

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 race, religion, gender, national origin, or any other characteristic. 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. 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.

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.

Sonny Perdue
Secretary