LIVESTOCK PUBLICATIONS COUNCIL MEMBERS' ETHICAL PERSPECTIVES REGARDING EDITORIAL CONTENT, ADVERTISING, NEW MEDIA, AND DIGITAL PHOTOS IN LIVESTOCK PUBLICATIONS

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Abstract:

The purpose of this study was to describe the ethical perspectives of LPC members' employees regarding selected issues in the livestock publications industry, including digital photo manipulation and use of new media. Additionally, the study sought to determine if a relationship exists between those ethical perspectives and the personal and professional characteristics of LPC members' employees. The study targeted employees of publication members of the LPC who had an email address on file with the association (N = 645). Descriptive research methodology was used to analyze the respondents' ethical perceptions regarding livestock publication content, advertising, digital photo manipulation, and new media.

The typical respondent was a 44-year-old female with a bachelor's degree in agricultural communications or journalism; who is employed by an organization that produces a print publication; and who is responsible for writing, editing and photography. While respondents generally agree the livestock publications industry and LPC have clear codes of ethics, nearly a quarter of respondents are not sure. More than half do feel strongly that ethical responsibility has an effect on the public perception of a publication's credibility. Respondents indicated the goal of livestock publications professionals should be to serve as communications representatives for the livestock industry and provide information to other members of the industry.

Respondents utilize new media, including Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and LinkedIn, more than once a day. They strongly believe new media should follow the same ethical standards as print publications. The topic of digital photo manipulation created dichotomous groups among respondents. While one quarter indicated recent technological developments have not made it more acceptable to alter photos within publications, nearly 20% of respondents somewhat agree it has become more acceptable. A narrow margin separated those who said advertising photos could be altered freely and those who strongly disagreed.

Based on the results of this study, the LPC and its member publications should revise their codes of ethics to include guidelines for digital photo manipulation and new media. Additional research should be conducted to further investigate the acceptability of digital photo manipulation techniques and to gain understanding of the opinions of livestock publication readers.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Livestock Publications Council (LPC) is an international nonprofit organization formed by members of the livestock publishing industry (Livestock Publications Council, 2012). According to the association's website, the mission of the group is to serve as a forum through which members can work together to improve the overall efficacy and value of the livestock publications industry (LPC, 2013). The by-laws of the LPC define several purposes for the group, including promoting cooperation among livestock publications, educating professionals in livestock publishing, preserving the traditions of the livestock industry, providing a forum for members to share ideas and information, and fostering relations among people in all segments of the livestock publications industry (LPC, 2013).

In a history of the association compiled by its members, the foundation of the LPC is described as an attempt to alleviate heated competition among peers in the livestock publications industry prior to the 1970s (Runnion, Runnion, & Day, 1988). The first LPC meeting was held in Texas in 1974 and was organized by six publication owners who desired to collaborate with other professionals in their field (Runnion et al., 1988). That first meeting established precedence for the future of the LPC by allowing free exchange of information and ideas among the 11 attendees (Runnion et al., 1988).

When the LPC was first created, eligible members were defined as "all agricultural livestock and horse publications on the North American continent published four times or more a year" (Runnion et al., 1988). Today, the membership requirements have been expanded to include international publications, as well (LPC, 2012). The LPC includes members who represent all species of the livestock industry and all segments of the livestock publications field (LPC, 2012). Many publication members serve as the official publication for a particular breed association (Boone, Meisenbach, & Tucker, 2000). These publication members select employees to serve as representatives of the publication at LPC meetings (D. Johnson, personal communication, February 12, 2013). Approximately 99 publication members and 93 service members comprised the 2012 membership of the association (LPC, 2012). Current members of the organization fill a wide array of roles in the livestock publishing industry, including photographers, graphic designers, writers, editors, publishers, and website administrators (D. Johnson, personal communication, February 12, 2013).

Since the founding of the group, membership numbers have grown and technology has advanced, resulting in many changes in industry practices (Runnion et al., 1988). Printing has progressed from the days of cold type and ink plates to in-house type-setting and then to the electronic desktop publishing found in publications in the 1980s and beyond (Runnion et al., 1988). Gone are the days of physically cutting and pasting clip art to create graphic designs (Telg & Irani, 2012). The development of digital photography, assorted computer software programs, and the Internet have impacted the roles of professionals in the livestock communications industry, and these professionals often integrate multiple communications methods to reach their audiences (Telg & Irani,

2012). As a result, the ethical issues posed to LPC members' employees also have evolved over time (D. Johnson, personal communication, February 12, 2013).

Specifically of interest to the LPC are the ethical dilemmas created by the use of image manipulation technology and the rapidly expanding popularity of new media as a news source (D. Johnson, personal communication, February 12, 2013). Photo manipulation software has become widely available and easy to use, thus increasing the frequency of publication of altered photos and blurring the lines between enhancement, distortion, and deception (Coleman, 2007; Gladney & Ehrlich, 1996, Cutrer, 2011). This has created a decline in the credibility of the media in the eyes of the public (Coleman, 2007).

Additionally, the rise of the Internet has introduced a new expectation of instant news access through cell phones, email, social networking (Stassen, 2010). This transition from traditional print media to the broad use of new media by journalists has encouraged discussions about the potential for ethical issues including privacy rights, accuracy, and objectivity (Eid & Ward, 2009).

As a result of these technological advances, guidelines and ethics codes have been created by publications, companies, and organizations to help employees and members make ethical decisions (Kremenak & Siegel, 2008). Many of these ethical codes are based upon the theory of corporate social responsibility (CSR), which is defined by Hopkins (2003) as "treating the stakeholders of the firm ethically or in a responsible manner." The original journalistic code of ethics, the Canons of Journalism, was written by the American Society of Newspaper Editors in 1922 and was derived from the social responsibility perspective that journalists primarily should be concerned with the welfare

of the public, their readers and "stakeholders" (Wilkins & Brennen, 2007). As publications providing news to their readers and gaining profit from audience subscriptions, livestock publications, like other companies, are interested in protecting their public image by encourage their employees to make ethical decisions (Brooks, 1989). Thus, these companies practice corporate social responsibility by creating codes of ethics to provide guidelines for employee behavior in certain situations (Brooks, 1989).

In the LPC's current code of ethics, the organization pledges to maintain, protect, and advance the publications that serve the livestock industry (LPC, 2012). The code reflects the organization's position on objectivity, editorial content, advertising, and professionalism (LPC, 2012). The LPC code of ethics has not been updated since 2003 and does not address current issues surrounding digital photo manipulation or the use of social media (D. Johnson, personal communication, February 12, 2013).

Because of the extensive variation of professional roles among LPC members' employees and the dramatic advances in technology during recent years, the current code of ethics may not represent accurately the perspectives of contemporary members (D. Johnson, personal communication, February 12, 2013). The goal of the association is to update its code of ethics to reflect the moral opinions of its members in relation to the LPC's current code of ethics and regarding ethical issues in the livestock publishing industry today (D. Johnson, personal communication, February 12, 2013).

Statement of the Problem

In the wake of technological developments, such as the wide availability of digital photo manipulation software and the extensive use of new media sites, no recent research

has been conducted to determine the perspectives of current LPC members' employees on related ethical issues in the field of livestock publications.

Within both its mission statement and code of ethics, the LPC expresses a desire to maintain its value and effectiveness to its readership (LPC, 2012). In an industry where ethical issues arise from both mass media and agricultural viewpoints, maintaining an ethical stance is important for publications (D. Johnson, personal communication, February 12, 2013). However, publications comprise numerous employees, each with his or her own perspective on current issues. Therefore, the LPC should study and understand the ethical perspectives of its members.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to describe the ethical perspectives of LPC members' employees regarding selected issues in the livestock publications industry, including digital photo manipulation and the use of new media. Additionally, the study sought to determine if a relationship exists between those ethical perspectives and the personal and professional characteristics of LPC members' employees.

Objectives

The objectives used to guide this study were to:

1. Describe the selected personal and professional characteristics of LPC members' employees including age, sex, education, current job and responsibilities, number of years in the livestock publications industry, and types of media platforms they use.
2. Describe the perspectives of LPC members' employees regarding selected ethical issues in the livestock publications industry, including digital photo manipulation, the use of new media, advertising, and editorial content.

3. Determine if relationships exist between selected characteristics and ethical perspectives.

Scope

The scope for this study consisted of the employees selected as representatives of LPC publication members ($N = 645$). These employees' email addresses were included in a database provided by the LPC to the researcher. As a result of frame error, 78 addresses were removed, leaving an accessible population of 567.

Significance

This study will allow leaders of the LPC to determine if the association's current code of ethics should be updated to reflect the perspectives of its membership regarding ethical issues involving editorial content, advertising, digital photos, and new media use. The study also may encourage publication members to create or revise their own codes of ethics that align with those of the association, which would improve consistency throughout the industry in terms of ethical standards.

Limitations

The following limitations were noted in this study:

1. The study cannot be generalized to other industry organizations.
2. The study cannot be generalized to the same audience in the future.
3. Only employees of LPC publication members with valid email addresses could be reached through this study's methodology, so the findings cannot be generalized to LPC members' employees who do not have an active email address.

Assumptions

The following assumptions were acknowledged in this study:

1. Email addresses provided by the LPC belonged to employees of publication members of the organization who are considered representatives of the LPC publication member.
2. The email addresses provided by the LPC were active addresses regularly checked by the individual.
3. Respondents were honest regarding their perspectives of ethical issues in the livestock publications industry.
4. The ethical perspectives of LPC members' employees could be measured with a questionnaire.

Definitions

The following definitions were used to guide this study:

Corporate social responsibility – treating the stakeholders of the firm ethically or in a responsible manner (Hopkins, 2003).

Ethics – a set of principles of right conduct governing an individual or a group (Bedford, 2013).

Livestock publication – a printed work that devotes at least 50% of its average content to the livestock industry and is published at least four times a year (LPC, 2012).

LPC publication member – publication that devotes 50% of its average contents to the livestock industry, publishes at least four issues a year, and pays annual dues to the LPC (LPC, 2012).

LPC service member – individuals and organizations that service the livestock industry, but do not meet publication membership requirements" (LPC, 2012).

New media – "a 21st Century catchall term used to define all that is related to the Internet and the interplay between technology, images and sound" (Socha & Eber-Schmid, 2012).

Stakeholder – Corporate social responsibility term describing any individual or groups who can affect, or is affected by, the achievement of a firm's objectives (Wan-Jan, 2006).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter is a review of appropriate literature, which provides a framework to the study. Topics include history and importance of livestock publications, common ethical issues for print publications, ethical litigation, codes of ethics, ethical implications of advances in technology such as digital photography and social media, and an overview of the conceptual framework based on corporate social responsibility theory.

Livestock Publications

A livestock publication is defined by the LPC as a printed publication that devotes at least 50% of its regular contents to the livestock industry (LPC, 2012). These publications are a dominant source of information, news and education for many members of the livestock industry (Sweeney & Hollifield, 2000). Like many other news and media platforms, agricultural publications, including those dedicated to livestock, have evolved as technology and audience expectations have changed and progressed over the years (Telg & Irani, 2012).

History of Livestock Publications

Print publications have been a fundamental piece of agriculture in the United States since the nation's infancy in the 1600s, when the first printing press was set up to

produce almanacs containing information on weather, moon phases, tides, and planting recommendations (Burnett & Tucker, 2001). *Agricultural Museum*, the first magazine devoted entirely to farming, was printed in 1810, and in 1819, *American Farmer* became the first farm magazine to attain national circulation (Burnett & Tucker, 2001). The *American Agriculturist* began publication in 1842 and is known as the oldest farm magazine to continue under the same name (Burnett & Tucker, 2001). The first livestock publication, *Drover's Journal*, was published for the first time in 1873.and is still being published today (Burnett & Tucker, 2001; Drover's Cattle Network, 2013).

In the 1850s, monthly journal publications grew in popularity, and that growth was triggered as technology progressed throughout the 19th century ((Boone et al., 2000). American innovation provided steam-driven, cylinder printing presses 10 times faster than the hand-powered, flatbed presses used in publishing previously (Boone et al., 2000). Paper also became cheaper in the 1860s, when a process was developed that allowed paper to be made from wood pulp rather than rags (Boone et al, 2000). The creation of the telegraph and the massive construction of railroad tracks across the United States also aided in the increase of agricultural publications (Boone et al., 2000). This growth in farm publications coincided with the westward expansion of agricultural lands as settlers moved to the plains of the Midwest (Telg & Irani, 2012).

The farm press expanded steadily in the years following these major technological advances that allowed printing costs to be reduced, which in turn kept magazine subscription prices low (Boone et al., 2000). The total number of farm magazines and newspapers in 1880 was 157 with a circulation of about 1 million. By 1920, the count had risen to 400 publications circulated to more than 17 million people (Boone et al., 2000).

Put another way, in 1880, only one in four farmers received a periodical, and in 1920, nearly all farmers received two or three (Boone et al., 2000). Even during the Great Depression, the agricultural publishing industry remained steady. Circulation numbers grew from 17 million in 1920 to 22 million in 1940 (Boone et al., 2000). In 1955, circulation for farm magazines totaled 29 million people at 4.8 million farms, an average of six per farm (Burnett & Tucker, 2001). Despite the poor economic situation, information was still valuable to farmers, and publishers worked to keep subscription prices low (Boone et al., 2000).

Change and evolution have continued for the agriculture industry as a whole, and the agricultural publishing sector is no exception. Perhaps one of the most important progressions has been with the developed of the Internet and its popularity as a source of information (Boone et al., 2000). By the 1990s, most farmers were using the Internet (Boone et al., 2000). In 2000, more than 7 million websites were available on the Internet and more than 50 percent of American homes had a computer with Internet access (Burnett & Tucker, 2001). Today, many agricultural media organizations have developed some type of website or online version of their publication, which has proven to be an effective way for publishers to reach their readers immediately with the most current news updates and to allow their readers an opportunity to voice their opinions (Boone et al., 2000; Telg & Irani, 2012).

According to a 2012 media channel study conducted by the American Business Media (ABM) AgriCouncil, 54% of farmers and ranchers use an agricultural-based website at least once a month. Additionally, the number of farmers and ranchers who used an agricultural website at least weekly, increased by 5% from 2010 to 2012 (ABM,

2012). The study found 52% of the respondents read or viewed some form of digital agricultural media at least once a week (ABM, 2012).

Importance in the Livestock Industry

While the ABM AgriCouncil study found digital media to be a significant part of the agricultural industry, the study also found that traditional media including magazines and newspaper continue to be the most important resource for most farmers and ranchers (ABM, 2012). The study's findings showed that 98% of farmers and ranchers read an agricultural publication at least once a month, and 82% read an agricultural magazine at least once a week (ABM, 2012). According to the study, agricultural magazines and newspapers are the top resource for the majority of farmers and ranchers for finding information about new products, validating purchasing decisions, and staying in touch with current events in the industry (ABM, 2012).

It seems agricultural publications, including livestock publications, have stayed true to the course described by Cholis in 1965: "The purpose of an 'ideal' livestock publication should be to educate, to inform, and to enlighten in a manner and style that develops and keeps habitual 'cover-to-cover' readers" (p. 172). Since Cholis described the ideal livestock publication nearly 50 years ago, the publications in the livestock industry have continued to serve as a source of information that helps their readers achieve success (Sweeney & Hollifield, 2000). Many members of livestock breed associations rely on the organization's official publication to keep up with current news, gain perspective on industry issues, and understand potential impacts on their businesses (Norton, 2009).

To achieve their purpose and provide readers with the information they desire, livestock publications offer a variety of editorial content, including how-to articles, reports on cutting-edge technologies, information about production and management techniques, ideas for improving profitability, and major news and events (Norton, 2009). Previous research has shown livestock publication audiences prefer articles focused on personal, local, and state interests (Sweeney & Hollifield, 2000). In terms of design, readers are most impacted by writing quality, photos and paper quality (Sweeney & Hollifield, 2000).

Data from previous research imply livestock publication readers heavily use their subscriptions. Norton's 2009 readership study of the American Angus Association's *Angus Journal* showed the majority of members read at least three-quarters of every issue they receive. Respondents of Norton's survey conveyed a tendency to save their issues for future reference and reluctance to allow the publications to leave their possession (2009). Additionally, nearly half of the respondents had been subscribing to a livestock publication for more than 10 years (Norton, 2009). These findings illustrate the importance of livestock publications to the breed organizations and members they serve (Norton, 2009).

Advances in Technology

Cass and Lauer (2004) said "advances in information technology create new communication media that extend or otherwise alter the functionality of existing media" (p. 252). New technologies require professionals to develop new ways of doing things, and this often results in changes in societal practices and expectations (Cass & Lauer, 2004).

Digital Photography

Since the invention of the camera, technologies for image production or reproduction have improved drastically and the technology for image enhancement has followed suit (Coleman, 2007). In 1873, the first halftone photograph was printed in a newspaper (Coleman, 2007). One hundred years later, Kodak released the first digital camera (Deutsch, 2008). Today, with the help of digital cameras and Photoshop, more and more people possess the ability to shoot and manipulate photos (Kremenak & Siegel, 2008). While the general philosophy of a photograph once was it could be used as evidence or proof an event occurred, today's computer-based technology threatens that idea because "none is fixed, all is flux" (Cass & Lauer, 2004, p. 258).

Image manipulation and regulations.

As technology continues to progress, the ease and frequency of digital image alteration also increases (Coleman, 2007). This trend correlates with the spread of knowledge among the public about image manipulation and a decline in the media's reputation of reliability (Coleman, 2007). Altered digital images can be found everywhere, from newspapers and magazines to television news and the Internet (Lasén & Gómez-Cruz, 2009). These images also have become more common in scientific research and in published journal articles (Cromey, 2010). Digital images are "integrated into a variety of business activities" (Oravec, 1999, p. 269), as well. According to Lasén & Gómez-Cruz (2009), photography has morphed from a means of preserving memories to an activity of everyday life.

This substantial increase in the use of digital photos and editing software has caused a rise in concern about the ethical issues associated with manipulating an image

(Coleman, 2007). The result is the development of guidelines and ethics codes for managing digital images by many publications, companies, and organizations (Kremenak & Siegel, 2008). Kremenak and Siegel (2008) noted these guidelines vary by discipline, but some rules are common, including archiving copies of original images, applying modifications to an entire image and not one segment, giving credit to contributors, and denoting altered images. Several other methods of image-alteration management have been implemented, including education programs on detecting image manipulation, symbols within the picture to indicate alterations, digital forensics software to detect any modifications, and mathematical techniques to differentiate between altered and unaltered photos (Coleman, 2007).

Professional opinions.

As regulations on image alteration become standard among the media and scholarly publications, the role perspective of the photographers, editors, television news directors, and other practitioners varies dramatically (Coleman, 2007). While Coleman (2007) found most editors value highly the reputation of reliability of their publications and pay close attention to any image modifications, some editors do not believe a special effort should have to be made to "weed out [modified] images" (Kremenak & Siegal, 2008, p. 79).

Gladney and Ehrlich (1996) as well as Tirohl (2000) found the ethical attitudes toward image alterations varied among different segments of the communications industry. For example, Tirohl (2000) noted newspaper staff members were much more careful about using modified images than those who were working for a tabloid publication. In their research, Gladney and Ehrlich (1996) compared the ethical codes of

newspaper editors to television news directors and found the television directors to be less strict about image processing.

Public perspective.

Huang (2001) conducted one of the first studies investigating the perspectives of readers and the general public about the publication of altered digital images. Respondents of the study proposed several guidelines and principles, including primarily avoiding the use of manipulated images, letting readers know an image has been altered, and strictly preventing modification of hard news images (Huang, 2001). Oravec (1999) presented several scenarios involving the ethics of image modification to her classes of business students, resulting in lively arguments between the students with strong reactions against any use of altered images by the media and those who saw it as less offensive.

Another polarizing public debate is the issue of requiring permission to take a photo of someone in a public place. This ethical battle is illustrated by the work of Lasén & Gómez-Cruz (2009), in which a woman was unknowingly photographed on a busy street and was infuriated when the photo was posted to a public photo-sharing website. Another passionate debate took place via the Web between people who assumed anyone in a public place must "expect to be photographed eventually" and those who felt a photographer always should ask permission to photograph people, even if they are in a public place (Lasén & Gómez-Cruz, 2009).

The body of literature surrounding the ethical issues of manipulating and publishing digital photos illustrates disconnect between the attitudes of practitioners and the desires of their readership (Gladney & Ehrlich, 1996). The spread of computer-based

technology allowing easy digital image alteration has caused the confidence of the general public in the media to dwindle (Gladney & Ehrlich, 1996). According to Gladney and Ehrlich (1996):

> [The] use of digital manipulation technology raises core ethical issues of truth, deception, and journalistic credibility – and the potential loss of public trust in visual journalism. Some pose as the central question: Where does image enhancement end and distortion begin, and where does distortion end and deception begin? (p. 1)

Social Media

Access to the World Wide Web has instilled in media audiences a need for instant news and constant connectedness (Stassen, 2010). People expect the latest news within minutes, and they get it on their phones, in their email inboxes, and through social networking sites (Stassen, 2010).

Expansion of social networking.

As few as 10 years ago, many magazines and newspapers only could be found in print and the Internet was barely on the radar (Palfreman, 2009). Today, studies conducted by the Pew Internet and American Life Project have found 74 percent of Americans use the Internet, the Internet has surpassed newspapers in popularity as a news platform, 33 percent of people read newspapers on their smartphone, and 37 percent say they use Facebook and Twitter to share news content (Purcell & Rainie, 2010; Rainie, 2010). Palfreman (2009) illustrated the rapid expansion of Internet usage:

> Along the way we interact with numerous dot-com enterprises: from Web mail services like Gmail, Hotmail or Yahoo!, to data storage services like Box.net,

> IDrive, iDisk and Mozy. We upload pictures to Flickr, SmugMug and Photobucket, edit videos with Avid, Final Cut Pro and JayCut, upload our creations to YouTube and Vimeo, buy and sell items on Craigslist and eBay, exchange multimedia messages through MySpace and Facebook, talk to each other on Twitter, compose documents with Google Docs, crunch spreadsheets with Zoho, aggregate news with Bloglines and Google Reader, and even manage projects in Basecamp. Most of these companies didn't exist in 1999. Google, founded in 1998, has become one of the most powerful and influential corporations on the globe. (p. 1)

The hasty evolution of online news has provided "little time for long-established human institutions like journalism to adapt" (Palfreman, 2009, p. 1). Journalists are learning to navigate and utilize successfully the new culture within social media that is based on the spirit of sharing, responding to others' opinions, and appealing to specific interests (Skoler, 2009).

Impacts on journalism.

Many news organizations make use of social media tools in a variety of ways. Online versions of print publications, audio and video news stories on publication websites, dissemination of news via social networking profiles, and gathering story leads from information shared by audiences are all functions of social media for journalists (Spence & Quinn, 2009; Stassen, 2010).

Social media sites also serve as a strong marketing tool for many organizations by driving traffic to the publication's website and building a community of readers (Stassen, 2010). Hong (2012) found a positive correlation between news organizations' use of

Twitter and subsequent traffic to the organizations' websites. Larger online networks, including multiple social media profiles and more connections to audience members, also correlated to more traffic pushed to the publications' websites (Hong, 2012). Ludtke (2009) reiterated the importance of the Internet and social media to journalists by saying for news organizations to stay ahead in their field, they have to embrace new technology and adapt their products in ways that add value to what they do.

Potentially one of the most profitable uses of social media in journalism is story gathering. Overholser (2009) said journalists, as professional communicators, have to take part in the conversations taking place via social media sites to understand the public interest. Skoler (2009) agreed "sometimes breaking news shows up" (p. 39) on social networking sites. Picard (2009) noted the interaction between readers and journalists through social media provides benefits to the news by providing opportunities for feedback and relationship-building.

Stassen (2010) conducted a qualitative study in 2009 that gathered the opinions of news editors regarding social media and its impact on journalism. Respondents of the survey indicated social networking provides many advantages, including building a brand for the organization, gaining real-time feedback from readers, disseminating news faster, and allowing the audience to be more involved in the news process (Stassen, 2010).

Social media, news, and ethics.

The transformation of traditional media into new media throughout recent years has prompted discussions about the ethical implications of this new approach for journalists (Eid & Ward, 2009; Spence & Quinn, 2009). Common social media issues for news organizations include control of information, volume and speed of communication,

and privacy rights (Eid & Ward, 2009). Eid and Ward (2009) said ethics and social responsibility are critical for journalists to use new media successfully and "should go hand-in-hand with the freedom of new media and social networking use" (p. 2).

Maintaining credibility is a major concern for news organizations participating in the competition to "get the story first" within the real-time speeds of today's news publishing (Spence & Quinn, 2009). The typical safeguards of traditional media, such as copy editing and fact checking, often are bypassed for the sake of timeliness and completeness, and accuracy of the story may suffer (Spence & Quinn, 2009).

Also affecting the credibility of online news sources is the fact nearly anyone with Internet access can easily publish a Web page and present themselves as a journalist (Spence & Quinn, 2009). This provides an opportunity for news to be disseminated widely by individuals who have not been trained in the ethical ideals of fairness, accuracy, balance, and completeness expected of professional journalists (Spence & Quinn, 2009).

Ethics in Communications

Life for all journalists, including livestock publications professionals, has become chaotic and competitive as technology continues to evolve (Huddleston, 1998). Cass and Lauer (2004) agreed technological advances create new forms of media that expand upon and change the way existing media functions.

Common Ethical Issues in Journalism

Among the common ethical issues raised in journalism throughout the history of print media have been the concepts of objectivity, conflicts of interest, privacy rights, and advertising pressure on editorial content. A 1991 study by Anderson and Leigh asked

newspaper editors and broadcast media professionals what they believed were the top ethical issues of the decade. The seven issues identified were "(1) fairness and objectivity; (2) reporter misrepresentation; (3) privacy rights vs. public's right to know; (4) conflicts of interest; (5) anonymous sources; (6) freebies; and (7) balancing compassion for subjects with newspaper policy" (p. 114).

Those same dilemmas still exist as well as a whole new realm of concerns brought about by digital photography, the Internet, and demands from the audience for immediate news (Huddleston, 1998). Journalists face many opportunities to cut corners and manipulate the truth (Huddleston, 1998). Likely because of the readily available "easy road," public opinion of the media as a whole has declined (Huddleston, 1998). In 2011, the public's negative opinion about the performance of the news media hit an all-time high in nine of 12 core measures studied by the Pew Research Center since 1985 (Kohut, 2011). According to the Pew report, 66% of people say they believe news stories are often inaccurate, 77% said the media tends to favor one side, and 80% said the news media are influenced by powerful people and organizations (Kohut, 2011).

Ethics and Livestock Publications

In light of the declining public opinion, maintaining a credible image to the public has become a goal for mainstream media, and livestock publications are no exception (Cutrer, 2011). Even in 1965, ethical obligations were top of mind for professionals in the livestock publishing field. Cholis (1965) wrote a description of the "ideal" livestock publication, and his ideas covered a broad spectrum of ethical concepts.

"Believability," as coined by Cholis in 1965, is one of the most important characteristics a livestock publication can be known for. Cholis (1965) said to attain

maximum believability, a publication must have a sense of responsibility, courage, integrity, goals, and a purpose. He also describes the necessity of journalists to dig for true and complete facts; stand up to advertisers who try to dictate editorial content; and "have zeal, the courage, and the determination to embrace and promote sound ideas and programs that will improve the lot of its readers engaged in the production and marketing of livestock for profit" (p. 172).

Many of those readers involved in livestock production turn to a portion of the livestock publications industry that deals in the marketing and sale of livestock for help maximizing their profits (Cutrer, 2011). This financially driven relationship between producers and communications professionals creates a number of ethical dilemmas (Cutrer, 2011). As the availability of photo editing software increases, digital photos in livestock sale advertisements often are scrutinized for signs of retouching to improve the appearance of an animal offered for sale (Cutrer, 2011). The dilemma of "how far is too far" in terms of what is ethical editing and what is not forces modern livestock merchandisers to adopt a set of ethical standards on image alteration (Cutrer, 2011).

That personal moral code also extends into other areas of livestock merchandising, including endorsements, accuracy in reporting accomplishments, copyrights and trademarks, and advertising themes directed at youth (Cutrer, 2011). "When in doubt, it is best to err on the side of caution, especially to avoid any case for legal concerns" (Cutrer, 2011, p. 159).

Litigation for Ethical Breaches

As breaches of ethics become more common, it also has become more common to see cases regarding ethics and journalism being decided in the court system rather than in

the newsroom, where they may have been handled previously (Alexander, 1996). The number of these ethics court cases has become immense, but Alexander (1996) highlighted a few that set precedence for other cases to follow. Cohen v. Cowles Media Co. was a 1991 case in which the U.S. Supreme Court allowed interviewees to sue journalists for breaking promises of confidentiality. Also in 1991, in Masson vs. New Yorker Magazine, Inc., it was ruled altering quotations could be considered libel. Finally, Braun v. Soldier of Fortune Magazine was a 1992 case that decided the media could be held liable for any consequences of advertisements that "create a danger of harm to the public, such as death or serious bodily injury" (Alexander, 1996, p. 49).

Aside from litigation, journalists committing breaches of ethics also can find themselves dealing with a variety of other consequences. In 1981, Washington Post reporter Janet Cooke was stripped of her Pulitzer Prize when it was discovered she had fabricated her prize-winning story (Eason, 1986, Huddleston, 1998). In April 2012, the Kansas Supreme Court was forced to declare a mistrial in a murder prosecution because a local newspaper reporter posted a photo on Twitter that included a view of one of the jury members (Bunn, 2012). Adnan Hajj, a Reuters photographer covering the war in Lebanon in 2006 was fired, and all 920 of his photos were removed from the news agency's database after it was discovered he had manipulated and published two photos ("Altered images," 2006). While all ethical breaches may not be as dramatic as these examples, journalists do face ethical decisions on a daily basis. It makes sense for news organizations to provide theories of right and wrong to help their reporters make sound decisions (Huddleston, 1998).

Codes of Ethics

Media professionals and organizations are aware of the ethical problems that exist in their field, and they often analyze the issues in attempts to prevent them from recurring (Huddleston, 1998). One way to accomplish this is to develop a code of ethics (Huddleston, 1998). "Codes of ethics serve as a crucial accountability tool already widely accepted by the journalism professions, with every major professional organization having adopted and revised its own versions, some nearly a century ago" (Whitehouse, 2010, p. 313).

History.

The first formal codes of ethics have been traced to the beginning of the 20th century (Herrscher, 2002). During that time, professional groups developed ethics codes to help justify and maintain social status (Himelboim & Limor, 2011). The first journalistic codes on record are the seven "Canons of Journalism" adopted by the American Society of Newspaper Editors in 1922 in an effort to pacify public dissatisfaction with daily newspapers in the wake of World War I (Wilkins & Brennen, 2007). The Canons outlined ethical practices regarding responsibility, freedom of the press, independence, sincerity, truthfulness, accuracy, impartiality, fair play, and decency. The code also warns that newspapers with "vicious interests" will suffer disapproval from their audiences while newspapers focusing on accurate and unbiased news will be considered more professional (Wilkins & Brennen, 2007, p. 300).

The American Newspaper Guild (ANG) is another group founded in the 1930s that developed an early code of ethics that has influenced many professional standards (Wilkins & Brennen, 2007). The goal of the ANG was to improve the ethical and

professional values of print journalism. This code insisted that journalists produce factual and unbiased news reports. It also encourages news workers to resist outside influences, including politics, economics, religion, and racial prejudices (Wilkins & Brennen, 2007).

Content and values.

Nearly 100 years later, codes of ethics in journalism are accepted widely as a means of articulating the ideas of news organizations and professionals (Himelboim & Limor, 2011). Ethics codes are primarily seen as a working list of dos and don'ts for the professional journalist challenged with ethical decisions (Himelboim & Limor, 2011). Aside from providing a road map of moral decisions and journalistic ethics, these codes also consider broad ethical concepts within the realm of media and real-life conditions under which news practitioners work on a daily basis (Herrscher, 2002). The content of codes varies from universal moral values to basic journalistic etiquette (Himelboim & Limor, 2011). The codes also are useful tools for organizations to outline journalistic roles. Himelboim & Limor (2011) noted:

> Beyond specific rules, one key purpose of many codes is to prescribe or proscribe the values that influence journalists' and media organizations' behavior as well as to set the context in which the more specific ethical rules are to be interpreted. In this respect, codes of ethics are valuable for understanding journalistic roles at the organizational level and provide a means of comparing role perceptions across societies and media and journalistic organizations. (p. 76)

Within the realm of communications, several professional organizations provide their codes of ethics online. The Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) has an established code of ethics that "is designed to anticipate and accommodate, by precedent,

ethical challenges that may arise" (PRSA, 2013, p. 1). Within the body of the organization's code, members can find guidelines for numerous situations ranging from honesty in reporting and conflicts of interest to ethical hiring practices and privacy rights (PRSA, 2013). PRSA members are required to sign the Member Code of Ethics Pledge which acknowledges the possibility of membership revocation should an individual not adhere to the organization's ethical code (PRSA, 2013).

The Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ) maintains a code of ethics that is predominantly similar to that of PRSA (SPJ, 2013). The SPJ code states journalist "should be honest, fair and courageous" (p. 1) when reporting information, and they should treat sources, subjects, and colleagues with respect (SPJ, 2013). Additionally, the SPJ requests its members be "free of obligation to any interest other than the public's right to know" (p. 1), and encourages them to be accountable to their audience (SPJ, 2013). The SPJ code also includes specific guidelines regarding manipulating digital photos saying journalists should "never distort the content of news photos or video" (SPJ, 2013, p. 1). The code goes on to say image enhancement for clarity is acceptable and all photo illustrations or montages should be labeled (SPJ, 2013).

In terms of agricultural news associations, the American Agricultural Editor's Association (AAEA) also created a code of ethics for active members of the association by adapting the ethics code of the American Business Media group (AAEA, 2013). The code, which was last revised in 2008, begins by saying "it is the duty of agricultural editors to serve our readers in the truest tradition of the free press" (AAEA, 2013, p. 1). Like the PRSA and LPC ethical standards, the AAEA code discusses maintaining accuracy of reporting, avoiding conflicts of interest, and respecting privacy rights

(AAEA, 2013). The AAEA code is also specific about the necessary separation of editorial, opinion, and advertising content (AAEA, 2013). In 2004, the association added a section to its ethical code regarding practices of electronic media, specifically websites, which focuses primarily on the distinction between editorial and advertiser content, respecting user privacy, and maintaining credibility of the publication (AAEA, 2013).

Need for a code.

Like the LPC, the AAEA funded research to gain a better understanding of the ethical views of its membership and to determine what purpose the code was serving for members (Evans, Simon & Roberts, 2009). In 2009, the AAEA presented findings from three surveys conducted in 1988, 1998, and 2008 (Evans et al., 2009). During the time period between these surveys, the AAEA adopted a new code of ethics that includes a method for enforcement and created an ethics task force that frequently communicates ethics information to the membership (Evans et al., 2009). While the association did find many ethical concerns that existed among members in 1988 still remained in 2008, the research also showed some progress regarding the ethical actions of AAEA members (Evans et al., 2009). A 10% drop was seen from 1998 and 2008 in the percent of journalists who said they had advertising funds withdrawn by advertisers displeased with editorial content (Evans et al., 2009). The research also showed a significant increase in the number of publications that had created ethical policies within the company (Evans et al., 2009).

Another organization, the National Agri-Marketing Association (NAMA), conducted a similar study in 2011, and a number of items from that instrument were modified for the LPC research (Price, 2011). The NAMA study found the organization's

members only somewhat agreed the agricultural communications industry has a clear code of ethics and standards of performance (Price, 2011). NAMA members stated objectivity, honesty, and social responsibility were all important traits of professionals in their industry (Price, 2011). Recommendations following the study were for additional research in similar organizations and the development of ethics codes to promote unity and consistency across the public relations industry (Price, 2011).

As illustrated in these studies conducted within professional organizations, perhaps the most important purpose of a code of ethics within a communications organization is to serve as an aide in guiding the practice of members, preventing unethical actions, increasing communication about ethics, and aiding in decision-making during moral dilemmas (Grobman, 2007; Lohman, 2007; Roberts, 2012). Ethics codes can serve a public relations function by allowing the public to review the standards by which the media judges itself, and the codes can be used by newcomers to the field as a means of orienting themselves to the behavior expectations of the organization and the industry as a whole (Roberts, 2012). Implementing a code of ethics is an opportunity for organizations to educate members why preserving ethical integrity is important (Simon, 2006). Even in instances in which organizations realistically have no power to enforce the code, having articulated standards can provide a sense of self-regulation and moral persuasion (Roberts, 2012).

Thousands of practitioners participate in professional associations with an established code of ethics (Roberts, 2012). The sheer number of professionals involved with these organizations can prompt the development and upgrading of a code of ethics, as illustrated by Grobman (2007):

> Today's professional association is likely to be much more diverse and its members not as likely to share a common moral philosophy. Thus, the code is a strategy that serves the purpose of laying out the common values to which the group aspires. (p. 247)

Media associations continuously create and update codes to reflect contemporary standards and to address the challenges of new technology (Roberts, 2012). Including members in the creation and updating of organizational codes of ethics can provide significant benefits, including allowing members to "gain a different perspective, learn appropriate behavior, take responsibility for personal actions, firmly understand the codes, and feel a stronger connection with the organization" (Lytle, 2010, p. 29).

While taking the step of implementing ethics codes is important, Seglin (as cited in Simon, 2006) said it is critical to the success of the system to internalize the standards throughout the organization and into management of individual publications. To achieve this, Geisler (2011) suggests holding staff workshops, developing specific guidelines for sensitive situations, sharing case studies, and otherwise embedding ethics in every aspect of the workplace including hiring interviews, staff meetings, and personnel evaluations.

Journalism Ethics Education

In addition to on-the-job ethical training, many journalists and communications professionals also have a background in ethics from their education (Hanson, 2009). Between 1984 and 1993, the number of collegiate journalism programs offering media ethics courses increased by 56% (Plaisance, 2007). At that time, programs that required journalism graduates to take a course in ethics were exception were exceptions to the norm (Plaisance, 2007). However, by 2002, Lambeth, Christians, Fleming, and Seow

(2004), as well as Hanson (2009), suggested that nearly all journalism schools were offering stand-along ethics courses, and approximately 40% required the course for graduation. Lambeth et al. (2004) also found that 83% of university programs included ethics units in their other skills classes, i.e. writing and reporting. These findings illustrate that media ethics "has gained an essential place in the curriculum for journalism and mass communications" (Lambeth et al., 2004, p. 251). The Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC), which is the organization formally recognized for accrediting journalism and mass communication programs, requires all graduates to "demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity" (ACEJMC, 2013, Section 2). According to university websites, ethics-based courses can also be found in the agricultural journalism and communications curricula at multiple institutes including Texas A&M University, Kansas State University, the University of Missouri, and Oklahoma State University.

The primary goals of journalism ethics education have not changed significantly since the 1980s when the Hastings Center listed five essential instructional goals including: (a) recognizing ethical issues, (b) developing analytical skills, (c) stimulating the moral imagination, (d) eliciting moral obligation, and (e) tolerating and resisting disagreement and ambiguity (Goree, 2009; Lambeth et al., 2004) Lambeth et al. (2004) found in their study that fostering moral reasoning skills and preparing students for the workplace were the primary objectives of journalism educators. These findings illustrate an attempt to balance the philosophical and theoretical bases for media ethics with the current demands of industry practice (Hanson, 2009). Richards (2003) said journalism

ethics coursework helps students become aware of their own ethical values and determine how they might affect decisions made in a professional environment. Black (2002) stated journalism ethics educators are "hoping to light a few candles to take some edge off the darkness" (p. 30) by teaching students to "recognize moral issues, develop analytical skills, tolerate and resist disagreement and ambiguity, stimulate the moral imagination, and elicit a sense of moral obligation and personal responsibility" (p. 5).

While some variation exists between programs and curricula, promoting critical thinking skills and moral development tends to be the main priority, which in turn allows students to be capable of working through ethical dilemmas on their own (Goree, 2009; Plaisance, 2007). Students in these ethics courses are introduced to multiple theories and issues involved in journalism (Hanson, 2009). Media ethics courses often are devoted to teaching students the process of how to make ethical decisions rather than concentrating on what the "right" answer is (Plaisance, 2007). Classical ethical theory is also a common pillar in these courses, often focusing on utilitarianism, Judeo-Christian ethics, and Kantian ethics (Goree, 2009). Specific issues discussed may include privacy rights, hidden cameras, and advertiser pressure (Hanson, 2009). Ethics teachers encourage students to work on their moral reasoning based in philosophical concepts, and help students learn to identify potential ethical issues (Plaisance, 2007).

Variation also can be seen in the teaching methods utilized in journalism ethics education. Some professors approach ethics at the micro-level, which is focused on specific ethical situations and the circumstances surrounding the dilemma (Hanson, 2009). Other professors prefer to use a macro-level approach and look at the broader philosophical questions associated with the issue at hand (Hanson, 2009). Case studies

and classroom simulations have been cited in previous literature as effective methods for teaching media ethics (Amend, Kay & Reilly, 2012; Hanson, 2009; Lambeth et al, 2004). Nearly all (98.2%) of media ethics institutions who participated in the study conducted by Lambeth et al (2004) reported using case studies in their ethics courses. This method places students in realistic situations and requires them to take on the role of a media professional (Hanson, 2009). They must decide how to resolve an ethical issue by understanding the moral concerns, identifying stakeholders in the situation, weighing ethical principles, and considering the consequences of all possible decisions (Hanson, 2009; Lambeth et al., 2004). Research has shown case studies and simulations make course material more relevant and stimulating for students and allow them the opportunity to react to inevitable issues while the instructor is present to observe and coach (Amend et al, 2012).

Research has been conducted to determine the efficacy of journalism ethics education courses. Studies found after taking a media ethics course, students were more open-minded, independent, and interested in the welfare of others (Plaisance, 2007). After taking an ethical course as part of a study conducted by Plaisance (2007), students were very similar in their value and ethical opinions to professional journalists, ranking four of the top ten ethical values exactly the same. Plaisance (2007) said this commonality suggests “a carefully designed media ethics course can affect students' value systems and ideological outlooks” (p. 391).

Conceptual Framework: Corporate Social Responsibility

Corporate social responsibility has been interpreted broadly since the phrase was coined in the 1950s to describe actions taken by corporations in response to heavy public

scrutiny for antisocial practices (Gulyas, 2011). In 1998, Frederick (as cited in Maak, 2008) described the early years of CSR as a progression from "doing the right thing" in the 1960s and 1970s, to marked changes in corporate behavior and compliance in the 1990s. At the same time, other researchers and professionals viewed the concept of CSR as comprising philanthropic activities, while still others felt CSR meant fulfilling a stewardship role (Gulyas, 2011). In 1976, Votaw (as cited in Gulyas, 2011), illustrated the broad range of definitions for CSR:

> The term is a brilliant one; it means something, but not always the same thing, to everybody. To some it conveys the idea of legal responsibility or liability; to others, it means socially responsible behavior in an ethical sense; to still others, the meaning transmitted is that of 'responsible for', in a causal mode; many simply equate it with a charitable contribution; some take it to mean socially conscious; many of those who embrace it most fervently see it as a mere synonym for 'legitimacy', in the context of 'belonging' or being proper or valid; a few see it as a sort of fiduciary duty imposing higher standards of behavior on businessmen than on citizens at large. (p. 61)

More recently, much research has been conducted to define CSR, but the meaning of the phrase remains subjective, often based on context. Within the context of marketing, Vaaland, Heide and Gronhaugh (2008) defined CSR as the "management of stakeholder concern for responsible and irresponsible acts related to environmental, ethical and social phenomena in a way that creates corporate benefit" (p. 931). Another business-related study deemed CSR to be both the expectations society has of organizations and "a bundle of ideals and actions utilized by companies to facilitate advantageous relationships with

stakeholders, improve societal welfare, and augment competitive advantage" (Valentine & Fleischman, 2008b, p. 657). Maak (2008) said CSR is simply an "umbrella term to describe much of what is done in terms of ethics-related activities in firms around the globe" (p. 353). Lindergreen, Swaen and Maon (2009) had a similar perspective saying CSR encompasses a variety of activities an organization can pick from, including voluntary programs, partnerships, and marketing initiatives.

For the purpose of conceptually framing this study, the researcher chose to follow the definition of CSR as written by Hopkins (2003), stating CSR means treating the stakeholders of a firm ethically or in a responsible manner. This definition suggests CSR consists of both ethical and business practices, and that businesses, or in this case, publications, should take an ethical stance that serves their stakeholders best as well as enhances profitability (Wan-Jan, 2006).

Importance of CSR to Companies

CSR provides a solid basis for this study in several ways. First, CSR serves as motivation for companies or publications to increase the ethical guidance for their employees (Brooks, 1989). As public confidence in corporations decreases, companies are interested in making sure their images are protected by well-behaved employees who make decisions based upon company standards (Brooks, 1989). Companies incorporate the social responsibility model of answering the requirements of stakeholders by following the "natural extension of organizational ethics" (Valentine & Fleischman, 2008a).

Many businesses and organizations establish codes of ethics and develop training programs with the intention of improving employees' execution of work from an ethical

standpoint (Valentine & Fleischman, 2008a). These ethical codes often dictate how employees should act in certain situations (Brooks, 1989). Valentine and Fleischman (2008) found a linkage between the perceived CSR of a corporation and their organizational ethics policies, which suggests that invigorating the ethical focus of the company with codes, training, and other CSR activities will encourage a positive reputation with the public. Studies also have shown customers desire to support ethical companies and punish unethical ones (Vaaland et al., 2008).

Additionally, ethics-related CSR activities by companies can catalyze individual ethics of employees to align with the company vision (Valentine & Fleischman, 2008). According to previous literature, professionals "must first perceive ethics and social responsibility to be important before their behaviors are likely to become more ethical and reflect greater social responsibility" (Singhapakdi, Vitell, Rallapalli, & Kraft, 1996, p. 1132). Valentine and Fleischman's (2008) study found that individual beliefs regarding professional ethics and CSR are positively associated with ideologies originating from professional associations and that corporate involvement in CSR activity has a positive effect on ethical attitudes of employees. The researchers also found that CSR activities, including codes of ethics and ethics training, had a positive association with employee job satisfaction (Valentine & Fleischman, 2008). Vaaland et al. (2008) agreed organizational ethics were important because while ethical sensitivity is learned, it is absorbed "less from formal ethical training and professional socialization, and more significantly from the individual's organizational socialization" (p. 942).

CSR and News Publications

Specifically related to journalism and publications, CSR has been a cornerstone for ethical codes since the Canons of Journalism were written in the 1920s (Wilkins & Brennen, 2007). The Canons were derived from a social responsibility perspective that journalists primarily should be concerned about the welfare of the public, their readers and stakeholders (Wilkins & Brennen, 2007). Topics covered in the Canons included truthfulness, accuracy, objectivity, privacy, and independence, which are all issues in modern journalism (Wilkins & Brennen, 2007). Media companies today are considered prominent businesses and are "perceived to have significant impacts on their audiences' lives, influencing how they spend their time, how they work, what they consume, and how they communicate" (Gulyas, 2011, p. 57). Media organizations serve a societal function and thus have a social responsibility to be the major providers of information to the public (Ingenhoff & Koelling, 2012). To fulfill that responsibility, they must maintain the journalistic and editorial standards that have been in place since the Canons (Ingenhoff & Koelling, 2012).

As such, news organizations increasingly are aware of their reputations with the public and have increased their CSR activities, including organizational ethics and media governance both internally and externally (Gulyas, 2011; Ingenhoff & Koelling, 2012). Externally, CSR activities may include market forces, lobby groups, and statutory regulations (Ingenhoff & Koelling, 2012). Internally, companies tend to focus on professional and ethics codes as well as management and self-regulation (Ingenhoff & Koelling, 2012). These control mechanisms help media organizations assume journalistic

responsibility and build their reputations as trustworthy sources of information (Ingenhoff & Koelling, 2012).

While research has been conducted regarding news media organizations and CSR activities, only a small portion of that literature pertains to agricultural publications. Price's (2011) study of NAMA members perceptions of CSR found the organization's membership agreed developing programs that are good for society is good for business, an organization that is socially responsible is more credible, and CSR stems from a firm conviction that it is important for organizations to always act in the public interest, not just when it is convenient. NAMA members also said socially responsible public relations professionals present several sides of an issue and provide an objective appraisal of conflicting opinions in their reports (Price, 2011). The present study adapted items from Price's instrument to determine similar perceptions regarding ethics and social responsibility among LPC members' employees.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, the researcher has explained the methods used to conduct this study, including research design, instrumentation, validity and reliability, population, sampling, data collection, and data analysis as well as the approval by the Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board.

Institutional Review Board

Oklahoma State University policy and federal regulations require approval of all research related to human subjects before the researchers can begin investigation. The Oklahoma State University Office of University Research Services and the Institutional Review Board (IRB) review research methods to protect the welfare of human subjects involved in biomedical and behavioral research. This study was reviewed by the OSU IRB and received approval on June 21, 2012. The application number assigned to this study was AG-12-25 (see Appendix A).

Research Design

The study was conducted as a nonexperimental descriptive survey to gather data to describe the personal and professional characteristics of LPC members' employees as well as their ethical perspectives regarding selected issues in livestock publications.

Instrumentation

This study used a researcher-designed electronic survey that was developed and implemented using www.Qualtrics.com (see Appendix B). The items in the questionnaire were collected and modified from related studies on digital photo manipulation, organizational ethics, and corporate social responsibility (Coleman, 2007; Huang, 2001; Price, 2011). Questions also were developed based on the LPC code of ethics (LPC, 2012) to determine if the code accurately represents opinions of current members. A total of 64 items was included in the instrument. The items addressed the characteristics and perspectives of the respondents. Two anchored rating scales were used for all ethical perspective questions, and demographics were measured with multiple-choice and multiple-answer items.

Items in the instrument were grouped into four major topic areas, including (a) statements from the LPC code of ethics, (b) items regarding digital photo manipulation, (c) items regarding the use of social media, and (d) items regarding personal and professional characteristics.

The first section of items consisted of 19 statements based on the current LPC code of ethics and regarding professionalism in the field of livestock publications. Respondents were asked to rate each statement on a seven-point agreement scale that was anchored as (a) *strongly disagree*, (b) *disagree*, (c) *somewhat disagree*, (d) *neither agree nor disagree*, (e) *somewhat agree*, (f) *agree*, and (g) *strongly agree*.

The second section consisted of four items investigating the use of social media by livestock publications professionals. These questions were rated on the same seven-

point agreement scale as the first section. Items asked about ethical standards for social media use, advertising and social media, and objectivity in social media postings.

The third section of seven-point agreement scale questions was comprised of nine sentences regarding digital image manipulation. These items discussed the necessity of including digital imaging in codes of ethics, the effects of image manipulation on credibility, and the differences in standards for altering advertising and editorial photos.

Following the agreement scale section on photo manipulation were two sections of nine items each asking about the acceptability of various photo manipulation techniques. One section considered alterations of editorial photos, and the second section addressed manipulation of advertisement photos. Techniques such as dodging, burning, cropping, adding/removing objects and people, and blending photos were ranked on a five-point scale. The scale was anchored as (a) *unacceptable*, (b) *somewhat unacceptable*, (c) *neutral*, (d) *somewhat acceptable*, and (e) *acceptable*.

Three items regarding the use of social media by livestock publications professionals assessed the types of media used and the frequency of social media activity. One item was a choose-all-that-apply question regarding the types of media platforms in which the respondents' publications participate. Available choices were (a) *print publication*, (b) *website*, (c) *radio*, (d) *television*, (e) *social media*, and (d) *other (with a fillable blank).*

The second choose-all-that-apply question regarding social media asked in which social media applications the respondents' publications participate. Choices were (a) *Facebook*, (b) *Twitter*, (c) *LinkedIn*, (d) *Flickr*, (e) *Digg.com*, (f) *Stumble Upon*, (g*)*

Blogging (WordPress, Blogger, etc.), (h) *YouTube*, (i) *Squidoo*, and (j) *Other (with a fillable blank).*

A third item on social media asked respondents how often their publication uses a social media site. This was a multiple-choice question with choices of (a*) more than once a day*, (b) *once a day*, (c) *once a week*, (d) *two to three times per month*, (e) *once a month*, and (f) *less than once a month*.

The 11 demographics questions included both professional and personal characteristics. Professional items asked about (a) the type of company respondents work for, (b) the number of employees at the company, (c) respondents' roles within the company, and (d) number of years respondents had worked in the livestock publication industry. Personal items included (a) age, (b) sex, (c) level of education completed, and (d) major(s) pursued. The item regarding major was asked up to four times based on the response to the multiple-choice question asking about the highest level of education they had completed (i.e., associate's, bachelor's, master's, and doctoral/professional).

The final item on the instrument was an open-ended question asking respondents to discuss any other thoughts they had regarding ethics in the livestock publications industry.

Validity and Reliability

Reliability is the consistency and stability of the scores for an instrument (Creswell, 2008). Validity refers to the strength of a researcher's conclusion, and is described as how accurately the research instrument measures the content that is intended to be measured by the study. Creswell (2008) explained the difference between the two:

"These two terms sometimes overlap and at other times are mutually exclusive.

Validity can be thought of as the larger, more encompassing term when you assess the choice of an instrument. Reliability is generally easier to understand as it is a measure of consistency" (Creswell, 2008, p. 169).

A panel of experts assessed the face and content validity of the instrument. The panel consisted of three Oklahoma State University agricultural communications professors and two executive members of the LPC. One professor specialized in ethical studies, another in theory, and the third was an executive member of the LPC organization.

To measure reliability, a pilot study was conducted with 44 members of the Association for Communication Excellence in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Life and Human Sciences (ACE). Reliability was calculated on the scaled items using Cronbach's alpha, as this statistic gauges the reliability of a survey by testing internal consistency or average correlation of the questionnaire's items (Santos, 1999). The Cronbach's alpha coefficients should be no lower than .70 to be acceptable (Santos, 1999).

Nineteen items regarding the LPC code of ethics and general professionalism yielded a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .72. Four items containing statements regarding the use of social media yielded a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .77. The section items regarding digital photo manipulation yielded a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .77. Two of the items regarding digital photo manipulation were reverse coded because the statements were written in a way that encouraged respondents to strongly disagree, while the rest of the items anticipated strong agreement. Additionally, in order to report the data accurately, one question was dropped from the analysis of the digital photo manipulation

section because it was worded too closely to another item. Finally, the 18 items regarding photo manipulation techniques of editorial and advertising photos yielded a Cronbach's alpha of .87.

Population

This census study targeted all publication members of the LPC via multiple employees at each publication who have reported an email address ($N = 645$). Membership with LPC is primarily based on publication businesses and not individual members (D. Johnson, personal communication, February 27, 2012.). Therefore, the population for this study consisted of representative employees of LPC publication members who had a valid email address on file with the LPC as of May 2012. These individuals had a variety of professional experiences, including management, editing, writing, graphic design, photography, sales, and Web design (D. Johnson, personal communication, February 27, 2012). Email addresses were obtained from the LPC membership committee in June 2012.

While using the LPC membership database as a frame allowed the study to be targeted at the entire membership, limitations also resulted from the list. The membership database lacked some accuracy due to people retiring, changing jobs, pursuing short-term internships, or having inaccurate email addresses in the database. Thus, all LPC publication members had an equal opportunity to participate in the study, but not all LPC members' employees had the same equal opportunity to be included.

The membership list was revised by removing retired members and those who were no longer employed by an LPC member business. An initial email was sent to the remaining members and email addresses were tested for accuracy. All addresses that

were returned as undeliverable were removed from the list. As a result of frame error, 78 participants were removed from the sample, leaving an accessible sample size of 567 participants (n = 567). The total number of respondents who answered at least one question for this study was 196 (34.6%).

To ensure results of the study were representative of the target population including non-respondents, the researchers compared early and late respondents as suggested by Miller and Smith (1983). Miller and Smith (1983) found that late respondents are often similar to non-respondents, and Ary, Jacobs, and Razavieh (2002) stated respondents can be compared by sorting them into two distinct groups. Based on a model utilized by Robinson (2006), the first 25% (n = 49) were classified as early respondents and the last 25% (n = 49) were deemed late respondents.

Early respondents were compared to late respondents on known demographic data including age, sex, number of years worked in the livestock industry, and number of years in current position (see Table 1). No significant differences were found between the two groups. Since no differences occurred, the study was considered generalizable to all LPC members' employees who have an email address.

Table 1

Comparison of Early and Late Respondents on Known Demographic Data (n = 98)

	Early Respondents		Late Respondents		
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*p*
Sex	1.61	.49	1.44	.50	.39
Age	28.5	11.1	28.7	11.6	.44
Years worked in the livestock publishing industry	18.8	11.3	14.8	11.2	.71
Years worked in current position	10.9	7.2	9.6	8.1	.93

Data Collection

Following recommendations by Dillman, Smyth, and Christian (2009), participants remaining on the list were contacted multiple times with invitations to participate in the study. A link to the Qualtrics questionnaire (see Appendix B) was sent to participants via email. The introductory email (see Appendix C) was sent by the researcher on June 21, 2012. This initial email included the purpose of the study, the types of questions within the questionnaire, the approximate amount of time required to complete the survey, information regarding anonymity and consent, and contact information for the researchers.

One week later, on June 28, 2012, a follow-up email (see Appendix D) was sent. This message included the same link to the Qualtrics survey and a brief reminder. This same reminder message was sent on July 6, 2012, and July 13, 2012. The survey was closed on July 20, 2012, one week after the final reminder was sent.

An incentive to complete the survey was offered by the LPC. Respondents who wished to provide their email address at the end of the survey were entered into a drawing for two $50 VISA gift cards. Once an email address was collected from the questionnaire, the address was removed from the contact list for follow-up emails.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using SPSS/PSAW Statistics 18.0 for Macintosh™. Scaled ordinal data from items addressing ethical perspectives were analyzed using frequencies and percentages. Questions regarding the respondents' ages, number of employees at the respondents' companies, and number of years the respondents had worked in their current positions yielded interval date and were analyzed using means, modes, and standard deviations.

Responses to the open-ended question at the end of the instrument were analyzed by the researcher. The responses were compared for similar content and then divided into groups based on common themes emerged within the content of the answers. These groups included (a) the ethical spectrum of digital photo manipulation techniques, (b) the responsibilities of livestock publications professionals regarding editorial and advertising content, (c) reasons why the livestock publications field does or does not need a code of ethics, and (d) the ethical requirements of livestock publications using new media.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Chapter IV exhibits and describes the findings of this research study. The results will be discussed by order of the objectives of the study.

Findings Related to Objective One

Objective one sought to describe selected personal and professional characteristics of LPC members' employees, including age, sex, education, current job and responsibilities, number of years in the livestock publications industry, and types of media platforms they use.

Personal Characteristics

Of the members who responded to the question regarding sex, 45% (f = 73) were male and 55% (f = 91) were female. The mean age of respondents was 44.18 (SD = 12.65). The youngest respondent was 21, and two members were the eldest at 72.

Regarding their education, respondents were asked to report the highest level of education they had completed. Combined, less than 10% (f = 9) of respondents reported earning a only high school diploma or associate's degree (see Table 4). The majority of respondents (70.5%, f = 117) earned a bachelor's degree. Of the respondents who pursued degrees beyond a bachelor's, 20.5% (f = 34) earned master's degrees and 3.6% (f = 6) received a doctoral degree. No respondents reported post-doctoral education.

Respondents also were asked to report the major and minor degree programs they pursued during their education. Of those who reported earning an associate's degree (n = 5), two (40%) earned their degrees in business, one (20%) earned a degree in agriculture, one (20%) in sociology, and one (20%) in education.

Respondents who earned a bachelor's degree (n = 117) completed degree programs in agricultural communications (f = 30, 25.6%), agricultural journalism (f = 29, 24.7%), animal science (f = 27, 23.1%), and journalism (f = 18, 15.4%) (see Table 2). Other reported majors each accounted for less than 8% of respondents.

Table 2

Bachelor's Degrees Pursued by LPC Members' Employees (n =117)

Major	f	%
Agricultural Communications	30	25.6
Agricultural Journalism	29	24.7
Animal Science	27	23.1
Journalism	18	15.4
Communications	9	7.7
English	8	6.8
Agricultural Business	6	5.1
Agricultural Economics	5	4.3
Business	5	4.3
Political Science	5	4.3
Agricultural Education	4	3.4
Advertising	3	2.6
Agriculture	3	2.6
Education	2	1.7

Table 2 *(continued)*

Major	*f*	%
Marketing	2	1.7
Plant Sciences	2	1.7
Public Relations	2	1.7
Agricultural Leadership	1	0.8
Art	1	0.8
Computer Science	1	0.8
European Studies	1	0.8
Graphic Design	1	0.8
History	1	0.8
Music	1	0.8

Note. Some respondents pursued double majors, which are listed separately.

Of respondents who pursued a bachelor's degree with a minor (n = 95), 27 (28.4%) reported obtaining a minor degree in animal science (see Table 3). Respondents listed 21 other minor programs, each of which accounted for less than 8% of the group.

Table 3

Minor Degrees Pursued by LPC Members' Employees (n = 95)

Minor	*f*	%
Animal Science	27	28.4
Business	7	7.4
Political Science	7	7.4
Agricultural Economics	6	6.3
Communications	6	6.3
English	4	4.2
History	4	4.2

Table 3 *(continued)*

Minor	*f*	%
Journalism	4	4.2
Plant Sciences	4	4.2
Agricultural Communications	3	3.2
Education	3	3.2
Marketing	3	3.2
Philosophy	3	3.2
Agricultural Business	2	2.1
Agricultural Journalism	2	2.1
Art	2	2.1
Chemistry	2	2.1
International Studies	2	2.1
Math	2	2.1
Photography	2	2.1
Psychology	2	2.1
Sociology	2	2.1
Theater	2	2.1
Accounting	1	1.1
Entomology	1	1.1

Note. Some respondents pursued multiple minors, which are listed separately.

Thirty-nine respondents (n = 39) reported earning a master's degree. Six (15.4%) respondents earned a master's in animal science. Agricultural communications, agricultural education, and mass communications were each listed by five respondents (12.8%). Journalism and sociology were each named by four members (10.3%). Other disciplines were only listed by one or two respondents (see Table 4).

Table 4

Master's Degrees Pursued by LPC Members' Employees (*n* = 39)

Major	*f*	%
Animal Science	6	15.4
Agricultural Communications	5	12.8
Agricultural Education	5	12.8
Mass Communications	5	12.8
Journalism	4	10.3
Sociology	4	10.3
Agricultural Leadership	2	5.1
Business	2	5.1
Agricultural Business	1	2.6
Agricultural Journalism	1	2.6
Computer Science	1	2.6
Education	1	2.6
English	1	2.6
Liberal Studies	1	2.6

No respondents reported earning a professional or post-doctoral degree. Six (3.6%) reported they had earned a doctorate. Of those who pursued a doctoral degree, four (66.7%) earned that degree in agricultural education. One (16.7%) respondent earned a doctorate in agricultural leadership, and another (16.7%) earned a doctorate in animal science.

Professional Characteristics

When asked about the type of organization for which they work, 50.6% of respondents (*f* = 84) reported being employed by a magazine or other print publication

and 24.1% (f = 40) work in marketing and advertising (see Table 5). Thirty-nine respondents (23.5%) selected the Other option, and the most common answer was trade association (see Table E1 for all Other responses).

Table 5

Types of Organizations Employing LPC Members (n = 166)

Organization	f	%
Magazines or other print publication	84	50.6
Marketing and advertising	40	24.1
Other	39	23.5
Breed Organization	24	14.5
Public Relations	24	14.5
Graphic Design	17	10.2

Note. Respondents were asked to choose all that apply.

The median number of employees working at these organizations was 15. The minimum number of employees was 1 and the maximum staff size was 1,400.

Respondents were asked to report how many years they had worked in the livestock publications industry and how many years they had been in their current positions. The mean number of years in the industry was 17.13 (SD = 11.89). The maximum number of years in industry was 45. The mean number of years in the current job was 9.8 (SD = 7.33). The maximum number of years in their current position was 29.

Respondents reported their responsibilities in a "choose all that apply"-style question. One-hundred-twenty (72.7%) respondents indicated their responsibilities include writing, 116 (70.3%) listed editing, and 98 (59.4%) marked photography (see Table 6). Of the 40 respondents (24.2%) who marked Other, the most common write-in

Table 6

Professional Responsibilities of LPC Members' Employees (*n* = 165)

Responsibility	*f*	%
Writing	120	72.7
Editing	116	70.3
Photography	98	59.4
Graphic Design	53	32.1
Advertisement Sales	48	29.1
Other	40	24.2
Web Design	34	20.6

Note. Respondents were asked to choose all that apply.

was management. Additionally, respondents listed social media, marketing, publishing, and education in the Other category (see Table E2 for all Other responses).

Of the 164 respondents who answered the question regarding media platforms utilized by LPC members, 153 (93.3%) reported using print publications, 148 (90.2%) have a website, and 137 (83.5%) use new media (see Table 7). Platforms listed by the 22 respondents (13.4%) who marked Other included e-newsletters, videos, and online publications (see Table E3 for all Other responses).

Table 7

Media Platforms Utilized by LPC Members (*n* = 164)

Platform	*f*	%
Print Publication	153	93.3
Website	148	90.2
New Media	137	83.5

Table 7 *(continued)*

Platform	*f*	%
Radio	54	32.9
Television	51	31.1
Other	22	13.4

Note. Respondents were asked to choose all that apply.

As the LPC was interested in understanding the use of new media by its members, respondents were asked to elaborate on the new media they use at work. Regarding types of new media, 154 of 155 respondents (99.3%) reported using Facebook, 116 (74.8%) use Twitter, and 108 (69.7%) use YouTube (see Table 8). The most common responses in the Other category were Pinterest and Constant Contact (see Table E4 for all Other responses).

Table 8

Types of New Media Utilized by LPC Members (*n* = 155)

New Media	*f*	%
Facebook	154	99.3
Twitter	116	74.8
YouTube	108	69.7
LinkedIn	72	46.5
Blogging	67	43.2
Flickr	38	24.5
Other	14	9.0
StumbleUpon	4	2.6
Digg.com	3	1.9
Squidoo	1	0.6

Note. Respondents were asked to choose all that apply.

When asked how frequently they use new media, 42% (*f* = 68) of respondents said they use new media more than once a day, 19.1% (*f* = 31) use new media more than once a week, and 15.4% (*f* = 25) use new media once a day (see Table 9).

Table 9

Frequency of New Media Use by LPC Members (*n* = 162)

Frequency	*f*	%
More than once a day	68	42.0
More than once a week	31	19.1
Once a day	25	15.4
Once a week	19	11.7
More than once a month	7	4.3
Less than once a month	7	4.3
Once a month	5	3.1

Findings Related to Objective Two

Objective two sought to describe the perspectives of LPC members' employees regarding selected ethical issues in the livestock publications industry, including digital photo manipulation, the use of new media, advertising, and editorial content.

When asked to rate their level of agreement with a variety of statements regarding the status of the livestock publishing industry, 58.2% (*f* = 110) of respondents said they at least somewhat agreed objectivity is the job of the news media, 54.5% (*f* = 103) at least somewhat agreed the livestock publications industry has clear standards of performance, and 68.4% (*f* = 126) at least somewhat agreed the LPC has a clear code of ethics (see Table 10).

Table 10

Perspectives of LPC Members' Employees on the Livestock Publications Industry

Statement	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Somewhat Disagree		Neither Agree nor Disagree		Somewhat Agree		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	f	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%
Presenting all sides of an issue and remaining objective is the job of the news media, not specific breed or species publications. (*n*=189)	18	9.5	32	16.9	22	11.6	7	3.7	28	14.8	**42**	**22.2**	40	21.2
The livestock publications industry has clear standards of performance. (*n*=189)	6	3.2	16	8.5	22	11.6	42	22.2	32	16.9	**55**	**29.1**	16	8.5
The Livestock Publications Council has a clear code of ethics. (*n*=189)	5	2.7	10	5.3	10	5.3	38	20.1	34	19.8	**73**	**38.6**	19	10.0

Note. Bolded items represent the modal response.

Eight items asked respondents to rate their level of agreement with statements pertaining to the ethical responsibilities of livestock publications (see Table 11). Respondents agreed ethically responsible publications are more credible with the public (*f* = 161, 87.1%), livestock publications professionals should act ethically regardless of influence on profit (*f* = 170, 91.4%), and that all personal opinions printed in publications should be labeled as such (*f* = 160, 86%).

Respondents also were asked to rate their level agreement with eight statements describing the ethical decisions of livestock publications professionals. Of the 177 respondents who answered the question regarding accuracy of content, 175 (98.9%) agreed professionals should work to ensure accuracy and promptly correct any errors (see Table 12). Respondents also agreed livestock publications professionals should accurately represent the circulation of the publication to advertisers (*f* = 167, 94.3%) and should work to ensure organizational secrecy is not used to hide misconduct (*f* = 164, 93.7%).

The use of new media was the topic of four items with which respondents rated their level of agreement. Respondents (*f* = 149, 85.6%) agreed that new media content should follow the same ethical standards as printed material. Eighty-three (48%) strongly agreed that new media content should maintain the same level of objectivity as editorial content in publications. Of the 174 who answered the question, 84.5% (*f* = 147) at least somewhat agreed that livestock publications should have a written code of ethics for the use of new media (see Table 13).

Table 11

Perspectives of LPC Members' Employees on Ethical Responsibilities of Livestock Publications

Statement	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Somewhat Disagree		Neither Agree nor Disagree		Somewhat Agree		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	f	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%
An ethically responsible livestock publication is more credible with the public than one that is not. (*n*=185)	1	0.5	5	2.7	1	0.5	6	3.2	11	6.0	68	36.8	**93**	**50.3**
Management of a livestock publication should act ethically responsible regardless of how those actions affect profit. (*n*=186)	1	0.5	2	1.1	0	0.0	1	0.5	12	6.5	64	34.4	**106**	**57.0**
Any personal opinions reported in a livestock publication should be labeled as such to avoid connection with the publication as a whole. (*n*=186)	1	0.5	3	1.6	2	1.1	6	3.2	14	7.5	62	33.3	**98**	**52.7**
Livestock publications should avoid publishing editorial content based on the wishes or benefits of advertisers. (*n*=185)	1	0.5	5	2.7	13	7.0	15	8.1	39	21.0	**59**	**31.7**	54	29.0
A responsible livestock publication should present several sides of an issue and provide objective reporting when disseminating information. (*n*=184)	1	0.5	1	0.5	3	1.6	8	4.3	30	16.2	**81**	**43.8**	61	33.0

Note. Bolded items represent the modal response.

Table 11 *(continued)*

Perspectives of LPC Members' Employees on Ethical Responsibilities of Livestock Publications

Statement	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Somewhat Disagree		Neither Agree nor Disagree		Somewhat Agree		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	f	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%
Livestock publications should consider the potential impacts on privacy and rights of all persons before publishing material. (*n*=189)	1	0.5	2	1.1	1	0.5	6	3.3	15	8.2	70	38.0	**89**	**48.4**
Livestock publications should not publish any details that serve no useful purpose or may harm individuals. (*n*=185)	2	1.1	7	3.8	3	1.6	12	6.5	13	7.0	62	33.5	**86**	**46.5**
If harmful material is reported, a livestock publication should seek and publish responses from those individuals involved. (*n*=184)	1	0.5	5	2.7	0	0.0	14	7.6	19	10.3	**73**	**39.7**	72	39.1

Note. Bolded items represent the modal response.

Table 12

Perspectives of LPC Members' Employees about the Ethical Decisions of Livestock Publications Professionals

Statement	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Somewhat Disagree		Neither Agree nor Disagree		Somewhat Agree		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	f	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%
The main goal of livestock publications professionals is to serve as communications representatives for the livestock industry and provide information to members of the industry. (*n*=177)	2	1.1	1	0.6	3	1.7	4	2.3	21	11.9	**83**	**46.9**	63	35.6
Livestock publications professionals should work to ensure the accuracy of content and promptly correct errors when called to attention. (*n*=177)	1	0.6	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.6	0	0.0	35	19.8	**140**	**79.1**
The credibility of a livestock publication can be damaged if professionals accept gifts or favors that could potentially be viewed by readers as compromising the responsibilities of the publication. (*n*=176)	2	1.1	2	1.1	6	3.4	15	8.5	24	13.6	**67**	**38.1**	60	34.1
Livestock publications professionals should accurately represent the circulation of the publication to advertisers, agents or representatives. (*n*=177)	1	0.6	1	0.6	1	0.6	1	0.6	6	3.4	56	31.6	**111**	**62.7**

Note. Bolded items represent the modal response.

Table 12 *(continued)*

Perspectives of LPC Members' Employees about the Ethical Decisions of Livestock Publications Professionals

Statement	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Somewhat Disagree		Neither Agree nor Disagree		Somewhat Agree		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	f	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%
Livestock publications professionals should work to ensure organizational secrecy is not used to hide organizational misconduct. (*n*=175)	2	1.1	1	0.6	1	0.6	4	2.3	3	1.7	58	33.1	**106**	**60.6**
Livestock publications professionals should act as the consciences of their publications. (*n*=176)	3	1.7	0	0.0	1	0.6	8	4.6	14	8.0	**77**	**43.8**	73	41.5
Livestock publications professionals should avoid putting organizational obedience ahead of personal conscience. (*n*=177)	1	0.6	2	1.1	3	1.7	26	14.7	20	11.3	**78**	**44.1**	47	26.6
Individuals can have separate ethical standards in their private and business affairs. (*n*=177)	20	11.3	34	19.2	18	10.2	10	5.7	30	17.0	**44**	**24.9**	21	11.9

Note. Bolded items represent the modal response.

Table 13

LPC Members'Employees' Perspectives Regarding New Media Use in the Livestock Publications Industry

Statement	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Somewhat Disagree		Neither Agree nor Disagree		Somewhat Agree		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	f	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%
Any content posted using new media should follow the same ethical standards as material printed in a livestock publication. (*n*=174)	1	0.6	1	0.6	3	1.7	1	0.6	19	10.9	63	36.2	**86**	**49.4**
Any content posted using new media that has been sponsored by an advertiser should be labeled as such. (*n*=174)	1	0.6	0	0.0	1	0.6	1	0.6	9	5.2	73	42.0	**89**	**51.2**
Livestock publications professionals should maintain the same level of objectivity for new media content as for editorial content in the publication. (*n*=173)	1	0.6	1	0.6	3	1.7	3	1.7	13	7.5	69	39.9	**83**	**48.0**
A livestock publication should have a written code of ethics to aid in making decisions related to new media content. (*n*=174)	1	0.6	4	2.3	1	0.6	21	12.1	27	15.5	**61**	**35.1**	59	33.9

Note. Bolded items represent the modal response.

Digital photography was another topic of interest for the LPC. When asked if developments in digital imaging technology made it more acceptable to alter photos for publications, 47.6% (*f* =80) respondents at least somewhat disagreed, while 39.9% (*f* = 67) at least somewhat agreed. Eighty-seven (51.8%) respondents strongly agreed that altering photos in any way that could change the meaning of the image was unacceptable. Ninety-six (57.6%) respondents at least somewhat disagreed with the item that stated advertising photos could be altered freely, and 56 (33.6%) at least somewhat agreed. Respondents generally agreed (*f* = 135, 81.3%) the livestock publications industry should have set standards for manipulating digital images, and 137 (82.6%) at least somewhat agreed livestock publications should have written codes of ethics for altering images (see Table 14).

Finally, respondents were asked to rate the acceptability of nine photo manipulation techniques for both editorial and advertisement photos. In terms of editorial photos, 139 respondents (85.3%) said color enhancement was acceptable, 80 (49.4%) said adding objects or people was unacceptable, and 110 (68.3%) said removing blemishes such as scratches and dirt was acceptable. Fifty-four (33.4%) of respondents also said blending multiple photos was unacceptable (see Table 15).

Regarding advertising photos, the most frequent response for all nine manipulations was acceptable. Removing blemishes was considered acceptable by 131 respondents (82.9%), and 74 (47.2%) said adding objects or people was acceptable. Eighty (50.7%) respondents said blending multiple photos was acceptable, and 135 (86%) said color enhancement was acceptable (see Table 16).

Table 14

LPC Members' Employees' Level of Agreement with Manipulation of Digital Photos in Livestock Publications

Statement	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Somewhat Disagree		Neither Agree nor Disagree		Somewhat Agree		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	f	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%
The recent developments in digital imaging technology make it more acceptable to alter photos for publication. (*n*=168)	27	16.1	**38**	**22.6**	15	8.9	21	12.5	33	19.6	24	14.3	10	6.0
Any photo that has been altered should be identified as a photo illustration. (*n*=168)	1	0.6	16	9.5	18	10.7	34	20.2	33	19.6	**35**	**20.9**	31	18.5
Altering photos in any way that may change the meaning of the image is unacceptable. (*n*=168)	2	1.2	3	1.8	6	3.6	12	7.1	18	10.7	40	23.8	**87**	**51.8**
Images to be used in advertisements may be altered freely. (*n*=167)	**34**	**20.4**	30	18.0	32	19.2	15	9.0	30	18.0	23	13.8	3	1.8
The livestock publications industry should have set standards for manipulation of digital images. (*n*=166)	1	0.6	4	2.4	3	1.8	23	13.9	25	15.1	**61**	**36.7**	49	29.5

Note. Bolded items represent the modal response.

Table 14 *(continued)*

LPC Members' Employees' Level of Agreement with Manipulation of Digital Photos in Livestock Publications

Statement	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Somewhat Disagree		Neither Agree nor Disagree		Somewhat Agree		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	f	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%
Digital manipulation has caused a shift in the credibility of livestock publications as perceived by readers. (*n*=168)	0	0.0	2	1.2	5	3.0	22	13.3	23	13.7	**33**	**19.6**	18	10.7
A livestock publication should have a written code of ethics to be referred to when making decisions about altering images. (*n*=166)	2	1.2	8	4.8	4	2.4	20	11.9	21	12.7	**70**	**42.2**	46	27.7
A responsible livestock publications professional follows personal ethics for digital manipulation.. (*n*=168)	2	1.2	8	4.8	4	2.4	20	11.9	23	13.7	**68**	**40.5**	43	25.6

Note. Bolded items represent the modal response.

Table 15

Perspectives of LPC Members' Employees on the Acceptability of Certain Manipulation Techniques on Editorial Photos for Livestock Publications

Statement	Very Unacceptable		Unacceptable		Somewhat Unacceptable		Neither Acceptable nor Unacceptable		Somewhat Acceptable		Acceptable		Very Acceptable	
	f	%	*F*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%
Dodging (*n*=161)	2	1.2	7	4.4	4	2.5	46	28.6	18	11.2	**57**	**35.4**	27	16.8
Burning (*n*=160)	2	1.3	7	4.4	4	2.5	44	27.5	20	12.5	**57**	**35.6**	26	16.3
Color enhancement (brightness, contrast, saturation, color balance) (*n*=163)	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.6	5	3.1	18	11.0	**87**	**53.4**	52	31.9
Removing blemishes (e.g., scratches, dirt) (*n*=161)	0	0.0	2	1.2	6	3.7	7	4.4	36	22.4	**67**	**41.6**	43	26.7
Adding object or people to a photo (*n*=162)	**35**	**21.6**	45	27.8	20	12.4	19	11.7	24	14.8	13	8.0	6	3.7
Removing objects or people from a photo (*n*=164)	23	14.0	27	16.5	16	9.8	22	13.4	**44**	**26.8**	24	14.6	8	4.9
Blending multiple photos (*n*=162)	20	12.4	**34**	**21.0**	18	11.1	28	17.3	22	13.6	32	19.8	8	4.9
Extensive cropping (*n*=162)	7	4.3	1	0.6	10	6.2	23	14.2	37	22.8	**61**	**37.7**	23	14.2
Horizontally or vertically flipping (*n*=163)	7	4.3	11	6.8	12	7.4	20	12.3	21	12.9	**63**	**38.7**	29	17.8

Note. Bolded items represent the modal response.

Table 16

Perspectives of LPC Members' Employees on the Acceptability of Certain Manipulation Techniques on Advertising Photos for Livestock Publications

Statement	Very Unacceptable		Unacceptable		Somewhat Unacceptable		Neither Acceptable nor Unacceptable		Somewhat Acceptable		Acceptable		Very Acceptable	
	f	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%
Dodging (*n*=156)	2	1.3	4	2.6	4	2.6	30	19.2	17	10.9	**61**	**39.1**	38	24.4
Burning (*n*=156)	2	1.3	5	3.2	2	1.3	31	19.9	17	10.9	**61**	**39.1**	38	24.4
Color enhancement (brightness, contrast, saturation, color balance) (*n*=157)	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	1.3	4	2.6	16	10.2	**76**	**48.4**	59	37.6
Removing blemishes (e.g., scratches, dirt) (*n*=158)	0	0.0	0	0.0	4	2.5	3	1.9	20	12.7	**78**	**49.4**	53	33.5
Adding object or people to a photo (*n*=157)	10	6.4	16	10.2	12	7.6	16	10.2	29	18.5	**45**	**28.7**	29	18.5
Removing objects or people from a photo (*n*=158)	6	3.8	8	5.1	9	5.7	16	10.1	35	22.2	**55**	**34.8**	29	18.4
Blending multiple photos (*n*=158)	7	4.4	12	7.6	15	9.5	15	9.5	29	18.4	**50**	**31.7**	30	19.0
Extensive cropping (*n*=158)	4	2.5	1	0.6	2	1.3	11	7.0	24	15.2	**76**	**48.1**	40	25.3
Horizontally or vertically flipping (*n*=157)	3	1.9	4	2..6	7	4.5	8	5.1	20	12.7	**76**	**48.4**	39	24.8

Note. Bolded items represent the modal response.

Findings Related to Objective Three

Objective three sought to describe the relationship among selected personal and professional characteristics and ethical perspectives. Known demographic data including age, sex, number of years worked in the livestock publishing industry, and number of years working in current position were compared to the summated scale scores from all ethical perspective questions.

A one-way ANOVA was used to compare the effect of respondents' sex on their summated scale scores (see Table 17). The analysis indicated the sex of a respondent had a statistically significant effect on his or her ethical perspectives, $F(1, 120) = 4.09$, $p = .05$.

Table 17

ANOVA Comparison of LPC Members' Employees' Summated Scale Scores and Gender

	SS	*df*	*MS*	*F*	*p*	*η*
Between Groups	1345.14	1	1345.14	4.09	.045	.033
Within Groups	39505.38	120	329.21			
Total	40850.53	121				

Note. $p < 0.05$

Regarding age, a Pearson's *r* correlation coefficient was calculated to compare respondents' age to their ethical perspectives (see Table 18). No statistically significant relationship was found between a respondent's age and ethical perspectives, $r(119) = -.14$, $p = .14$.

No significant relationship was found between the number of years a respondent had worked in the livestock publishing industry and his or her ethical perspectives, $r(122) = -.09$, $p = .29$, (see Table 18). A statistically significant relationship, $r(120) = -.04$,

p = .66, was indicated between the number of years a respondent had been in his or her current job and his or her ethical perspective (see Table 18).

Table 18

Pearson Correlation (r) between LPC Members' Employees' Summated Scale Scores and Selected Demographic Data

	Age	Years worked in the livestock publications industry	Years worked in current position
Scale Score	-.136	-.097	-.041

Open-ended Question Responses

The researcher provided a space at the end of the instrument to allow respondents to discuss any additional thoughts they had regarding ethics in the livestock publications industry. Forty-eight LPC members' employees responded to the question.

Major Findings

The four major findings of the open-ended question were:

1. Respondents were mixed regarding their ethical perceptions of digital photo manipulation, often citing the subjective nature of the topic.
2. Respondents agreed that livestock publications should strive to provide clear and accurate editorial content that is not dictated by advertisers.
3. Respondents had very mixed perceptions of the effectiveness and necessity of a code of ethics in the livestock publications field.
4. Respondents had positive feelings about developing a written code of ethics for the use of new media within livestock publications.

Data Analysis

Four main themes emerged in the context of LPC members' employees' perspectives of ethics in the livestock publications industry. The themes were (1) the ethical spectrum of digital photo manipulation techniques, (2) the responsibilities of livestock publication professionals regarding editorial and advertising content, (3) reasons why the livestock publications field does or does not need a code of ethics, (4) and the ethical requirements of livestock publications professionals using new media. Appendix E presents a thematic matrix of all responses submitted for the open-ended question.

Ethical spectrum of digital photo manipulation.

Respondents expressed a variety of opinions regarding the ethical acceptability of altering digital images for use in print publications. One respondent said advertising photos have "more leniency as far a photo manipulation and balance, in accordance with reader expectations." However, another respondent stated, "If you put a sale animal in an ad and you say 'this animal is for sale,' then that photo should have no alterations other than blemishes and color correct, and it should depict the animal as it is."

This concept of "how much is too much" in terms of editing photos was common among respondents. Fourteen (29%) of the 48 respondents who answered the question said it is acceptable to remove blemishes (i.e., mud, scratches, sun glare) or distracting background components (i.e., fence posts, power lines, lead ropes), but it is unethical to alter the physical confirmation of a photographed animal. One respondent stated, "Removing background clutter, removing manure from the animal – even removing people, sometimes – is acceptable. But, if the animal's appearance is changed

(lengthening or deepening of body, straightening topline, etc.), and it is no longer a true representation of the animal, I believe that is no longer ok."

Responsibilities of professionals regarding editorial and advertising.

Accuracy, honesty, clarity, and objectivity were all common terms used when LPC members' employees described their ethical responsibilities in terms of editorial content. Six respondents mentioned livestock publications professionals should present truthful and impartial information. One respondent said "Livestock publications have a responsibility to encourage an open dialogue and free exchange of ideas."

Separating advertising and editorial content was also a dominant topic within this theme. Several respondents expressed very strong feelings that advertisers should not be allowed to dictate the editorial content of a publication. One member said, "In all cases, readers are best served when the advertising and editorial departments are kept as separate as possible, and editors are given the guidelines and support to deliver truthful, ethical copy and imagery." Other respondents said the reality is that advertisers do often have input on the information in livestock publications. One respondent remembers it happening at his publication and said, "As an old freelance writer, I can recall a couple of times when stories of mine got killed because of concerns that it would offend an advertiser."

Why livestock publications do or do not need a code of ethics.

LPC members' employees' responses regarding the need for a code of ethics in the livestock publications industry ranged from "Ethics need to be re-emphasized" to "This is so subjective and there are so many variables that I don't see how you can create

standards." Eight respondents said it is necessary for livestock publications professionals to have a personal moral code as well as adhering to industry standards.

Advocacy also was mentioned by several LPC members' employees. Four respondents discussed the need for livestock publications professionals to promote the livestock and agriculture industries. These responses also suggested that many readers of livestock publications expect a certain level of advocacy or bias for the trade. One respondent said readers "don't expect to see articles balanced by commentary from HSUS or PETA – and delivering that angle and positive spin is part of the service livestock publications provide."

Ethical requirements of professionals using new media.

Four of the respondents who answered the open-ended question discussed new media and the ethical dilemmas encountered by those who use the technology. All respondents who mentioned new media generally agreed it is important for the livestock publications industry to set and follow ethical guidelines similar to those in print publications. One respondent said, "Our content whether it be editorial, advertising or social media is only as reliable and trustworthy as the standards by which we manage our businesses or publications."

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter includes the researcher's conclusions from the study, as well as implications, recommendations for practice, recommendations for future research, and a related discussion section.

Conclusions and Implications Related to Objective One

Objective one sought to describe the selected personal and professional characteristics of LPC members' employees including age, sex, education, current job and responsibilities, number of years in the livestock publications industry, and types of media platforms they use.

The typical respondent was a 44-year-old female with a bachelor's degree in agricultural communications or journalism. This finding supports Price's (2011) conclusion that more females than males are enrolled at universities in general and in agricultural communications programs. A survey conducted by the International Federation of Agricultural Journalists in 2005 also found the average agricultural communicator is likely to be a woman in her mid-40s (IFAJ, 2005). This conclusion is reinforced further by data presented by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2012) that show from 2000 to 2010, male undergraduate enrollment increased

from 5.8 million to 7.8 million while female undergraduate enrollment rose from 7.4 million to 10.2 million. Females accounted for 57% of undergraduate students in the United States in 2010 (NCES, 2012).

Additionally, the typical respondent is employed by an organization that produces a print publication, maintains a website, and utilizes new media; her responsibilities include editing, writing, and photography. She has worked in the livestock publications industry for approximately 17 years and has been in her current position for nearly nine years. This is representative of the LPC membership, more than 50% of which is comprised of publication members (LPC, 2012). Price (2011) also found National Agri-Marketing Association members, another group of agricultural communicators, tended to have more than 15 years of experience in their industry and fewer years in their current position.

Conclusions and Implications Related to Objective Two

Objective two sought to describe the perspectives of LPC members' employees regarding selected ethical issues in the livestock publications industry, including digital photo manipulation, the use of new media, advertising, and editorial content.

While respondents generally agree the livestock publications industry and the LPC have a clear code of ethics and standards of performance, nearly a quarter of respondents are unsure of either. They strongly agree that ethical responsibility has an effect on the public perception of a publication's credibility. The similar study conducted by Price (2011) with NAMA members also found those professionals were unsure about the existence of clear ethical standards in their industry. American Agricultural Editors' Association members responding to the study conducted by Evans et al. (2009) shared

significant ethical concerns about their profession. Agricultural communications professionals may desire more consistent guidelines throughout the industry including publications, public relations, broadcast news, etc.

Separating opinions from editorial content, accurately and objectively reporting topics, respecting the privacy of sources, and avoiding publication of harmful information are all actions respondents agree are ethically responsible. Respondents indicated the goal of livestock publications professionals should be to serve as communications representatives for the livestock industry and provide information to other members of the industry. The ethical standards illustrated by these findings have been pillars of journalistic ethics codes since the original Canons of Journalism (Wilkins & Brennen, 2007). The Canons encouraged journalists to be concerned with providing timely, accurate, and objective information to their readers for the sake of public welfare (Wilkins & Brennen, 2007). Ethical codes established by NAMA, AAEA, the Society of Professional Journalists, and the Public Relations Society of America also indicate similar concerns among members regarding reporting, advertising, privacy, and objectivity (Evans et al., 2009; Price, 2011; PRSA, 2013).

Respondents indicated livestock publications managers should make ethically responsible decisions, regardless of how those actions may affect profit, and editorial content should not be dictated by the wishes or benefits of advertisers. NAMA members in Price's (2011) study also agreed that management should act socially responsible despite potential influence on profit. These findings support previous work by Johnson (1971) as well as Zhang and Swanson (2006) that said maximizing profit is not the only goal of CSR activities within businesses, but it can influence profits nonetheless.

According to Vaaland et al (2008), customers prefer to support ethical companies and punish unethical ones. Thus, LPC publication managers who not only encourage employees to follow the LPC code of ethics but also participate in CSR by developing an ethical code for their business may experience improvements in public opinion, and in turn, an added bonus of profit increases.

Respondents use new media, including Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and LinkedIn, more than once a day. This is unsurprising, as much research has indicated a substantial rise in the number of news organizations participating in new media outlets (Spence & Quinn, 2009; Stassen, 2010). Ludtke (2009) anticipated journalists' use of new media, saying to stay ahead in the field, news organizations would have to embrace new technology. Additionally, Hong (2012) found positive correlations between journalists' use of new media websites and traffic on their news organizations' websites. Thus, LPC members' involvement in new media and social networking will likely continue to evolve, indicating a need for ethical guidelines for these practices.

Regarding ethical standards within new media, respondents strongly agreed new media should follow the same ethical standards as print publications. This includes labeling advertiser-sponsored posts and maintaining objectivity in reporting. Respondents indicated a need exists for a written code of ethics for new media content. These findings support the claim by Eid and Ward (2009) that ethics and social responsibility are critical for journalists using new media and "should go hand-in-hand with the freedom of new media and social networking use" (p. 2). Also, other similar professional organizations, including the AAEA, have revised their codes of ethics to include guidelines for electronic media (Evans et al., 2009). The AAEA code focuses on topics similar to print

publications, including separating editorial and advertising content, respecting user privacy, and maintaining credibility (Evans et al., 2009).

The topic of digital photo manipulation created dichotomous groups among respondents. While one quarter of respondents perceived recent technological developments have not made it more acceptable to alter photos within publications, nearly 20% somewhat agree it has become more acceptable. A narrow margin, roughly 7%, separated those respondents who said advertising photos could be altered freely and those who strongly disagreed. These findings do not allow a decisive conclusion to be made; however, the inconsistency in responses could be caused by the broad range of professional roles found among employees of LPC publication members. While this study could not determine a relationship between professional responsibilities and ethical perceptions, many researchers have found variation in the ethical perspectives regarding digital photo manipulation based on professional roles. Tirohl (2000) founds newspaper staff members were more opposed to manipulating photos than magazine editors, while Gladney and Ehrlich (1996) also found newspaper editors were more conservative than televisions news directors.

Respondents did agree altering photos in any way that change the meaning of the image is unacceptable and the livestock publications industry needs to have set standards for manipulating digital images. They also indicated digital manipulation has caused a shift in the credibility of publications as perceived by readers. Based on the results of a study conducted by Huang (2001), it seems LPC members are somewhat in tune to the desires of their readers. Huang (2001) found that the general public did not trust the photos they saw in most news sources. Readers preferred publications avoid running

manipulated images as much as possible, especially in hard news stories, and they requested any image that has been altered be labeled as such (Huang, 2001).

In terms of specific manipulation techniques, respondents tended to be more ethically conservative with editorial photos than advertising photos. Adding objects or people to a photo and blending multiple photos were considered unacceptable for editorial photos, but these changes were perceived as acceptable for images used in advertising. Enhancing colors, removing blemishes, and extensive cropping or flipping were acceptable for both advertising and editorial photos, but they were considered more acceptable in advertising images. The more relaxed standards for advertising photos support comments from Cutrer (2011), stating that livestock sale photos are often scrutinized for excessive editing to improve the look of a sale animal. These findings also illustrate the need for more specific guidelines of what is considered ethical editing and what is not.

Conclusions Related to Objective Three

Objective three sought to describe the relationship among selected personal and professional characteristics and ethical perspectives. Methodologically, this study could not compare all personal and professional characteristics to ethical perspectives. However, some relationships were found among those comparisons that could be made.

While age does not appear to affect the ethical decisions of LPC members' employees, it was determined that the sex of a respondent could influence his or her ethical perspectives. The study of NAMA members found similar significant differences among males and females regarding their opinions of CSR responsibilities of public relations professionals (Price, 2011). These findings support work by Lund (2008) that

showed female marketing professionals exercised "significantly higher ethics judgment than their male counterparts" (p. 511).

The amount of time an individual has been in his or her job also affects ethical perspectives. An employee who has worked in his or her current position for a shorter amount of time will be more ethically conservative in his or her actions than one who has had the same job for a longer period of time. Is this because new-hires are less comfortable in their positions and thus are less likely to push any ethical limits? Or could it be that companies are asserting ethical standards more fervently on new employees than they have in the past? Additional research regarding factors that influence ethical perspectives may shed more light on this area.

Recommendations for Practice

To address the needs expressed by its members in this study, the LPC should revise the current code of ethics to include guidelines for manipulating digital photos to be used in publications and for publishing content using new media sites. The organization should continue to monitor developments in the livestock publications industry and the opinions of its members regarding the ethical issues associated with those trends. Frequent updates of the code will ensure it is representative of the opinions of the current membership. Additionally, professional organizations in this field could collaborate to create a set of ethical standards that provide unity among all sectors of the industry.

The LPC also should increase awareness of the code of ethics to members through trainings and workshops, as suggested by Geisler (2011). More extensively promoting the code to members would help the LPC ensure its constituents understand the ethical expectations of the organization. Furthermore, collaboration among agricultural

communications professional organizations to maintain consistency in ethical standards across all sectors of the field could help prevent confusion.

Once the LPC has revised the association's ethics code, member publications and organizations should update or create their own ethical codes. Providing these standards for employees will encourage consistency throughout the livestock publications field. Additionally, as suggested by Zhang and Swanson (2006), CSR activities such as establishing a code of ethics also can improve the financial bottom line for these businesses by improving their reputations with the public.

Recommendations for Future Research

As the findings of this study were inconclusive regarding livestock publications professionals' ethical perspectives of digital photo manipulation, additional research should be conducted specifically on perspectives of photo manipulation techniques. In addition to survey research, focus groups with a variety of professionals could provide insight as to what exact alterations are acceptable and where the ethical "line in the sand" is drawn.

Similarly, future research should be conducted to determine the influence professional roles have on ethical perspectives. This study was limited in its ability to describe in depth any relationships between the ethical perspectives of professionals and their roles as photographers, writers, publishers, designers, and so on. Previous literature suggests such a relationship exists among mainstream media, but little work has been done specifically within agricultural communications (Coleman, 2007; Gladney & Ehrlich, 1996; Tirohl, 2000).

The instrument could be modified to be distributed among readers of livestock publications to determine their perspectives of the credibility and ethical actions of the

publications. This variation of the study would allow the LPC publications to understand the expectations of their audiences, which may encourage more revisions to codes of ethics.

Research also could be conducted to compare the perspectives of livestock publications professionals to other communications specialists within the agricultural industry. While findings of this study were largely consistent with the editors and writers of the AAEA (2013) and the public relations professionals in NAMA (Price, 2011), similar studies with photographers, television broadcasters, radio hosts, and so on may have different results.

Discussion

Respondents varied dramatically in their ethical perspectives of digital photo manipulation. What factors influence these opinions? Could it be that professionals who are less familiar with the process of altering photos are less comfortable with the concept of publishing altered photos? Or, could it be that the professional role of the individual dictates his or her perspective (i.e., a cattle sale catalog photographer may be more likely to alter photos than an editorial column writer)? In any case, future research delving deeper into these questions will be important as the LPC continues to maintain its code of ethics in the future.

Though the majority of respondents said the association should have a written ethical code, more than one-fourth of respondents were unsure about the existence of clear standards for the LPC or the livestock publications industry. Is this because the association has not actively encouraged members to adhere to the code of ethics? Or, is it

because professionals in the industry have such a broad spectrum of moral opinions that they find it difficult to align their beliefs with written standards?

The findings of this study indicate LPC members' employees do, in fact, desire to have set standards and specific guidelines provided in regard to reporting, advertising, photos and the use of new media. As the literature shows, technology continues to evolve and change the way professionals do their jobs. Therefore, it appears updating the LPC code of ethics also will be an ongoing process.

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APPENDIX A

Approval of Institutional Review Board

Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board

Date:	Thursday, June 21, 2012
IRB Application No	AG1225
Proposal Title:	Livestock Publications Council Membership Perspective of Ethical Issues in Publishing
Reviewed and Processed as:	Exempt

Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved Protocol Expires: 6/20/2013

Principal Investigator(s):

Lindy Wiggins
448 Ag Hall
Stillwater, OK 74078

Shelly Sitton
448 Ag Hall
Stillwater, OK 74078

The IRB application referenced above has been approved. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in section 45 CFR 46.

[X] The final versions of any printed recruitment, consent and assent documents bearing the IRB approval stamp are attached to this letter. These are the versions that must be used during the study.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

1. Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol must be submitted with the appropriate signatures for IRB approval. Protocol modifications requiring approval may include changes to the title, PI, advisor, funding status or sponsor, subject population composition or size, recruitment, inclusion/exclusion criteria, research site, research procedures and consent/assent process or forms.
2. Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period of one calendar year. This continuation must receive IRB review and approval before the research can continue.
3. Report any adverse events to the IRB Chair promptly. Adverse events are those which are unanticipated and impact the subjects during the course of this research; and
4. Notify the IRB office in writing when your research project is complete.

Please note that approved protocols are subject to monitoring by the IRB and that the IRB office has the authority to inspect research records associated with this protocol at any time. If you have questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact Beth McTernan in 219 Cordell North (phone: 405-744-5700, beth.mcternan@okstate.edu).

Sincerely,

Shelia H. Kennison

Shelia Kennison, Chair
Institutional Review Board

APPENDIX B

Introductory Email Text

Greetings! As a member of the Livestock Publications Council, you have been selected to participate in a research project titled "An Ethical Analysis of Livestock Publications Council Members."

The purpose of this web-based questionnaire research study is to determine the perspectives of LPC members on various ethical issues in order to update and enhance the current code of ethics for the organization. If you choose to participate, you will be asked questions about your opinions on ethical issues related to editorial content, advertising, digital photos and social media, as well as selected academic and personal characteristics to aid in research analysis.

The amount of time to complete the survey will be approximately 15 minutes. If you choose to provide an email address at the end of the questionnaire and be registered for one of two $50 Visa gift cards, you will not receive any additional information from the researchers. Additionally, that email address will be extracted from the data to ensure anonymity.

By clicking on the link below, you are giving your consent to participate in this study.
To access the online survey, please use your Internet browser of choice and go to
https://okstatecasnr.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_6PUXmtHc4AwiAeg.

Your immediate response would be appreciated greatly.

You may choose at any time to withdraw from the study without penalty. The risks associated with this project are not greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life. Your responses are voluntary and anonymous, and they will be treated with confidentiality. Your e-mail address was included via the Livestock Publications Council membership database.

All answers will be stored online in a password-protected account until the survey is closed; then, they will be transferred to a password-protected computer to be analyzed. Any written results will discuss group findings and will not release any information that could possibly identify you as an individual. The data will be kept for up to five years on a password-protected computer located in 435 AGH on the Oklahoma State University campus.

We would appreciate your assistance with this survey. If you have any questions or concerns about this project, please contact Lindy Wiggins, M.S. Student, at 405-744-3690 or lindy.wiggins@okstate.edu, or Shelly Sitton, Professor, at 405-744-3690 or shelly.sitton@okstate.edu. If you have questions about your rights as a research volunteer, you may contact Dr. Shelia Kennison, IRB Chair, 219 Cordell North, Stillwater, OK 74078, 405-744-3377 or irb@okstate.edu.

Investigators:
Lindy L. Wiggins, M.S. Student; Shelly Sitton, Professor
Oklahoma State University
Department of Agricultural Education, Communications and Leadership
448 Agricultural Hall
Stillwater, OK 74078
405-744-5130
405-744-5176 (fax)

APPENDIX C

Follow-up Email Text

Follow-up e-mail text:

Hello! Last week, you received a message asking for your opinions on ethical issues in the livestock publications industry.

This research project, titled "An Ethical Analysis of Livestock Publications Council Members," is being conducted to determine the perspectives of LPC members on various ethical issues in order to update and enhance the current code of ethics for the organization. If you choose to participate, you will be asked questions about your opinions on ethical issues related to editorial content, advertising, digital photos and social media, as well as selected academic and personal characteristics to aid in research analysis.

The amount of time to complete the survey will be approximately 15 minutes. If you choose to provide an email address at the end of the questionnaire and be registered for one of two $50 Visa gift cards, you will not receive any additional information from the researchers. Additionally, that email address will be extracted from the data to ensure anonymity.

By clicking on the link below, you are giving your consent to participate in this study.

To access the online survey, please use your Internet browser of choice and go to https://okstatecasnr.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_6PUXmtHc4AwjAeg.

Your immediate response would be appreciated greatly.

You may choose at any time to withdraw from the study without penalty. The risks associated with this project are not greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life. Your responses are voluntary and anonymous, and they will be treated with confidentiality. Your e-mail address was included via the LPC membership database.

All answers will be stored online in a password-protected account until the survey is closed; then, they will be transferred to a password-protected spreadsheet to be analyzed. Any written results will discuss group findings and will not release any information that could possibly identify you as an individual. The data will be kept for up to five years on a computer located in 435 AGH on the Oklahoma State University campus.

We would appreciate your assistance with this survey. If you have any questions or concerns about this project, please contact Lindy Wiggins, M.S. Student, at 405-744-3690 or lindy.wiggins@okstate.edu or Shelly Sitton, Professor, at 405-744-3690 or shelly.sitton@okstate.edu. If you have questions about your rights as a research volunteer, you may contact Dr. Shelia Kennison, IRB Chair, 219 Cordell North, Stillwater, OK 74078, 405-744-3377 or irb@okstate.edu.

Investigators:
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405-744-5130
405-744-5176 (fax)

APPENDIX D

Instrument

Default Question Block

Thank you for agreeing to share information about your perspective on ethical issues in the livestock publications industry. The Livestock Publications Council values your opinion.

Please click the button below to begin.

Please identify your level of agreement with the following statements about the livestock publications industry.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Presenting all sides of an issue and remaining objective is the job of the news media, not specific breed or species publications.							
The livestock publications industry has clear standards of performance.							
The Livestock Publications Council has a clear code of ethics.							

Please identify your level of agreement with the following statements about livestock publications.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
An ethically responsible livestock publication is more credible with the public than one that is not.							
Management of a livestock publication should act ethically responsible regardless of how those actions affect profit.							
Any personal opinions reported in a livestock publication should be labeled as such to avoid connection with the publication as a whole.							
Livestock publications should avoid publishing editorial content based on the wishes or benefits of advertisers.							
A responsible livestock publication should present several sides of an issue and provide objective reporting when disseminating information.							
Livestock publications should consider the potential impacts on privacy and rights of all persons before publishing material.							
Livestock publications should not publish any details that serve no useful purpose or may harm individuals.							
If harmful material is reported, a livestock publication should seek and publish responses from those individuals involved.							

Please identify your level of agreement with the following statements about livestock publications professionals.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The main goal of livestock publications professionals is to serve as communications representatives for the livestock industry and provide information to members of the industry.							
Livestock publications professionals should work to ensure the accuracy of content and promptly correct errors when called to attention.							
The credibility of a livestock publication can be damaged if professionals accept gifts or favors that could potentially be viewed by readers as compromising the responsibilities of the publication.							
Livestock publications professionals should accurately represent the circulation of the publication to advertisers, agents or representatives.							
Livestock publications professionals should work to ensure organizational secrecy is not used to hide organizational misconduct.							
Livestock publications professionals should act as the consciences of their publications.							
Livestock publications professionals should avoid putting organizational obedience ahead of personal conscience.							
Individuals can have separate ethical standards in their private and business affairs.							

Please identify your level of agreement with the following statements about new media use in the livestock publications industry. (New media includes social media platforms, blogs, podcasts and similar technology.)

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Any content posted using new media should follow the same ethical standards as material printed in a livestock publication.							
Any content posted using new media that has been sponsored by an advertiser should be labeled as such.							
Livestock publications professionals should maintain the same level of objectivity for new media content as for editorial content in the publication.							
A livestock publication should have a written code of ethics to aid in making decisions related to new media content.							

Please identify your level of agreement with the following statements about digital photo manipulation in the livestock publications industry.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The recent developments in digital imaging technology make it more acceptable to alter photos for publication.							
Any photo that has been altered should be identified as a photo illustration.							
Altering photos in any way that may change the meaning of the image is unacceptable.							
News-related images have different manipulation standards than images to be used in advertisements.							
Images to be used in advertisements may be altered freely.							
The livestock publications industry should have set standards for manipulation of digital images.							
Digital manipulation has caused a shift in the credibility of livestock publications as perceived by readers.							
A livestock publication should have a written code of ethics to be referred to when making decisions about altering images.							
A responsible livestock publications professional follows personal ethics for digital manipulation.							

Please indicate the level of acceptability of the following digital photo alterations for *editorial* photos in livestock publications.

	Very Unacceptable	Unacceptable	Somewhat Unacceptable	Neither Acceptable nor Unacceptable	Somewhat Acceptable	Acceptable	Very Acceptable
Dodging							
Burning							
Color enhancement (brightness, contrast, saturation, color balance)							
Removing blemishes (e.g., scratches, dirt)							
Adding object or people to a photo							
Removing objects or people from a photo							
Blending multiple photos							
Extensive cropping							
Horizontally or vertically flipping							

Please indicate the level of acceptability of the following digital photo alterations for *advertisement* photos in livestock publications.

	Very Unacceptable	Unacceptable	Somewhat Unacceptable	Neither Acceptable nor Unacceptable	Somewhat Acceptable	Acceptable	Very Acceptable
Dodging							
Burning							
Color Enhancement (brightness, contrast, saturation, color balance)							
Removing blemishes (e.g., scratches, dirt)							
Adding object or people to a photo							
Removing objects or people from a photo							
Blending multiple photos							
Extensive cropping							
Horizontally or vertically flipping							

The following questions are for classification purposes only. Your responses will allow the researchers to group the answers of all respondents and will never be associated with you as an individual.

What type of organization do you work for? Please check all that apply.

- Magazine or other print publication
- Breed organization
- Public relations
- Graphic design
- Marketing and advertising
- Other

How many staff members are employed at your company? (Please enter whole numbers only. Count part-time employees as 1.)

Please mark each type of media platform that your publication participates in.

- Print publication
- Radio
- Television
- Website
- New media (e.g., blogs, social media platforms)
- Other

Which of the following new media does your publication use? Please check all that apply.

- Facebook
- Twitter
- LinkedIn
- Flickr
- Digg.com
- StumbleUpon
- Blogging
- YouTube
- Squidoo
- Other

How frequently does your organization provide content using new media?

- More than once a day
- Once a day
- More than once a week
- Once a week
- More than once a month
- Once a month
- Less than once a month

What are your responsibilities within your current position? Please check all that apply.

- Editing
- Writing
- Photography
- Graphic design
- Web design
- Advertisement sales
- Other

How long have you worked in the livestock publications industry? (Please enter whole numbers only. If experience is less than one year, please enter 1.)

Total years

Years in current position

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- High school
- Associate's degree
- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree
- Doctoral (PhD or EdD) degree
- Professional degree (e.g., DVM, JD)
- Post-doctoral study

Please answer the following questions about your associate's degree.

What was your major?

Please answer the following questions about your bachelor's degree.

What was your major?

What was your minor?

Please answer the following question about your master's degree.

What was your major?

Please answer the following question about your doctoral or professional degree.

What was your major?

What is your gender?

- Male
- Female

What is your age?

In the space provided, please share any additional information pertaining to ethics in the livestock publications industry.

Thank you for participating in this study.

Please enter your e-mail address in the box below to allow the researchers to record your response and reduce additional contacts regarding this study. Your email address will not be associated with your responses. Entering your email address below will also enter you into the drawing for one of two $50 Visa Gift Cards.

Please enter E-mail address here.

Appendix E

Table E1

"Other" Responses for Types of Organizations Employing LPC Members

Responses	Responses, cont.
Digital animal health media	Web development
Livestock producer association	Financial association
Commodity organization	I write books
Non-profit, education	Association
Trade association	Graduate student
Freelancer	Web publication
Photography	Have done magazines and pubs - now PR
Allied industry	Print production
Ag television program	University
Machinery association	Allied organizations
Trade association	National trade organization
Association	Checkoff
Freelancer	Ads for realty, livestock, equine
Trade organization	Livestock show and rodeo
Online publication	Freelance writer
Education	Industry association
Freelance writer and photographer. Worked for publications for 10 years.	In-house communications/marketing department for a corporation
Livestock association/non breed	University
Checkoff organization	Print and multimedia company
Trade association	

Table E2

"Other" Responses for Professional Responsibilities of LPC Members' Employees

Responses	Responses, cont.
Community development, work flow	Account Services
Association management	Video
Social media	Management
Social media	Company management
Publication management	Management
Management	Social or new media
Sales	Management
Department management	Management
Management	Teaching, advising and research
Director of sales and marketing	Owner
Talent	Management
Management	Publisher
Spokesperson	Sales and marketing
Project management & client relations	Recommending publications to clients
Publisher	Management
I do everything from start to finish.	Management
Project management	Sales
Production manager	Video production
Management	Livestock show management
Event planning	

Table E3

"Other" Responses for Media Platforms Utilized by LPC Members

Responses	Responses, cont.
Email	Print publication
E-newsletters	Communications consultant
Online publication (eZine)	E-newsletters, webinars
Emailed newsletters	DVD
Electronic promotions	Newsletter
Video	Electronic newsletter
Newsletter	Newsletters
Events	Weekly newspaper
Annual publication	News and op ed releases, e-news for specific audiences
Video DVD	E-newsletter
Education	Digital only publication

Table E4

"Other" Responses for Types of New Media Utilized by LPC Members

Responses	Responses, cont.
Google +, Scoop.it	4 square
Pinterest	Constant Contact- Weekly eNewsletters
iHigh	Pinterest
Pinterest	Pinterest, Instagram
Pinterest	Pinterest
Pinterest	Constant Contact
Pinterest	Pinterest

Appendix F

LPC Members' Employees' Responses to Open Ended Question Regarding Ethics in the Livestock Publications Industry

Theme	Responses
The ethical spectrum of digital photo manipulation techniques	"Adding or removing people/building from a photo is significantly different that straightening the topline of a bull/female or adding depth to an animal. Before digital photography, most of us dodged, burned, cropped, etc. That was part of the trade."
	"Paid ad space is subject to more leniency as far as photo manipulation and balance, in accordance with reader expectations."
	"Photo alteration has become a huge problem in our industry and standards need to be set and enforced. Currently, photo editing is out of control in the cattle business, especially the show cattle sector."
	"Re: questions about photo retouching Taking out a fence post behind an animal or removing manure is ok but actually altering the appearance of the animal should not be done."
	"As far as photography is concerned: editorial photos should not be doctored in any way other than to lighten or darken the image to improve print quality. Some cropping is okay. It should reflect reality in a precise and truthful way. Advertising photos... the sky's the limit on what can be done, so long as the underlying message is still truthful and no one is hurt in the process."
	"Wish breed publications and breed associations would establish standards to disallow photos of animals that have been manipulated. Some people may be naive when buying genetics based on manipulated photos, which is unfortunate."
	"As far as photo manipulation - it really depends on the situation - in our case. You can never alter an animal to make is better physically. Cleaning the photo up to make the composition - cropping better is not a problem. A set of standards is a good idea."
	"I found the issue of altered photos intriguing - the only folks involved with animal ag who distort photos ought to be the

whacked out activists who want all animal ag off-shored. This is why animal ag cannot be caught fudging photos."

"Its not a matter of what you do, its a matter of why you do it. The photo manipulation question is a good example. Many of those tools are valuable IF they are used to enhance the value of the photo, not manipulate or deceive the reader or user. Digital now a split second medium. Much different than print in its immediacy."

"In my answers about digital manipulation of photos, the editorial photos should not have people added or deleted or settings changed. Enhancing the quality of the image itself is acceptable."

"In regards to touching up editorial photos – I would like to elaborate on my position. I am very much against editing the meaning of any photo that is part of a news or feature article package. People/objects at an event should not be touched unless maybe you are taking a blemish off one of the junior members or removing dust artifacts from the camera lens or something along those lines and another similar photo is NOT available for use. I think it is ok to color correct, fix lighting, etc., and if you are using a generic photo, to take out objects. For example, if I need a photo of a harbor for the faded background of a feature story on places to visit while you are at a show by the coast, and there is a boat in the middle that makes the text on top hard to read, I think it is fine to remove the boat as it will not alter the meaning of the photo."

"I believe the most important decision for a publication to how they intend to represent the livestock that they are promoting. Altering backgrounds and changing overall color is acceptable to reach a high quality product. However, when you start changing the shape, color, identifying marks on livestock, I believe the publication is crossing the line."

"There's a fine line publication professionals must draw between what is reality and what is perception. I, personally, think it is acceptable to apply some editing techniques as long as it doesn't change the meaning of the photo. I think it's acceptable to brighten an image to compensate for the photographer's imperfections or to crop an image to fit the dimensions of a layout. However, it's unacceptable, in any case, to manipulate an image to the point that it inaccurately reflects reality. For example, manipulating an image of an animal to make that animal look better than what it appears in reality."

“I shoot a lot of "backdrop" photos of winners at cattle shows for our company, and it is sometimes challenging to get 4 feet in place and two ears forward and all the people looking at the camera; and make it a cow-calf pair and that doubles. I don't have a problem altering a photo as long as the structural confirmation on the animal doesn’t' change - taking the ears ahead "head" from the cow in one pic and putting in on the other picture where the calf is set up. However, I analyze a lot of the "pros" and look at their "pasture shots" and bull after bull after bull look the same--why bother going out and taking a picture when you can touch up an entire sale offering in Photoshop to make them all look the same? THAT, I don't agree with.”

“Some of these questions didn't make much sense to me, for instance: "Altering photos in any way that may change the meaning of the image is unacceptable." The "meaning" is in the viewer's mind, not in the photo.”

“Photo manipulation is a touchy subject -- and a tough one. I believe photos in advertisements may be altered SO LONG AS the animal's appearance does not change. Removing background clutter, removing manure from the animal -- even removing people, sometimes -- is acceptable. BUT, if the animal's appearance is changed (lengthening or deepening of body, straightening topline, etc.), and it is no longer a true representation of the animal, I believe that is no longer ok.”

“Photo manipulation is allowed as long as the conformation of the animal is not changed. You can change, colors, backgrounds and more. If we see that an animal has had been compromised we reject photo or the ad as a whole.”

“For photos in advertising, I see a different level of standards. For example, if you put a sale animal in an ad and you say, "This animal is for sale," then that photo should have no alterations other than blemishes and color correction and should depict the animal as it is. If you have a pasture scene in an ad that is not promoting the animals in that scene as for sale and is used as an illustration, then I have no problem removing the power line that goes through the sky, taking out unsightly clutter, etc.”

“I think when an actual animal is manipulated to make him or her better than he or she is, that can become unethical.”

“For example, simply correcting scratches and blemishes on a

	photo isn't the same as changing the conformation of a bull or something more drastic and deceptive.”
	“I think it's probably been noted in some sectors of the industry that photos are digital enhanced/manipulated a lot. I think we do need to be conscience and aware of what we do to both to photographs used for editorial purposes, but also advertising (and maybe even more so with them). If our intent is to change the look of a product or animal in order to give the reader/consumer the impression said product is really different than it is in real life, then we are pushing a boundary of ethical conduct.”
	“Presenting facts and photos in a truthful manner is important. I have no problem cleaning mud off, but I will never alter an animal's conformation.”
	“Many ads for purebred livestock or seedstock are a joke. I am convinced that the majority of the readership does not understand what they are looking at and how badly the photographs have been doctored. Horses must be the worst, along with club calves, lambs and hogs. I suspect that some of the purebred cattle industry has policed itself into a better and more responsible position.”
The responsibilities of livestock publication professionals regarding editorial and advertising content	“It is important that sources are treated with respect, and that honesty prevails in any dealings with facts, quotations and photos in editorial work.”
	“It is also our role in the publication business to not only report the news and activities, but also provide thought-provoking, informative editorial to challenge our readership. That may be in the form of presenting different business models, products or technology on the horizon or opening up dialog amongst other segments of our food chain. All this is done in an effort of open-minded, objective, well-written content.”
	“As far as editorial content, a writer must report the facts or write a story from the information received or personally researched without including personal bias. Receiving approval from the subject before publishing content is a good way to avoid discrepancies or inaccuracies.”
	“Livestock publications have a responsibility to encourage an open dialogue and free exchange of ideas. That can usually be interpreted as moderate in approach to issues, reporting on both sides of an issue as a reasoned dialogue ensues.”
	“I will never knowingly report wrongful information about a

person, or their product."

"Thus, the publications must clearly distinguish between news and opinion. When they present all sides of an issue -- including interviews with those on "the other side" of it -- this raises the credibility of the publication. Livestock publication writers/editors should remember, too, that not all of their readers (or association members) necessarily support the opinions of the majority of readers."

"In all cases, readers are best served when the advertising and editorial departments are kept as separate as possible, and editors are given the guidelines and support to deliver truthful, ethical copy and imagery."

"Whether it is a product or an animal, there must be truth in advertising (content, images or otherwise). Anything else becomes false advertising."

"I think it is important for ALL journalists to be unbiased and ethical in all aspects of their jobs. Too often I see journalists compromising their standards to please an advertiser. Editorial and advertising should be separate when it comes to how we write content for publications. Yet, it still occurs in our industry and those people believe it is acceptable behavior. We should all be held to the same standards."

"Another issue I feel is important is accuracy in reporting show results, especially in advertisements. In the Brahman breed, we have a big problem with advertisers listing incorrect show awards in their advertising yet the publication does not fact check or enforce this accuracy. The same ethics standards should be applied to both editorial and advertising, and all publications should fact check. Angus Journal does a great job at this."

"Let's be very cautious as to the old philosophy regarding editor - advertiser relationships. Just because an editor is close to advertisers this by no means should reflect they are going to write something favorable about them. In fact, some may say that perhaps the greatest industry sources now come from companies."

"I look at this issue from the perspective of both an editor, an old freelancer and as an advertiser. I've found that, on balance, the more we advertise with a given publication, the more likely they are to run our press releases and articles. So, as much as I hate to say it, advertising plays as much a role in maintaining and building relationships with editors, publishers and sales people as it is about the advertising message itself. I can point to several occasions

	when we pulled advertising from a specific publication only to see our relationship with that editor or field staff damaged as a result of that decision. Long story short, I'd say the unspoken rule of the ag editorial and publishing community is that advertising can grease the skids when it comes time to determining which stories get run and which don't. This is a people business, and people take it personally -- both good and bad -- when you decide to do business with them. As an old freelance writer, I can recall a couple of times when stories of mine got killed because of concerns that it would offend an advertiser. This reality will become even more acute as we see more corporate consolidation and fewer advertisers in the mix down the road." "Suddenly, they are participating in helping an advertiser to misrepresent what is being sold. Bottom line, publications can't allow themselves to be put in a position where they aren't truthful with what really matters."
Reasons why the livestock publications field does or does not need a code of ethics	"I think the livestock publications industry serves its readers well. As my answers indicate, I believe there is a bit more room for advocacy on the part of the livestock publications industry than there would be for, say, consumer news magazines or newspapers. I believe readers' expect a certain level of advocacy from their trade publications, and don't expect to see articles balanced by commentary from HSUS or PETA -- and delivering that angle and positive spin is part of the service livestock publications provide." "Ethical practices in the livestock publications industry should be a constant dialogue among our peers. Through the efforts of LPC and the Ag Media groups, we at least have a forum for the discussion." "Livestock pubs face the same issues as animal agriculture as a whole" "Ethics is doing what is right for our readers/users/industry first, then our companies and advertisers. We must have guidelines for all we do, content, sales, circulation etc. Much of that must be self-driven and executed. But, our council must have strong, pertinent, applicable guidelines for us all to follow. those that don't should be held accountable." "Ethics need to be re-emphasized...." "Our job is to provide accurate information to both the industry and the consumer."

“Your questions were very interesting, they almost interpreted as there is a change in ethics as we move into the future. Our standards have not change for several years and administrations; maybe we should be more proactive from a agricultural informational industry! Husbandry, land stewardship we don't reach out far enough, issues and organizations like HSUS invading our way of life almost goes unanswered! Why? Ethics are important but preserving an industry and a safe food source better be more top of the mind.”

“I'm very concerned about the ethical standards of MANY livestock publications, misrepresenting their circulations, not labeling placed articles, selling editorial space for ad placements, etc.”

“I worked for many years for a newspaper with a very strict code of conduct. For example, no gifts -- even an inexpensive lunch -- were allowed. I have found the practice of an ethics code in the livestock publications industry to be more relaxed. And I'm not saying, automatically, that is bad. There are significant differences between mainstream publications and livestock publications. I think each earns reader trust in different ways. I also think I understand the economic issues; some publications are operating on terribly restrictive budgets. Does that give permission to journalists from these publications to accept, for example, an expense-paid trip? Difficult question. The easy answer is "no," but does that policy serve a publication's readers? Does a disclosure statement suffice? The bigger question, I think, concerns advocacy. I think most livestock publications are, in some sense, advocates for the industries they cover. And that is probably as it should be. The challenge is how to maintain objectivity in news coverage -- including story selection -- while fulfilling the advocacy mission and at the same time not attacking the interests of supporting advertisers.”

“This is so subjective and there are so many variables that I don't see how you can create standards.”
“As the agriculture industry faces increasing scrutiny every day, it is extremely important for each one of us aught be agriculture advocates and promote the industry in an honest, positive and ethical manner. “

“LPC members are in a difficult spot if they are publishing for an audience that pays their salary, i.e. advertisers and breed association magazines, who want to read only that with which they agree.”

	"Ethical behavior in all aspects of one's life is the penultimate of traits." "I found it interesting that ethics was the subject of the study, not because it's not important, but because I guess I don't tend to question the ethics of livestock publications like I do the mainstream news media. I have always felt that livestock publications uphold a strong code of ethics, but that may be naive. In any regard, we should always be striving to make sure we are being ethical in all we do. For me personally, I would like to think I have a high standard of personal ethics that also translates to my work as well. I would think it would be hard to separate the two."
	"We must all hold ourselves responsible for the work we do. We cannot patrol the entire industry, but each of us needs to be willing to uphold our own standards with respect to the work that we do for others."
The ethical requirements of livestock publications professionals using new media	"Our content whether it be editorial, advertising or social media is only as reliable and trustworthy as the standards by which we manage our businesses or publications."
	"It is also important to explore current technologies to reach our audience (of all ages). A traditional print publication is now but one component of an overall communication effort by an organization or a business. Interesting times for our industry, indeed!"
	"Another ethical consideration with regards to new media is the plagiarism of editorial copy and photographs by other news sources. I have seen too many publication websites copy and paste articles written by other news sources on their own website without giving any more credit than a link at the bottom of the article saying, "Read more here." If you want an example, look at http://www.surebetracingnews.com/. They did not write any of the articles on their website, and yet the articles are presented as if they were written by SureBet staff, with little or no credit given to the actual author/news source other than a small link at the bottom which still does not say the article was written by someone else. StallionESearch is another website in the Quarter Horse Racing industry that does the same thing, including copy/paste AP articles from AP member newspapers. Again, the article is not always properly credited to the original author, even though entire paragraphs, and even entire articles, are used verbatim. In my office, we have also had trouble with photographs being

	inappropriately shared on Facebook. Many employees feel it is acceptable to copy/paste/share any photograph they find online on our publication's Facebook page, without getting permission from the photographer or giving credit to the photographer. The majority of the public believes it is perfectly acceptable to copy/paste/share anything they find on the internet with no thought to copyrights or ownership. As livestock journalists, we must remain highly ethical in our online dealings if we are to maintain our integrity." "I do think there has been a decline in journalistic ethics due to economic/business pressures as well as influence from new media. The conversation surrounding ethics has not caught up with new technologies. What's more, I'm afraid it will soon be too late. There is an inclination to associate traditional ethical positions to being "old fashion" and not in tune with "new media" thinking and approaches. I think that editors are not being listened to at the corporate level and are being placed in increasingly uncomfortable positions."

VITA

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Master of Science

Thesis: LIVESTOCK PUBLICATIONS COUNCIL MEMBERS' ETHICAL PERSPECTIVES REGARDING EDITORIAL CONTENT, ADVERTISING, NEW MEDIA AND DIGITAL PHOTOS IN LIVESTOCK PUBLICATIONS

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