



**SHARE YOUR FARM STORY: MEDIA & PUBLIC RELATIONS TOOL KIT**  
**Farm & Agriculture Resources for Media (FARM)**  
**FARM PHOTOGRAPHY GUIDE**

Any media effort you make can be enhanced if you have high-quality, high-resolution, digital photos of your farm on file and ready to go. With the increasing, cost-effective availability of professional-grade digital cameras, using the tips below can result in plenty of media-quality photos of your farm. Additionally, as the media are faced with budgetary pressures, publications are less likely to pay for a photographer to go out and shoot on location for a story. Having your own photos on file (and available for free use) greatly increases chances of publication.

Key things to remember:

- **Plan a Formal Photo Shoot Outside**

Don't wait till the media calls needing photos; shoot when the lighting and setting are perfect. Have great photos on file. While candid shots can be great, take the time to specifically shoot some photos of yourself (and your family or other farm members) to maximize quality and take advantage of sunlight (see "timing" below). Similar to the advice on the TV tip sheet, wear solid colors (no white or black; royal blue works well). Shooting outside captures both your farm essence and can take advantage of natural light. Plan the shoot during early to mid summer when greenery and the gardens are in abundance but before the heat of summer dries things out.

- **Time your Shoot**

Lighting is one of the biggest factors in taking a good picture. Fortunately, this is something you can easily control by shooting either during the morning sunrise (within a few hours after it's up) or late afternoon as the sun begins to set. During those times of day, the sun casts a warm light that enhances photos with a natural glow. Avoid taking photos mid-day when the sun is the brightest and harshest (and directly overhead in the summer).

- **Shoot at a High Resolution**

Shoot photos at the highest resolution the camera will allow. Your image, often expressed as a "jpg" file, should be at least 5-inches by 7-inches and taken at a resolution of 200 dots per inch (or "dpi") or higher. The file size might be around 3 megabytes (MB) to 5 MB, or larger. A publication can always adjust a photo to a lower resolution if needed (i.e., for Internet use) but not the other way around.

- **Leave Space around your Subject Matter (for some shots)**

Besides capturing images at a large enough size, you'll also need to make sure that for some shots, you capture them with enough space around the main subject matter. This allows for the editors to creatively crop your image for use, possibly for a magazine cover image which must have "open space" for text and titles. For some photos that establish your operations, make sure there is plenty of background space around all sides (top, bottom, and both sides). This approach need not apply to all images, but should be considered for at least a few.



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- **Use a Tripod if Available**

A tripod minimizes the chance of camera shake and will give you an extra clear photograph. For people using a hand-held SLR (single lens reflex) camera, try shooting the photo at a speed of 100<sup>th</sup>/second or faster to help reduce the chances of camera shake that results in fuzzy or blurry images. Getting the eyes of people or the main subject matter in clear focus is crucial.

- **Take Horizontal and Vertical Shots**

Publications often have very specific photo needs based on the page layout. By shooting both a horizontal and vertical version of each shot, you will have more options available to them. Also important is to capture images of varying perspectives of your operations: establishing landscapes, product shots, people portraits, action shots, and close-up detail images of perhaps your favorite tool, farm animal, or farm sign.

- **Shoot Both Headshots & Action**

Take a few basic headshots of yourself that clearly identify you as the farmer. Shoot some photos with you holding things that represent your farm and your farm work (i.e., a bushel of produce). Additionally, take some staged shots of you “in action” on the farm (i.e., harvesting greens or feeding animals). These action shots can include more of the farm background.