

Equality and Diversity Policy

1. COMMITMENT TO EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

1.1 HEROS & North Farm Stud is committed to the principle of equality and diversity in employment and in equal pay for work of the same or similar nature or work of equal value. The organisation declares its opposition to any form of less favourable treatment or financial reward, whether through direct or indirect discrimination, harassment, or victimisation accorded to employees, job applicants, or former employees on the grounds of their race, religious beliefs, political opinions, creed, colour, ethnic origin, nationality, marital/parental status, sex, sexual orientation, disability, age, fixed term or part time status.

2. EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

2.1 We wholeheartedly support the principles and practices of equality and diversity and recognise that it is the duty of all employees to accept their personal responsibility for fostering a fully integrated community at work by adhering to these principles and maintaining racial harmony.

2.2 We will actively promote equality and diversity through the application of employment practices which will ensure that individuals receive treatment that is fair and equitable, and consistent with their relevant aptitudes, potential, skills and abilities. All managers and supervisors will seek to ensure that all employees comply with these principles.

2.3 We will ensure that individuals are recruited and selected, promoted, and trained on objective criteria, having regard to the relevant aptitudes, potential, skills and abilities. In particular, no applicant will be placed at a disadvantage by requirements or conditions which are not necessary to the performance of the job or which constitute indirect unfair discrimination.

2.4 We recognise the problems that sexual, racial and other forms of harassment may cause at work and is committed to ensure that such unacceptable behaviour does not take place. All forms of harassment are abhorrent.

3. DISCIPLINARY AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

3.1 We will ensure that any individual or group of employees who believe that they have experienced direct or indirect unfair discrimination are properly represented in any grievance proceedings. Any employee who feels that he or she has been treated unfairly in connection with his/her employment should raise their grievance through our Equality and Diversity Grievance Procedure, when every effort will be made to secure a satisfactory conclusion.

3.2 In addition, we will ensure that any employee making a complaint of unfair discrimination will be protected from any victimisation in any form.

3.3 We will continue to treat unfair discriminatory conduct by any member of staff as a disciplinary offence.

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4. TRAINING AND ADVERTISING

4.1 We will train, develop and promote on the basis of merit and ability. We will also provide suitable and relevant equality and diversity training as necessary for our staff.

4.2 When vacancies are advertised, we will continue to ensure that such advertising, both in placement and content, is compatible with the terms of this policy. To this end, opportunities will be taken through language, images or declarations as appropriate to show that we are an equality and diversity employer. In practical terms, this means that the wording of advertisements will be carefully scrutinised to ensure that any hidden discrimination is avoided, or sexually or racially loaded wording is avoided. Every effort will be made to ensure that the advertisements are placed in newspapers and publications so that as wide a readership as possible has access to the vacancies.

5. RIGHTS OF DISABLED PEOPLE

5.1 We attach particular importance to the needs of disabled people. Under the terms of this policy, managers are required to:

- Make reasonable adjustment to maintain the services of an employee who becomes disabled. For example: training, provision of special equipment, reduced working hours. (NB The Managing Director will advise on the availability of funds from external agencies to maintain disabled people in employment)
- Give full and proper consideration to disabled people who apply for jobs, having regard to making reasonable adjustments for their particular aptitudes and abilities to allow them to be able to do the job.
- Include disabled people in training/development programmes

6. VICTIMISATION AND HARASSMENT

6.1 Discrimination by victimisation occurs when a person is treated less favourably than another because he/she had asserted his/her rights under the Acts relating to discrimination or had helped another person to assert those rights.

6.2 There is a separate policy dealing with all forms of harassment.

6.3 MANAGERIAL RESPONSIBILITY

The responsibility for ensuring the effective implementation and operation of the arrangements will rest with the Chief Operating Officer. The Chief Operating Officer must ensure that:

- All staff are aware of the policy and the arrangements, and the reasons for the policy;

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- **All grievances concerning** discrimination are dealt with properly, fairly and as quickly as possible and will follow the Equality and Diversity Grievance Policy;
- Proper records are maintained.

6.4 RESPONSIBILITY OF STAFF

Whilst the responsibility for ensuring that there is no unlawful discrimination rests with management, the attitudes of staff are crucial to the successful operation of fair employment practices. In particular, all members of staff should:

- Comply with policy and arrangements;
- Not discriminate in their day to day activities or induce others to do so;
- Not victimise, harass or intimidate other staff or groups on the grounds specified in the policy statement;
- Inform their manager if they become aware of any discriminatory practice.

NB. Be aware some discrimination is not intentional. However, we have a duty of care at all times to others, to consider all our comments, attitudes and actions, as they may albeit unintentionally, cause offence.

7. APPLICATION OF THE DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE IN CASES OF ALLEGATIONS OF DISCRIMINATION OR HARASSMENT AGAINST YOU.

If our Disciplinary Procedure is invoked as a result of complaints being raised against you with regard to acts of discrimination or harassment contrary to our Equality and Diversity Policy, and the offence is proven, the severity of the penalty imposed on you will be as provided in the disciplinary procedure, i.e. harassment or discrimination will normally result in summary dismissal for gross misconduct or sufficiently serious misconduct as to warrant dismissal.

In circumstances where discrimination is proven but a lesser penalty is appropriate, such penalty will normally be a final written warning. This may be coupled with further action by us to ensure that the complainant is able to continue working without embarrassment or anxiety.

Disciplinary action may be taken against you if you are aware that harassment of any nature is taking place against any person, but you fail to report it immediately to your immediate Line Manager or the Chief Operating Officer.

If we become aware of discrimination of any nature taking place, but the person suffering such discrimination does not wish to make a formal complaint, then we reserve the right to investigate the matter in any event and to take such formal action as we deem necessary so that we can properly comply with our duty of care toward our employees at all times.

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THE COMPANY WILL NOT TOLERATE DISCRIMINATION OF ANY NATURE AT ANY TIME.

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EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

If you feel you are being subjected to Discrimination and/or Harassment of any nature you should use the following procedure:-

1. INFORMAL PROCEDURE

1.1 If you feel that you are subject to harassment and/or discrimination you should, if possible advise your harasser that the behaviour is unwelcome, must be stopped and is interpreted as harassment and/or discrimination within the terms of the Company's policy statement. If preferred, you may do this in writing.

1.2 If the behaviour does not cease or you find approaching the harasser difficult, further informal assistance is available. Employees, who wish to discuss such a complaint in confidence, should contact the Managing Director.

2. FORMAL PROCEDURE

(i) Where the informal method described above fails or serious harassment or discrimination occurs, you are advised to bring a formal complaint against the harasser. The complaint should be made in writing and where possible state the following: -

- (a) the name of the harasser;
- (b) the nature of the harassment;
- (c) the date and time when the harassment occurred;
- (d) the names of any witnesses to the harassment;
- (e) details of any action already taken by the complainant to stop the harassment.

(ii) The complaint should be sent to the Chief Operating Officer. Immediately a complaint of harassment is received, action will be taken to separate the harasser from you if appropriate. This may involve temporary transfer of the harasser or you to another department or suspension of the harasser with pay until the complaint has been resolved.

(iii) The Chief Operating Officer will appoint a senior member of Management to carry out a thorough investigation as quickly as possible, maintaining as much confidentiality as possible at all times. You should be aware however, that if the complaint is to be investigated, other employees might have to be asked for witness statements.

(iv) All persons involved in the investigation are expected to respect the need for confidentiality. Failure to do so will be considered a disciplinary offence.

(v) Copies of any witness statements will be made available to the harasser and yourself. Witnesses will be encouraged to appear at any investigation or disciplinary hearing instigated as part of this process. It is acknowledged that some witnesses may be reluctant to do so and forced participation will not occur. In these circumstances, if necessary, the hearing will be adjourned in order that supplementary questions may be asked of witnesses in private.

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(vi) You may, if you choose to do so have a colleague of your choice, to support you throughout the procedure and any hearing. The employee or user accused of harassment or discrimination will ordinarily face disciplinary action in accordance with our disciplinary procedure.

(vii) If discrimination or harassment is proved the severity of the penalty imposed on the harasser will be consistent with those detailed in the disciplinary procedure. The result of any investigation and disciplinary hearings will be confirmed in writing to both employees.

(viii) If you are not satisfied about the way your complaint has been handled you may appeal to the Managing Director. The appeal should be made in writing within 5 working days of the first hearing. The decision of the Managing Director will be final and will be given to you in writing.

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