but not limited to, recruitment/hiring, merit promotion, transfer, reassignments, training and career development, benefits, and separation.

Feeding everyone means it doesn't matter what you look like or where you come from, USDA programs are for you. Hunger knows no color or creed. Whether we are responding to disasters with food aid, cultivating sustainable agriculture programs overseas, or improving school meals here at home, at USDA we know food has the power to unite.

When you start with a simple expression of integrity and equality, upholding civil rights and all the freedoms enshrined in our laws is not just compulsory, it becomes intrinsic. For that reason and working together, we will continue to return to our touchstone: Do right ... by everyone ... and feed everyone.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sonny Perdue".

Sonny Perdue
Secretary