Farm Safety Photo Tips for Media Meeting Kit

FARMS AND PHOTOS

Farms use photos not just for business practices but also to communicate farming activities through social media, various methods of advertising in farmers markets and stores, news and magazine articles, and much more.

CONTEXT MATTERS

The content of the photo and what is in the background is important to keep in mind before posting photos. Sunlight, shadows, animals, people, objects, weather, unsafe acts and conditions and other distractions can take away from the intent of the picture.

The best time to take a photo outdoors is in the morning or evening on a cloudy day using flash and a background free of distractions.

AVOIDANCE ISSUES

- Avoid taking pictures in front of manure pits, clotheslines, aggressive animals, powerlines, etc.
- Avoid showing workers climbing Silo’s or grain bins without wearing fall protection or workers working around unguarded equipment or machinery such as PTO and augers.
- If you want young children in a photo, show them in supervised fenced play areas on the farm.
- Avoid showing children under the age of 14 driving farm machinery, riding ATVs, or ride-on lawn mowers.
- Avoid showing adults with children riding in the adults’ laps on farm machinery, ATV’s, or lawn mowers.

10 MAJOR TIPS FOR TAKING PHOTOS

1. **Prepare for dust and dirt:** Wear old clothes as dogs will jump up and you may have to kneel down and wade through mud. Keep the lens cap on – you should always have one on a camera lens – until the last moment if there is muck or dust flying about. Keep the camera strap around your neck.
2. **Look before you shoot:** Look around carefully for what is most interesting about a particular farm. Is it the stock, the buildings, the machines or what is actually going on? Think carefully about what you want to take pictures of before rushing in.
3. **Circle your target:** Whatever it is you have decided to take a picture of, walk all around it if you can, to see which angle will offer the best composition. You may be very surprised how different things can look from another viewpoint and with the light coming from a different direction.
4. **Think background:** Backgrounds can be very distracting in a photograph. You may take a picture of a fabulous new tractor only to find that piles of fertiliser bags in the background completely ruins the photograph and you didn't even see them because you were too busy looking at the tractor.
5. **Animal magic:** When photographing animals especially, look for a plain background and try to avoid 'half-animals' at the side of the picture. If you are trying to photograph sheep, particularly in a field where they are all nicely arranged, move very slowly into position and don't get eye contact with them. Look away, just watching where you are going out of the corner of your eye; the second you look at them directly they will run away.
6. **Where's the sun?** The bright sunny days of summer are not a good time to take photographs. The contrast between the light and dark areas will be very hard to handle. Bright overcast days are usually the best for most photography.
7. **Lighting the landscape:** Landscape photography of fields is best done when there is good strong directional lighting. For example, it's good all winter when the sun is low in the

sky and then in summer in the morning and the evening. Cross-lighting with the sun at your side will show up textures in ploughed land and rows and furrows much better than if you have the sun directly behind you. Unsettled weather with dramatic skies and patchy sunlight can make the most interesting photographs of fields.

8. **Get inside:** Go inside buildings, the lighting will then be from the side, rather than from all directions.
9. **Better building:** Try to find old buildings on a farm, they tend to make much better backdrops to photographs. If it is possible, move an animal that you want to photograph to somewhere with a plain background. You will get a much better picture than filling the background with farmyard clutter. Modern buildings with their strong graphic lines can also offer interesting compositions.
10. **Manual work:** Try to move away from using the "auto" setting on your camera, go on to manual and experiment until you see what a difference aperture and shutter speed can make to your pictures when you are in control and not the camera.

DOs:

DO show tractors and other farm equipment being maintained and operated safely, including rollover protective systems (ROPS), guards in place, safety chains attached, etc.

DO show children doing supervised age-appropriate chores.

DO show workers wearing proper fitting personal protective equipment appropriate for the task they are performing.

DONTS:

DON'T put children in unsafe situations – sometimes "cute" is unsafe. For example, showing a five-year-old child leading a large draft horse may be cute, however it is very unsafe and should never be depicted as a safe, fun or acceptable activity.

DON'T photograph children in agricultural work sites; rather show

them in a fenced-in play area where they are being properly supervised. Most farm-related childhood incidents happen when children are playing or doing chores with their parents in a farm work area.

DON’T allow or show people engaging in unsafe behavior such as extra riders, climbing heights without fall protection, working with unguarded blades or moving parts, and so on.

DON’T allow or show children under 14 driving farm vehicles or machinery.

DON’T allow or show children riding on adults’ laps on tractors/machinery, ATVs or riding mowers.

DON’T allow or show children near large animals unless appropriate barriers are evident.

FINAL WORD

A picture is worth a thousand words only if the taker of the picture knows, understands and is able to incorporate safe farm practices in picture taking.