United States
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Marketing and
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Programs

Animal and
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Inspection
Service

Washington, DC
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APHIS Sexual Harassment Policy Statement

I am committed to creating a working environment where no person or group is given an advantage or disadvantaged because of their race, gender, culture, disability, religion, national origin, age, marital status or sexual orientation. This includes maintaining a work environment where sexual harassment is not tolerated.

All employees have the right to work in an environment free of unsolicited and unwelcome sexual overtures. Further, it is the policy of APHIS to support a system of personnel management that ensures high standards of honesty, integrity, impartiality, and conduct. Sexual harassment is a conduct issue and a prohibited personnel practice that compromises these standards.

As stated in the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) booklet, entitled "Sexual Harassment: It could cost you your job. ..and a whole lot more," sexual harassment is a violation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Copies of the booklet can be obtained from the APHIS Civil Rights Enforcement and Compliance (CREC) staff.

All employees, especially managers and supervisors, have the responsibility for establishing and maintaining a workplace free from discrimination, including sexual harassment. The Department defines sexual harassment as:

> Participating in coercive or repeated unsolicited and unwelcome verbal comments, gestures, or physical contacts of a sexual nature OR by using implicit or explicit coercive sexual behavior in the process of conducting agency business or to control, influence, or affect the career, salary, or job of an employee.

Sexual harassment is illegal, undermines the employee/employer relationship, interferes with productivity, and threatens the mental, emotional and physical well-being of employees. USDA policy applies to all employees within the Department in their dealings with Federal and non-Federal employees, including persons employed under contract or other formal agreements with the USDA.

Prevention is the best tool to eliminate sexual harassment in the workplace. Managers and supervisors carry the larger burden of responsibility for ensuring the workplace is free from sexual harassment and should take steps necessary to prevent sexual harassment from occurring. Managers and supervisors should clearly communicate to employees that sexual harassment will not be tolerated. Managers and supervisors are

subject to disciplinary action if they tolerate sexual harassment, fail to take appropriate action on reports of sexual harassment, or retaliate against employees who report or file complaints of sexual harassment. Any employee who tolerates or promotes such conduct will be held accountable. In addition, any employee engaging in sexual harassment is subject to disciplinary action, including demotion, suspension, and/or removal *(DPM Chapter* 751, *Appendix A, Table of Disciplinary Penalties).*

I strongly encourage each of you to make a commitment to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace. If you are sexually harassed, or have witnessed sexual harassment, you should report it immediately to your supervisor, or someone in the management chain (2nd or 3rd level) or the APHIS Alternative Dispute Resolution Center on (301) 734-6317 or 1-800-342-7231.

To request education and training on the prevention of sexual harassment, managers and supervisors may call the Human Resources Division on (301) 734-4949. For advice or guidance on preventing sexual harassment in the workplace, please contact the APHIS Civil Rights Enforcement and Compliance staff on (202) 720-6312.

Bobby R. Acord
Administrator

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