



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
National Institute of Food and Agriculture
Office of the Director

Diversity and Inclusion Policy Statement

In 2010, the National Institute of Food and Agriculture set forth a “new direction” to become a more relevant, dynamic, and flexible Agency, able to meet the shifting needs and priorities of a rapidly expanding diverse population. As we continue to move ahead on that positive path, our mission will be refined and influenced by changes in the economy, the work environment, and demographics. As such, we must place a high priority on recruiting, promoting, retaining, and developing a diverse high-performing workforce that draws from all segments of our populations.

As employees of this Agency, we all have an obligation to each other and to the American public to correct any program or employment practice that is not achieving the objectives of equal opportunity, diversity, and inclusion. Each of us has a personal responsibility to ensure that our commitment to equal opportunity, diversity, and inclusion is thoroughly understood, aggressively followed, and recognized as an integral part of the support we provide for every educational program that is developed and delivered, every research project we support, and in every opportunity for employment.

Senior executives, managers, and supervisors authorized to make employment and program decisions play a critical role in setting and maintaining a positive equal opportunity environment. I expect each of you to ensure our program and personnel practices continue to operate on a merit basis, and create an environment that is welcoming to a diverse population.

If we are to thrive as an Agency, we must cultivate an environment of diversity and inclusion that allows us to have differences of opinions in a climate of openness, mutual respect, and trust. We must operate on the premise that we cannot be effective without being fair and responsive. Let us pledge to enrich a culture that is inclusive and encourages collaboration, flexibility, and fairness to enable employees to participate to their full capability.

The Secretary of Agriculture has maintained that diversity and inclusion are of great importance and must clearly exist in the Department’s workforce and program operations. I am personally committed to ensuring that equal opportunity, diversity, and inclusion are an integral part of this Agency’s employment and program planning activities. I ask the same commitment of you.

Diversity and inclusiveness are essential for our ability to execute our mission and achieve excellence. A climate of equity brings about the best in our workforce and helps employees reach their highest potential. Let us renew and strengthen our efforts to leverage diversity and foster inclusion in all aspects of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture’s programs and employment decisions. This is an all-hands effort.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sonny Ramaswamy".

Sonny Ramaswamy
Director
September 2, 2014

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