

LIVESTOCK PHOTOGRAPHERS' ETHICAL
PERSPECTIVES REGARDING DIGITAL
PHOTO MANIPULATION

By

JACOB R. GANKOFSKIE

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Oklahoma State University

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Thesis Approved:

Dr. Shelly Peper Sitton

Thesis Adviser

Dr. D. Dwayne Cartmell II

Dr. Nicholas R. Brown

Name: JACOB R. GANKOFSKIE

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Abstract:

Advancements in photo editing software allow photographers to use several different tools to change the shape and composition of an animal, which has left the livestock industry in need of a set of standards to reference when using editing programs. Research regarding this phenomenon and the ethical standards is extremely limited. Though the profession is commonly unheard of among the public, further research would help provide insight about agriculturalists' ethical decisions when dealing with livestock.

Personal interviews with livestock photographers were conducted throughout February and March 2014 contributing to a better understanding of what is to be considered ethical photo editing. This research will consist of a qualitative analysis of the ethical perspective behind editing photos of livestock. Using a case study approach based on a utilitarianism theory, interviews were evaluated with significant horizons clumped into themes. This research comprises the views of seven (N = 7) livestock photographers and their outlook on ethics in the livestock photography industry.

Findings suggest photographers in the livestock industry agree that unethical practices include changing the physical appearance of the product being presented. Participants also recognized challenges they faced in order to please their customers (producers) without losing trustworthiness among the public as photographers. In addition, participants agree that a standard code of ethics is needed to be implemented within the industry. The research concludes with participants' overview of ethics and recommendations for practice.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Farmers and ranchers have relied on agricultural and livestock publications since the first printing press was established to produce almanacs, weather information, and planting recommendations (Burnett & Tucker, 2001). The agricultural communications field emerged because farmers, food distributors, and processors felt the need to communicate with the public about certain issues that involved their products and production methods (Boone, Meisenbach, & Tucker, 2000).

The history of the livestock press contains accounts of mighty struggles among competitors within various species (Livestock Publications Council, 2014). This issue drove a group of publications professionals together to discuss and explore the possibility of forming an association of livestock publications, which led to the organization of the Livestock Publications Council (LPC) in 1974 (LPC, 2014). The LPC was intended to be an association where members could exchange ideas and policies centered on livestock publications with an effort to solve trending issues among publications, such as postal problems, photo exchange problems, and amounts charged for use of lists for special mailings (LPC, 2014). In addition, the organization set out to promote understanding and cooperation among publications serving the livestock industry (LPC, 2014). The LPC opened its membership to all livestock publications and communicators within the

industry, which established a home for agricultural communicators whose interests were within the realm of journalism and photography (LPC, 2014).

Less than 20 years ago, most photographers were limited to using only film to capture their subject; now, a variety of possibilities exist when editing and perfecting these images (Lyon, 2004). Livestock photographers can shoot photographs in high definition, view their images instantaneously, and record video using one device (Cass & Lauer, 2004). The advancement in technology changes everything when it comes to the ideal image for the individual using the camera (Colman, 2007). This combined with ever-changing developments in software has turned photography into an entirely new practice (Colman, 2007). This trend continues today in the livestock industry as photography professionals are hired to market livestock through photography.

Livestock photographers have existed for decades, photographing animals at exhibitions such as livestock shows, on farms and ranches, and at sporting events such as rodeos (Dickenson, 1980). While the trade and sale of livestock has been a fixture throughout history, changes in technology and convenience to livestock producers have impacted the way livestock are marketed (Livestock Marketing Association, 2014). Livestock photography provides the reader with a sense of trustworthiness and evidence of the integrity of an animal (Cass & Lauer, 2004).

However, in the digital communications era, livestock photographs are edited using software to enhance or recreate an image for a more dramatic effect or with an overabundance of uncharacteristic features (Cass & Lauer, 2004). According to Telg and Irani (2012), advancements in digital photography, computer software programs, and the

Internet have impacted the daily functions of professionals, including those within the livestock photography profession.

Ethical issues related to photo manipulation exist within the livestock publication industry (Wiggins, 2013). According to Wiggins (2013) LPC members strongly agree ethical responsibility has an effect on the public perspective of a publication's credibility. The majority of LPC members agree the LPC and the livestock publications industry needs to have a clear code of ethics (Wiggins, 2013).

Statement of Problem

As the availability of digital photo manipulation software grows, the need for a code of ethics has become increasingly relevant to maintain integrity within the agriculture and livestock marketing industries (Wiggins, 2013). While Wiggins (2013) studied LPC member's ethical perspectives regarding editorial content, advertising, new media, and digital photos in livestock publications, little research has been conducted to determine the perspectives of livestock photographers, specifically concerning the ethical editing of livestock photographs.

Purpose

The purpose of this case study was to understand livestock photographers' ethical perspectives regarding livestock photo manipulation.

Objectives

The objectives used to guide the study were to:

1. Describe livestock photographers' ethical perspectives when digitally manipulating a photograph.
2. Describe the impact digital manipulation has on the livestock industry.

Significance

This study will assist in providing information for use by organizations such as LPC as they establish and update a code of ethics or provide ethical guidelines for livestock photographers. The study could help improve consistency throughout the livestock photography industry. In addition, industry newcomers also can use a code of ethics as a guideline and a means of orienting themselves to behavior expectations of certain organizations or the livestock industry in general.

Limitations

The following limitations were acknowledged in this study:

1. Due to the sensitive nature of the topic and small community of livestock photographers, participants may have been less willing to share information.
2. Interpretative research data can rarely be generalized.
3. The participants were not interviewed in person.

Assumptions

The following assumptions were acknowledged in this study:

1. Respondents were honest regarding their perspectives of livestock digital photo manipulation.
2. Each respondent answered questions based on his or her perspective that is shaped by learned experiences.
3. Respondents have prior knowledge regarding ethics in livestock photography.

Definitions

The following definitions were used to guide this study:

Code of Ethics – adopted by organizations to assist members in understanding the difference between “right and wrong” and in applying that understanding to their decisions (Bedford, 2013).

Livestock Photographer – “a professional photographer who captures images of individuals or groups of different species of livestock for promotional or sales and marketing purposes” (D. Johnson, personal communication, June 19, 2014).

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).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter is a review of literature encompassing a review of photography, photojournalism, and photographic manipulation relating toward the need for a code of ethics in the livestock publications industry. Topics include the history of livestock publications, advances in technology, ethics in modern photography, and the conceptual framework on which this research is based.

History of Livestock Publications

Livestock and agricultural publications evolve continually and have progressed to keep up with modern technologies and audience expectations (Telg & Irani, 2012). Farmers and ranchers have relied on agricultural and livestock publications since the first printing press was established to produce almanacs, weather information, and planting recommendations (Burnett & Tucker, 2001). Monthly journal publications grew rapidly in popularity in the 1850s, prompted by advances in technologies (Boone et al., 2000). Following this growth, *Drover's Journal* made its debut in 1873 as the first livestock publication and is still printed today (Burnett & Tucker, 2001; Drovers, 2014). With technology on the rise, printing became more of a norm; advances in paper production

and steam-driven printing presses allowed for mass distribution of agricultural and livestock publications nationwide (Boone et al., 2000).

In 1880, the total number of farm magazines increased to 150 with more than one million copies in circulation (Boone et al., 2000). By 1920, the number of publications printed rose to 400 with a total circulation of 17 million (Boone et al., 2000).

Surprisingly, during hard economic times such as the Great Depression, farming publications still thrived (Boone et al., 2000). According to Boone et al (2000), farm publication circulation numbers increased by 5 million from 1920 to 1940.

As the development of technology continued, agricultural publications followed suit. By the 1990s, the majority of farmers were using the Internet, and by the year 2000, 50% of American homes had a personal computer with access to the Internet (Boone et al., 2000; Burnett & Tucker, 2001). Today, 54% of farmers and ranchers use an agricultural-based website at least once a month (ABM, 2012). In addition, according to the American Business Media (ABM) AgriCouncil (ABM, 2012), 52% of farmers and ranchers read or view a form of agricultural media at least once a week. The digital age not only reached more industry professionals but also cut production costs for publication companies drastically (Ishmael, 2004).

Technology brought creativity to the forefront of livestock publications (Ishmael, 2004). No matter the size of the project, new desktop-publishing techniques gained more creative control of the finished product (Ishmael, 2004). In addition, with the advancements in broadband Internet access, publications reach farmers and ranchers across the nation at the click of a button (Telg & Irani, 2012). Web-based editions of

publications continually are on the rise without the added costs of printing materials and additional overhead (Telg & Irani, 2012).

History of Agricultural Communications

Agricultural communications, similar to other agricultural disciplines in the United States, dates back to the colonial days (Graves, 2005). In the early 1800s, the main line of communication in agriculture was by word-of-mouth and was passed from farmer to farmer (Tucker et al, 2000). The origin of agricultural communications in the United States can be traced back to as early as the first decade of the 1800s (Tucker, Whaley, & Cano, 2003). According to Tucker et al. (2003), the earliest forefront leaders of the industry relied on their reputations and publications to argue for a multitude of social and political issues aimed at improving farming as a business and way of life. However, agricultural communications has been a professional field for more than 150 years dating back to the mid-1800s (Kearl, 1983). The need for a professional field came in the late 1800s when word-of-mouth was no longer effective for sharing information (Buck, 1995). Reisner (1990) broadly defines agricultural communications as “Using communication skills and theories to make decisions concerning companies involved in food, agriculture or natural resources” (p. 10).

In the 1900s, the popularity of agricultural communications grew rapidly because industry leaders were outspoken and they used their communication skills and reputations as editors and writers to argue the social and political needs for improving agriculture (Tucker et al., 2003).

According to Phillips and Osborne (1988) the Vocational Education Act (VEA) of 1963 helped secondary and postsecondary education expand from traditional production

agriculture education. The VEA combined with the Carl Perkins Act of 1984 broadened the horizons of the agricultural programs allowing funds to support students pursuing all careers that required knowledge of the agriculture industry (Phillips & Osborne, 1988). These programs allowed students to advance in the fields of agricultural education and communications (Phillips & Osborne, 1988).

Agricultural journalism/communications programs were designed to forge the spirit of two worlds — producing scholars who use the fundamentals of communications and agriculture to create graduates who are instructed to distribute agricultural reports to agricultural and non-agricultural groups (Ciuffetelli, 2002, p. 10).

Photography in Agricultural Communications

According to Telg and Irani (2012), photography has transformed the way agricultural news is edited and distributed. In addition, photography has changed the vision a photographer develops when exploring the world of agricultural communications as a profession (Telg & Irani, 2012). Morgan (2008) stated photography historically has been a critical skill for agricultural communications. Photography has been a way for readers to connect to a time, place, or event without having been present and provides the reader with a form of trustworthiness and evidence of a specific event (Cass & Lauer, 2004). As the digital age evolved, agricultural communicators used technology to their advantage through agricultural publications (Telg & Irani, 2012).

The practice of livestock photography has enhanced the value of the product producers are providing to customers (Cutrer, 2011). In addition, economics have changed how farmers and ranchers market their animals in order to increase sales and cut overhead costs (Cutrer, 2011). Furthermore, the practice of livestock photography

provides a way for producers to reach customers on a level unlike the past; they are now able to showcase their livestock to customer outside of their typical range (Cutrer, 2011). In fact, according to Cutrer (2011), Internet sales and video auctions within the purebred livestock industry have experienced extreme growth since 2005. These methods of marketing livestock require animals to be photographed for customer viewing before the start of the auction (Cutrer, 2011).

History of Photography

The first permanent photograph was produced in 1826 by French inventor Joseph Nicéphore Niepce (Tissandier, 1877). The photo was shot from a window over Le Gras in eastern France and showed only highlights and shadows. The image was produced on a polished pewter plate covered in a petroleum derivative called bitumen, which hardens when exposed to light (Tissandier, 1877). The camera obscura was an optical instrument that became a popular and widespread invention working as a dark room and allowing light to be admitted through a small opening, which in turn resulted in an image of the outside on the opposite wall (Neri, 2001). The technology of the camera obscura later emerged as the first modern camera (Coleman, 2007).

With the help of Louis Daguerre, the first convenient and effective method of photography was developed by producing images on sheets of silver-plated copper in 1839 (Tissandier, 1877). The portable camera obscura replaced the mobile dark room and later became essential for entertainers, researchers, and artists (Neri, 2001). The invention of portable camera obscura silver-plating process changed readers' expectations of imagery from an "artists' impression" to "evidence" of a particular event (Cass & Lauer, 2004, p. 252).

The first halftone photograph was printed in a newspaper in 1873 (Coleman, 2007). With the continued advancements in technology and the help of William Henry Fox Talbot, the calotype process was created and introduced the world to images produced directly on paper (Daniel, 2004). This new form of paper imaging is what was later became known as negatives (Daniel, 2004). With the help of Niepce and Talbot, photojournalists have evolved the process of recreating imagery for their readers (Cass & Lauer, 2004).

In 1882, George Eastman announced a new invention, which went on to revolutionize the Kodak Company (Jenkins, 1975). Before 1882, photography was a complex process involving knowledge of chemical processing before and after the captured image (Munir & Phillips, 2005). Eastman's invention of roll film eliminated the need to carry around chemicals and glass plates, allowing photographers to shoot more frames by capturing them on a celluloid film (Munir & Phillips, 2005). Eastman's invention also allowed photographers to capture images easily with more efficiency (Munir & Phillips, 2005). With the invention of film cameras, reproductions of photographs became easier, introducing more imagery to more readers (Cass & Lauer, 2004). Film photography still held a high value of trustworthiness providing evidence of a particular event or place (Cass & Lauer, 2004). According to Cass and Lauer (2004), as film photography progressed, enhancement and editing techniques were born, allowing the production artist to enhance and edit photographs, which lowered the value of trustworthiness perceived by viewers.

Lastly, digital imagery and manipulation were introduced, showing only "possible" evidence of a particular place or event (Cass and Lauer, 2004). The

introduction of digital imagery lost the value of trustworthiness as perceived by viewers (Cass & Lauer, 2004).

Digital Photography

Digital cameras are filmless; they capture light and color through an electronic sensor producing an output of 1s and 0s arranged in a pre-defined format (Friedman, 1993). The digital camera was introduced in 1975; its invention was credited to Steven Sasson, an engineer at Eastman Kodak (Deutsch, 2008). As technologies progressed in the 1980s, solid-state image or megapixel sensors were developed that allowed photographers to capture 1.4 million megapixels, leading to the release of the first Kodak digital camera in 1987 (Deutsch, 2008).

As the population began to adopt digital photography into daily life, the images were considered truthful (Newton, 2001). In the film era of photography, the primary reason for capturing an image was to remember the moment; people wanted a physical memory of the past (Dijick, 2008). The rise of digital photography brought a change to this perception; identity formation and communication became a much more important motivator for the creation of an image (Dijick, 2008). Digital photography changed one's ability to transform a real-life image into a photograph and has changed how individuals market goods and services (Coleman, 2007). The livestock industry is no exception. According to Russial (2000), the change from chemical to digital processes has allowed photographers and editors to exercise greater control of their work. In addition, digital cameras provide more people with the ability to shoot and manipulate photos (Kremenak & Siegel, 2008).

When first released, the digital image was seen as the death of photography, but it did not take long for photographers to realize the digital image released photography from the physical and time constraints of the darkroom (Newton, 2001). However, digital imagery provided an arena for asking when conceptual expansion becomes deceptive (Cass & Lauer, 2004).

Image Manipulation and Software

Photojournalism plays a colossal role in to how individuals perceive a particular place or product (Page, 2012). According to Page (2012), images may enhance or detract from a news story or make a story less credible if the image is presented in a fraudulent manner. The progression of technology creates and increases the ease and frequency of digital image alteration (Coleman, 2007). This trend also increases public knowledge on the topic of digital manipulation followed by a decline in the media's reputation of reliability (Coleman, 2007). With the rise of digital technology, photography seems to have changed from a way to support memories of public and private stature to an activity of everyday life (Lasen & Cruze, 2009).

Digital imaging for print primarily refers to image processing through the use of negative scanners, computers, and software such as Adobe Photoshop®. In the 1980s, the term *digital imaging* evolved to encompass image capturing through the use of digital technology (Russial, 2001). This increased the demand for additional software development driven to further edit and enhance photographs, such as Scitex® and Leaf Desk® as well as additional advancements in Adobe Photoshop® (Russial, 2001).

Media Ethics

According to Hanson (2014), media ethics is a complex topic media institutions face that typically requires employees to do things ordinary people in ordinary circumstances normally would not do. In addition, media ethics draws on a range of philosophical principles, including basic Judeo-Christian values, Aristotle's ideas about virtue and balanced behaviors, and a mixture of various other philosophers' ideas on social responsibility (Hanson, 2014). Media ethics, as a whole, encompass a range of issues, including, but not limited to, truthfulness, conflicts of interest, sensationalism, authenticity, and appropriateness (Hanson, 2014).

History of Media Ethics

According to Thiroux and Krasemann (2012), ethics is used to refer to a specific area of study: the area of morality, which concentrates on human conduct and human values. The practice of ethics can be separated into many theories; however, because individuals see the act of being ethical or unethical as typically good or bad, a set of good ethics are typically open for interpretation (Thiroux & Krasemann, 2012).

The first formal codes of ethics have been traced to the start of the 20th century (Herrscher, 2002). At this time, professional groups were developing ethical codes to uphold and maintain social status (Himmelboim & Limor, 2011). The very first journalism codes recorded are known as the seven "Canons of Journalism," which was adopted by the American Society of Newspaper Editors (ASNE) in 1922 in an effort to pacify the general public's dissatisfaction with newspapers in the wake of World War I (Wilkins & Brennen, 2007). The Canons showcased ethical practices regarding responsibility, freedom of the press, independence, sincerity, truthfulness, accuracy, impartiality, fair play, and decency. In addition, the code of ethics states newspapers with "vicious

interests” will suffer disapproval from their audiences, while newspapers focused on accurate and unbiased information will be considered professional and ethical (Wilkins & Brennen, 2007, p. 301).

The American Newspaper Guild (ANG), founded in the 1930s, developed an early code of ethics that influenced a great majority of professional standards (Wilkins & Brennen, 2007). The overall goal of the ANG was to better the ethical and professional values of journalism. The ANG code of ethics required journalists to produce factual and unbiased reports (Wilkins & Brennen, 2007). Additionally, the code encouraged the press to resist outside influences, including politics, economics, religion, and race (Wilkins & Brennen, 2007).

Establishing a Code of Ethics

According to Simon (2007), a major agricultural publication found establishing specific codes of ethics provided the entire staff with a tool to use when faced with unethical demands. Media personnel and organizations are aware of the ethical issues that exist in their field; they often analyze problems in an attempt to prevent like issues 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 (Huddleston, 1998).

Wheeler (2002) stated there is not a need to rehash old debates about ethics; however, the time is now to reexamine them in the light of new developments. Wheeler (2002) also said the need existed for a code of ethics for the reproduction of manipulated

photography. As discussed by Thiroux and Krasemann (2012), ethical standards are most often open for interpretation, which makes establishing a strict code tedious and difficult.

When establishing a code of ethics, W. Arens, Weigold and C. Arens (2008), suggested separating ethics into three levels of ethical responsibility and applying them to advertising. On one level, ethics comprises two interrelated components: the traditional actions taken by people in a society or community and the philosophical rules that society establishes to justify such past actions and decree future actions (Arens et al., 2008). In addition, Arens et al. (2008) argued these components create the primary rules of ethical behavior in the society and enable individuals to measure how far an individual or a company strays from the norm.

According to Arens et al. (2008), every individual faces a second set of ethical issues: the attitudes, feelings, and beliefs that create a personal value system. In addition, Arens et al. (2008) stated when the two levels of ethical decisions show conflict, individuals are pushed toward the third level of ethical concerns, which include concepts such as good, bad, right, wrong, duty, integrity, and truth. Arens et al. (2008) said these concepts are not absolute, universal, or binding, mainly because every person's moral and ethical philosophy is influenced by outside factors such as religion, society, and individual values, which ultimately will determine his or her answer to ethical decisions.

Content and Value of Ethics in the Communication Field

Ethics in journalism are accepted widely as an approach to articulating the ideas of news organizations and professionals (Himmelboim & Limor, 2011). Ethical codes are traditionally seen as a list of dos and don'ts for the professional journalist who may be challenged with ethical decision or choice (Himmelboim & Limor, 2011). Other than

providing a road map of moral decisions, journalistic codes of ethics also consider the ethical concepts within the realm of the media and the current real-life conditions in which media individuals work on a daily basis (Herrscher, 2002). The content of codes varies from a universal understanding of moral values to extremely basic and vague journalistic etiquette (Himmelboim & Limor, 2011). In addition, Himmelboim & Limor (2011) note codes are also a useful tool for organizations to outline journalistic roles within a company. Himmelboim & Limor (2011) stated:

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)

According to the National Press Photographers Association (NPPA, 2014), a constant concern exists for every person's need to be informed fully about public events and to be recognized as part of the world in which one lives. The NPPA (2014) also stated visual journalists operate as trustees of the public and their primary role is to report visually on the significant events and varied viewpoints in the world. Visual journalists have the responsibility of documenting society and preserving history through images (NPPA, 2014). "Photographic and video images can reveal great truths, expose wrongdoing and neglect, inspire hope and understanding, and connect people around the globe through the language of visual understanding" (NPPA, 2014, Pg. 1). Photographs

also can cause great harm if they are callously intrusive or are manipulated to tell a story contrary of that of reality (NPPA, 2014).

According to Coleman (2007), every photographer makes an initial decision to take a photograph but is limited based on the lens of the camera in determining what can be captured or excluded. The decision to take a photograph is first step of manipulation of a story (Coleman, 2007) In addition, the decision to crop, color correct, or correct exposure can manipulate the image again (Coleman, 2007). Snyder (1997) stated that photographs never represent a complete fact or truth. The way the public and audience interpret an image is not the main concern of photo manipulation; instead, the skepticism the audience has to the meaning of the image is of concern (Coleman, 2007).

The Need for a Code of Ethics

According to Coleman (2007), 54% of newspapers have written codes of ethics regarding photo editing and manipulation. In addition, 42% of all responding publications did not have a written code, but the majority of these publications have had discussions on what codes or guidelines photographers should follow (Coleman, 2007).

Wiggins (2013) found most livestock professionals were unaware of any clear ethical standards regarding livestock photo manipulation through livestock publications. Furthermore, these professionals strongly agreed ethical responsibility has an effect on the public perception of the publication's credibility (Wiggins, 2013).

According to Roberts (2012), one of the most important purposes of a code of ethics within a journalistic or communications organization is serving as a guide to direct an individual's decisions, preventing unethical actions, increasing communication about ethics, and influencing moral choice dilemmas. Ethical codes can serve as a public

relations function, allowing the public to review the standards by which the media judges itself (Roberts, 2012). Ethical codes also can be used by newcomers to the industry as a means of orienting themselves to the behavior expectations of the organization and the industry as a whole (Roberts, 2012). This proves beneficial in instances where organizations realistically have no power to enforce a code of ethics but can support the ethical code that provides a sense of self-regulation and moral persuasion (Roberts, 2012).

The media and its associations constantly create and update ethical codes to adjust to contemporary standards and to address the challenges of new technology (Roberts, 2012). While creating and updating codes of ethics, communicators and media members can gain many benefits, including allowing members to gain a different perspective, to learn appropriate behavior, to take responsibility for their actions, to understand the codes, and to feel a stronger connection with the organization and its values (Lytle, 2010).

Ethics in Photography

A photograph is no longer a fixed image; it has become a blurred mix of portable pixels and this is changing how we perceive what a photograph is (Long, 1999). According to Long (1999), the credibility of photojournalists is damaged every time a reputable news organizations is caught lying to the public and some of the most blatant and widely recognized situations include photo manipulation. The lack of credibility threatens the profession of photojournalists across the country because the public is losing faith in what they view because they no longer believe everything they see (Long

1999). In addition, photojournalists are experiencing a paradigm shift in how the nature of photographs is defined (Long, 1999).

In addition to overall credibility decline, the need for a code of ethics opens up a world of legal actions that photojournalists face (Alexander, 1996). According to Alexander (1996), in recent years, courts have decided several cases concerning matters of professional ethics that previously had been left to the purview of newsroom executives. Claims such as confidentiality infringement, quote and photo altering, or ads that can prove to be harmful can bring about lawsuits, potentially making or breaking media outlets (Alexander, 1996). In the case of Braun vs. Soldier of Fortune Magazine in 1992, the Eleventh Circuit of the U.S. Supreme Court of Appeals ruled media could be liable for the consequences of advertisements that create a danger or harm to the public, such as death or seriously bodily injury (Alexander, 1996). According to Alexander (1996), these claims used to be either routinely dismissed in court or never made it into a courtroom; yet, today, these accusations take serious offence.

The Associated Press (AP, 2014) abides by a strict code of ethics, stating the content of a photograph should not be altered using any photo editing software or by any other means. Elements should not be digitally added to or subtracted from any photograph (AP, 2014). Retouching an image to eliminate dust on camera sensors and scratches on scanned negatives or a scanned print is considered acceptable (AP, 2014). Likewise, the Associated Press Media Editors (APME) adopted a code of ethics in 1994 that focuses on responsibility, accuracy, integrity, and independence, stating these principals are a method of editorial performance and adhering to the public's right to know about matters of importance (APME, 2014). Codes of ethics such as the ones

outlined by the AP and APME protect the media organization and help prevent action lawsuits from being filed against the organization (Alexander, 1996).

Theoretical Lens

The utilitarianism ethical theory was used as the tool for framing the case study. Utilitarianism, whose architects were Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill, is generally found in two main forms: act utilitarianism and rule utilitarianism (Theroux and Krasemann, 2012). Act utilitarianism says everyone should perform an act to bring about the greatest amount of good over bad for everyone affected by the act (Theroux & Krasemann, 2012). Likewise, rule utilitarianism is a form in which everyone should always establish and follow a rule or rules what will bring about the greatest good for all concerned (Theroux & Krasemann, 2012).

Cognitive load can have an effect on the utilitarianism theory (Greene, Morelli, Lowenberg, Nystrom, & Cohen, 2008). Green et al. (2008), found that a cognitive load manipulation selectively interferes with utilitarian judgment; as cognitive load increased the rate time of utilitarian judgment decreased. This implies that as individuals increase their work load, utilitarianism is reacted to in a slower manner (Greene et al., 2008). In addition, Green et al. (2008) also found that in the absence of a cognitive load, there was no difference in rate time when comparing utilitarianism and non-utilitarianism judgments. Based on the findings of Green et al. (2008), cognitive load can have an effect on livestock photographer's perception of good and bad photo manipulation. This could delegate decisions livestock photographers make when editing and manipulating a photograph.

The reliance on theoretical concepts to guide design and data collection is one of the most important strategies for conducting successful case studies (Yin, 2012). The theories of ethics are centered around two major viewpoints: consequentialist and nonconsequentialist (Thiroux & Krasemann, 2012). The consequentialist viewpoint is based on or concerned with consequences, and the nonconsequentialist viewpoint is not based on or concerned with consequences (Thiroux and Krasemann, 2012). According to Thiroux and Krasemann (2012), the consequentialist viewpoint is based on two major ethical theories: ethical egoism and utilitarianism. Both theories agree that human beings should behave in a manner that brings about good consequences; however, the egoist theory says humans should act in their own self interest, and the utilitarianism theory says humans should act in the interest of all concerned (Thiroux and Krasemann, 2012).

Framing a case study with a theory will assist the researcher in answering the “how” and “why” of the phenomenon, as the case has a special meaning to participants (Yin, 2012). The theory should act as a blueprint for the study to point to “how” and “why” the eventual findings might be expected to be relevant to other similar situations or conditions (Yin, 2012). Yin (2012) also stated focusing on the “how” and “why” can go a long way toward helping one increase the value of a study.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, the methods used to conduct this study are explained, including Institutional Review Board documentation, interpretive research, thick description of the case, research design, participant selection and recruitment, procedures for data collection, data analysis, reflexivity of the researcher, the quality and ethics of the study, and the confirmability and dependability audit.

Institutional Review Board

Federal regulations and Oklahoma State University (OSU) policies require approval of all research related to human subjects before researchers can begin data collection or investigation. The Oklahoma State University Research Services and the Institutional Review Board (IRB) are required to review all 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 March 20, 2014. The application number assigned to this study was AG-14-10 (see Appendix A).

Interpretive Research

According to Glense (1999), qualitative inquiry is often used as an umbrella phrase for the many orientations to interpretivist research. Qualitative data collection is more than deciding on whether you will observe or interview people (Creswell, 2007).

Interpretive research uses smaller samples that focus on human interaction and uses data that comes directly from the subject (Sturges & Hanrahan, 2004). In interpretive research, the intent is not to generalize a population but to develop an in-depth investigation of a central phenomenon (Creswell, 2007).

Interpretive researchers typically rely on face-to-face interviewing when conducting semi-structured and in-depth interviews (Sturges & Hanrahan, 2004). However, conducting an interview by telephone is seen as appropriate for short, structured interviews or in very specific situations. According to Sturges and Hanrahan (2004), respondents who agree to be interviewed about sensitive topics preferred the anonymity of a phone call versus the face-to-face interview with the researcher. Sturges and Hanrahan (2004) reported telephone interviews increased respondents' perceptions of anonymity and interviewing by phone may increase data quality.

Case Study

All case study research starts from the same feature: the desire to derive an up-close or otherwise in-depth understanding of a single or small number of "cases" set in their real-world contexts (Yin, 2012). According to Yin (2012), case study research assumes that examining the context and other complex conditions related to the case being studied are integral to understanding the case. Case study research often requires an in-depth interview process using an unstructured or open-ended interview (Simons, 2009). When conducting such interviews, the research must document the interviewee's perspective on the topic (Simons, 2009).

Thick Description of the Case

Livestock photographers contract their services to breeders and producers who use photography as a method of marketing their animals (Cutrer, 2011). According to

Cutrer (2011), as technologies advance, an increase in online and digital marketing tactics reach more customers. These methods of livestock merchandising have increased the demand for livestock photographers (Cutrer, 2011). This demand has brought newcomer photographers into the industry with varying practices of ethical standards (Cutrer, 2011).

Livestock photographers are expected to shoot animals in the show ring and on the farm under unpredictable circumstances such as weather and environment (D.Oldenburger, personal communication, July 20, 2014). In addition to extemporaneous settings, photographers are challenged with pleasing customers-often times with unyielding deadlines (D.Oldenburger, personal communication, July 20, 2014). Apart from photographers shooting livestock in the field, photo editing is a skill used to stay competitive in the industry (D.Oldenburger, personal communication, July 20, 2014). According to Oldenburger, (personal communication, July 20, 2014). many photographers will edit by adjusting lighting, cropping backgrounds, clearing debris on or around the animal, and adjusting the sharpness of a photo. Conversely, some photographers will edit by adjusting an animal's topline, cleaning up an underline or brisket, enhancing depth of body, and manipulating an animal's head or neck (D.Oldenburger, personal communication, July 20, 2014). To many, these editing techniques not only increase the likeability of a particular animal but increase the perceived value of the animal (D.Oldenburger, personal communication, July 20, 2014). According to Oldenburger (personal communication, July 20, 2014) this typically bodes well with the customers photographers are working to please; however, when an animal is misrepresented, breeders and producers are confronted by angry buyers. Misrepresentation of an animal

reflects poorly on the producer or breeder, the photographer, and the industry (D.Oldenburger, personal communication, July 20, 2014).

According to Wiggins (2013), many members of the LPC are unaware of a code of ethics used in the livestock industry. This case study was designed to determine how far is too far when manipulating a livestock photograph from a livestock photographer's perspective.

Research Design

The study focused on the agricultural communications profession of livestock photography. The research consisted of a qualitative analysis of the ethical perspective behind editing photos of livestock. This research will provide insight on ethical decisions when photographing and editing livestock images.

A single embedded case study was the correct approach to better understand the objectives of the study (Yin, 2014). This approach was chosen to address given objectives among the same population (Yin, 2014). According to Yin, (2003), a case study should be considered when the focus of the study meets one of the following criteria:

- The study answers how and why questions.
- The researcher cannot manipulate the behavior of those involved in the study.
- The researcher wants to cover contextual conditions based on the belief they are relevant to the phenomenon being studied.
- The boundaries are not clear between the phenomenon and context.

A semi-structured interview method was used to collect data from livestock photography professionals (Creswell, 2007). According to Creswell (2007), case study research is the study of an issue explored through one or more cases within a bounded system. This research is bounded by the open-ended questions presented to livestock photographers contained by the subject of ethics in livestock photography.

This research encompasses the ethics practiced by livestock photography professionals, and the case included a population of livestock photography professionals with at least 10 years of photography experience.

Participant Selection and Recruitment

Individuals were selected and interviewed based on their involvement in the livestock photography industry. A snowball sample ($n = 7$) allowed interview participants to recommend further participants for the study who had been active in the industry for some time and who had experienced the practices in question. The first interviewee was selected at random from a list provided by the LPC of self-identified livestock photographers. The LPC photographer list was chosen based on the findings from Wiggins (2013) research on LCP members ethical perspectives in the area of photography. Upon completion of the interview, each individual was asked to recommend a peer who would have had similar experiences in the profession; the name was then cross-referenced with the list of livestock photographers provided by the LPC before interviewing. A total of 12 ($n = 12$) photographers were contacted, two ($n = 2$) did not reply, and three ($n = 3$) declined to be interviewed. The snowball process was repeated until a list of seven individuals ($n = 7$) was identified and interviewed.

Pre-interview emails were sent to schedule interviews for each individual. A subject participation form was emailed to each participant describing in-depth the nature of the interview and research while outlining a willingness to participate clause along with contact information for the lead investigator and the OSU IRB office (see Appendix B).

Procedures for Data Collection

When conducting case study-based research, the process of collecting data involves primarily in-depth research to be conducted among participants through either an interview process or through questionnaires where environment and surrounding are observed when possible (Creswell, 2012). After IRB approval (see Appendix A), in-depth interviews were conducted using a semi-structured interview approach via Skype™ for MAC (version 6.3.0.602, 2013) and recorded via Call Recorder for Skype™ for MAC (version 2.4, 2013). Based on previous research in the agricultural communications field and current research objectives, a series of semi-structured interviews was used to better understand livestock photographers' experiences with photo editing. Interviews were conducted at various times of the day based on the availability of each participant. Interviews were transcribed by a third party transcriptionist and reviewed by the researcher for accuracy. Transcribed interviews were saved as Microsoft Word documents. Post transcription, the interviews were sent to the interviewees in the form of a PDF document to conduct member checks and approval before being analyzed to ensure the results were valid and reflected their interpretation of the case (Creswell, 2007). Transcribed interviews were stored in a secure location while the data was

analyzed. A design and interview protocol was developed that consisted of the following five open-ended questions (Creswell, 2012):

1. What should be included in a code of ethics for livestock photographers?
2. As a livestock photographer, what would you consider to be unethical when digitally manipulating a photo?
3. Why are ethical concerns regarding digital photo manipulation important, when it comes to the public's perceptions of the agricultural industry?
4. What factors influence your opinions on photo manipulation?
5. What do you consider ethical?

These questions were developed based on the findings of Wiggins (2013), which states future research should be conducted to determine the influence professional roles have on ethical perspectives. Interviewees were assumed to hold professional roles within the livestock photography industry when cross-referenced with the acquired list of photographers from the LPC. The questions presented followed the suggestions of Marshall and Rossman (2006), engaging the interviewee to fully express their thoughts and opinions. The need for evaluation between ethical perspectives of professionals and their role as photographers is critical in the development of ethical standards among livestock photographers (Wiggins, 2013).

Data Analysis

Each interview participant was designated a letter (A, B, C, D, E, F, and G) to keep anonymity among individuals. All interviews and data were analyzed using a method of *horizontalization* as suggested by Creswell (2012) to evaluate profound statements and commonality among responses. Statements were coded and compiled to

highlight the most common responses by participants. A holistic analysis was used to address the objectives of the study, which created themes in the findings (Yin, 2014).

Reflexivity of the Researcher

Emphasis on interpretation is the most distinctive characteristic of qualitative inquiry (Stake, 1995). To maintain proper interpretation of data within qualitative research, Stake (1995) suggests a research journal be maintained that identifies biases the researcher may ultimately obtain. A brief description of the researcher's background is appropriate to reveal potential bias relating to the study (Creswell 2007; Stake, 1995):

Growing up in Maine, I was surrounded by the livestock industry as a seed-stock producer and showman. For the last five years, I have been involved in professional livestock photography. In addition, I have spent time within the industry working for breed associations and in livestock merchandising.

Trustworthiness, Dependability, and Reciprocity of Study

According to Tracy (2010), trustworthiness is a key to high-quality interpretive research. A transparent approach to this study was taken, and all horizons were considered equal and nonbiased (Moustakas, 1994). To uphold trustworthiness and transparency, proper informed consent forms were distributed to all participants via email. This consent and explanation of research was designed to empower the participants while giving them the opportunity to understand the purpose and process of data collection while ruling out any form of deception from the researcher (Glesne, 1998). In addition, the consent and explanation document informed participants of the right to privacy, ensuring all interviews were to stay anonymous.

To maintain reliability and non-bias, interviews were transcribed by a third party transcriptionist and reviewed by the researcher for verification and accuracy. The researcher coded member statements as a further step to eliminate the possibility of subjectivity during analysis. The documents regarding the study were stored in a locked filing cabinet and any digital files were password protected. Maintaining records for material audits increases the credibility and reliability of a study because it allows an outside party to conduct member checks on the research process and assess the researchers methods and analysis (Glesne, 2006).

Glazer (1982) defines reciprocity as the exchange of favors and commitments, the building of a sense of mutual identification and feeling of community. Reciprocity was achieved because both parties (the researcher and participants) benefited from the study. The participants agreed to share their opinions so the livestock industry could better understand the ethics involved in livestock photography and the researcher agreed to share the participants' stories concisely and accurately to better understand livestock photography ethics for industry professionals.

Confirmability and Dependability Audit

Confirmability and dependability audits are techniques for evaluating and enhancing the quality of inferences in qualitative research after interpreted data are collected (Bergman, 2008). The dependability audit concerns the process of the inquiry, including the appropriate inquiry of decisions and methodological shifts (Bergman, 2008). The confirmability audit is an examination of the product of the inquiry to gain confidence the interpretations are supported by the results and are internally coherent. A peer examination of data was conducted to produce confirmability audit of data collected

through the interview process. The confirmability audit was conducted to ensure a degree of neutrality and non-bias was implemented when data were gathered. According to Seale (2004), confirmability is comparable to objectivity, that is, the extent to which a researcher is aware of or accounts for individual subjectivity or bias. The dependability audit was conducted to ensure the integrity of the study was intact and the research could be repeated easily. According to Seale (2004), dependability can be achieved through auditing, which consists of the researcher's documentation of data, methods, and decisions made during research as well as its end products. Auditing for dependability requires the data and descriptions of the research should be elaborate and rich (Seale, 2004). Dependability also may be enhanced by altering the research design as new data emerges. A dependability audit was conducted through a series of peer-reviewed member checks to determine the accuracy of data collection, methods, and decisions made while gathering data.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

This chapter discusses the findings of the research as it applies to the objectives of the study. During the data analysis, interviews were coded, and three themes emerged when the utilitarianism theory as a lens. A total of 78 significant statements were collected among participants supporting the three themes. The following themes emerged from the interviews: Animal Manipulation (Objective 1), Photo Alterations (Objective 1), and Industry Impact and Reputation (Object 2).

Findings: Animal Manipulation

Participants explained what was acceptable and unacceptable regarding manipulation to animals in livestock photos, which addressed Objective 1. Table 1 highlights significant statements supporting participants' views regarding the manipulation of the animals in photographs in either an ethical or unethical manner.

Table 1.

Significant statements related to animal manipulation

Ethical	Not Ethical
“If it’s something you can do with a brush and pair of clippers, it’s okay to do in Photoshop.”	“Altering the physical confirmation of the animal.”
“If there is a piece of hair that doesn’t belong, it’s okay to remove it.”	“Misrepresenting the physical element of the animal.”
“I will fill in hair on legs and a tail head to make them look fuller.”	I won’t portray an animal to be thicker, or alter confirmation.”
“I edit things like tufts of hair or anything that can be done with clippers or a comb.”	“Anything that alters the structure of the animal.”
“Proper tilt of the picture in order to level the animal.”	“Photographer should definitely not misrepresent the subject in any way.”
“Clean up an animal without changing the physical appearance.”	“Changing the structure of the animal.”
“Editing the animal’s hide, freeing it from debris.”	“Editing should not affect the overall integrity of the animal.”
	“Leveling out the topline or making an animal look deeper and more sprung in the rib.”
	“Straightening out a topline or deepening up a quarter.”
	“Manipulating a photo that skews the animal’s physical appearance.”

Participant F stated, “There needs to be some kind of standard where we say what is acceptable and what is not. Can a photographer clean up the background or substitute the background? There should be a standard that outlines whether it’s ethical.” Some participants find themselves questioning the value of editing photos by stating: “As a livestock photographer, my job is to bring out all of the strong points of the animal through the lens. My focus is doing that, as opposed to making an animal look better on a computer or with computer software.” Additional statements supporting this theme can be found in Appendix C.

Findings: Photo Alterations

Participants explained what was acceptable and unacceptable when making alterations to photos outside of manipulation of the animal related to Objective 2. Table 2 highlights significant statements supporting participants’ views regarding photo alterations in either an ethical or unethical manner.

Table 2.

Significant statements related to photo alterations

Ethical	Not Ethical
“Removing a halter or mud and dirt off the animal and cleaning out elements out of the background.”	“Changing the color of an animal.”
“Cropping dirt, off the animal’s body”	“Cropping an image that is misleading as far as representation of the animal is concerned.”
“I will fill in legs and a tail head to make them look fuller” [Referring to animals who may have lost their hair]	“Cropping the animal’s body such as around its neck to give it a cleaner appearance.”
“Anything that draws your eye away from the photograph of the animal.”	“Altering and cropping to restructure an animal.”
“Removal of background distractions such as a tree or post.”	“Cropping parts of an animal in a way that misleads the viewer.”
“Adjust brightness and clarity of a photo.”	“Making photo alterations to another photographer’s photo without a copyright release.”
“Change background, remove trees, or objects from the background.”	“Cropping out physical blemishes from the animal.”

Participants expressed what alterations photographers could make to a photograph beyond animal manipulation that is considered ethical and unethical. Participant A stated, “Color and brightness adjustment are two alterations that can be made as long as the physical appearance of the animal is not compromised.” In addition, Participant C stated: “Lighting can change the look of an animal drastically without having to change the physical appearance of the animal. Lighting effects and background changes are a good way to showcase the animal in a brighter light.” Participant E mentioned how environmental and location settings have an effect on the outcome of shots taken and stated, “Sawdust and mud can ethically be edited off the hide of an animal.” Additional statements supporting this theme can be found in Appendix D.

Findings: Industry Impact and Reputation

Participants stated various impacts the livestock industry has faced because of misrepresentation in livestock photos related to Objective 3. Table 3 highlights significant statements supporting participants’ views regarding the impact photo manipulation has had on the livestock industry.

Table 3.

Significant statements related to industry impact and reputation

“If photos aren’t accurate, you are misleading every client in the industry from the beginning.”

“The ag industry has always had the perception of holding a lot of integrity, and when we start manipulating photos to a point where we lose animal integrity, the public starts feeling like they are being misled.”

“Heavily manipulated photos don’t show factual information and skew the public’s perception of the livestock industry as a whole.”

“I think it gives the industry a bad name when there is over manipulation of photos taking place among photographers.”

“Farmers and ranchers have always prided themselves as being honest and trustworthy individuals, and unfortunately when a customer purchases an animal from a photo only to find that animal was misrepresented, the trustworthiness is lost.”

“I blame the public for not being wise enough to the situation [photo manipulation] and making breeding decisions based on photos.”

“Photo manipulation has not given the industry a bad name; it’s given the photographers’ bad names.”

Participant X stated, “Photographers tend to compete against each other and without noticing photo manipulation has gotten out of hand ... ” When such competitions arise, credibility is lost, and non-manipulated photos are automatically assumed to be manipulated based off past experiences.” Participant B expressed the need to take good photos from the start to avoid altering or manipulating altogether.

When asked about public and industry perspectives regarding digital photo manipulation, Participant C stated: “More of the responsibility needs to lie with the person that’s potentially buying the animal. If you go through your whole career of the livestock producer, and all you do is buy animals based on their photograph, I don’t know that you’re going to real successful career as a livestock producer.” Participant D added, “Photographers must determine what their values, morals, and standards are before undertaking a role as a livestock photographer.” Additional statements supporting this theme can be found in Appendix E.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMENDATIONS

This chapter includes conclusions for each objective based on the findings of the research study, recommendations for future research, and discussion of findings.

Discussion and Conclusions Related to Objective 1

Objective 1 sought to describe livestock photographer's ethical perspectives when digitally manipulating a photograph. Based on the findings, livestock photographers who were interviewed consider changing the physical appearance of an animal to be unethical. Participants also consider manipulation of an animal is only acceptable when the appearances that are being altered can be done naturally by proper grooming or animal cooperation. This agrees with the code of ethics implemented by the NPPC that states "photographs also can cause great harm if they are callously intrusive or are manipulated to tell a story contrary of that of reality" (NPPC, 2014).

All participants stated ethical and unethical standards practiced when manipulating livestock photos. Participants indicated that manipulation of photos that hinder the physical appearance of an animal is an unacceptable practice. In addition, participants said photo editing should be limited and not change the physical appearance of the animal. Alteration of livestock photographs around the animal was considered an

ethical practice. In addition, participants consider the alteration of lighting and the sharpening of images to be ethical practices, considering the various weather conditions, environmental settings, and atmospheres many photographers are subject to.

Based on the findings, any manipulation that changes the physical appearance or integrity of an animal is an unethical practice. All participants understood the need to present a product that is pleasing to the eye and provides truth and trustworthiness to those viewing the photo. Livestock photographers are not only working to please the livestock owners but also the final customers.

A fine line exists between manipulation and misrepresentation according to participants. Some participants held contrasting views on the acceptability of ethical manipulation and alteration. These findings coincide with Wiggins' (2013) study, which describes agricultural communications professionals desire for more consistent guidelines throughout the industry. As a whole, all participants agreed proper ethical behavior is important in how photographers represent their finished work. According to Wiggins' (2013) study, 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. In addition, all participants agreed livestock should be portrayed in a clear and precise light without affecting the integrity of the animal.

Discussion and Conclusions Related to Objective 2

Objective 2 sought to describe the impact digital manipulation has on the livestock industry. Participants agreed the livestock industry has a rich reputation of trustworthiness and integrity. In addition, participants used a utilitarianism approach

when viewing the role digital manipulation has on the livestock industry: Though participants compete against one another for business, the greater good of the industry for all is participants approach when discussing industry impact which falls under the theory of utilitarianism as described by Theroux and Krasemann, (2012). These findings also agree with Wiggins (2013) study that states industry members strongly agree that ethical responsibility has an effect on the public perception of a publication's credibility. Participants have an overwhelming pride for the industry and want to produce quality products to protect its integrity.

According to Long (1999), since the age of digital photography and photo manipulation, credibility among photojournalists has decreased due to misrepresentation of an event or product. The findings indicate this is particularly true within the livestock industry because of increased Internet marketing. Participants generally agreed the agriculture industry is known for its trustworthiness, credibility, and integrity. Photo manipulation has tested these traits for the sake of marketing livestock to drive a higher value for the animals.

All photographers seemed to understand the importance of ethics to maintain credibility and integrity among their peers and the public they serve. This follows the fundamental issues Long (1999) presented regarding trustworthiness and credibility. Each photographer has ethical decisions to face when digitally manipulating and altering photos; however, reputation is a major factor they consider before editing takes place.

Recommendations for Future Research

As the findings provide structure for the development of a code ethics for livestock photographers, other areas within the agricultural marketing and advertising

industry may benefit from similar ethical research. Further research examining photography used for specifically advertising purposes versus other types of photography could help improve ethical codes.

Several of the participants mentioned videography as an additional avenue for marketing livestock. Ethics in the area of videography should be researched to further the integrity of the communications field within the livestock industry.

Recommendations for Practice

Participant responses suggest a need for a clear code of ethics to serve as guidelines for industry professionals when digitally manipulating photos of livestock. An updated code of ethics could help improve industry consistency and trustworthiness within the agriculture industry. As suggested by Zhang and Swanson (2006), activities such as establishing a code of ethics can improve the financial bottom line for businesses by improving their reputations with the public.

Livestock marketing professionals should continue to monitor developments within their field and consider opinions of other professionals regarding ethical issues associated with trends in the livestock marketing industry. Current ethical codes should be updated and industry organizations should increase awareness by offering trainings and workshops, as suggested by Geisler (2011). Additionally, professional organizations in the livestock marketing industry could collaborate and consider the findings in this study to update ethical codes within the industry.

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APPENDIX A

Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board

Date: Thursday, March 20, 2014
IRB Application No AG1410
Proposal Title: Livestock Publications Council Members' Ethical Perspectives Regarding Digital Photo Manipulation of Livestock
Reviewed and Processed as: Exempt

Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved Protocol Expires: 3/19/2017

Principal Investigator(s):

Jacob R. Gankofskie 4599 N Washington St Apt 1c Stillwater, OK 74075	Shelly Sitton 435 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.

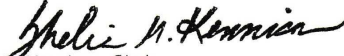
The final versions of any printed recruitment, consent and assent documents bearing the IRB approval stamp are attached to this letter. These are the versions that must be used during the study.

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. 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 the 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 Dawnnett Watkins 219 Cordell North (phone: 405-744-5700, dawnnett.watkins@okstate.edu).

Sincerely,



Shelia Kennison, Chair
Institutional Review Board

APPENDIX B

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION
OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY

Title: Livestock Publications Council Members' Ethical Perspectives Regarding Digital Photo Manipulation of Livestock

Investigator: Jacob Gankofskie

Graduate Assistant

Dept. of Agricultural

Education, Communications

& Leadership,

Oklahoma State University

Dr. Shelly Sitton

Professor

Dept. of Agricultural

Education, Communications

& Leadership,

Oklahoma State University

Purpose: The purpose of the research study is to better understand livestock photographers' ethical standards. This research will consist of a qualitative analysis of the ethical perspective behind editing photos of livestock. Though the profession is commonly unheard of among the public, further research would help provide insight about agriculturalists' ethical decisions when dealing with livestock.

What to Expect: Participants will be asked a series of questions the process should last 20 to 30 minutes that will be audio recorded however, I expect some interviews will last longer and some may be shorter.

Risks: There are no known risks associated with this project which are greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life.

Benefits: There are no direct benefits to you. However, you may gain an appreciation and understanding of how research is conducted.

Compensation: You will not receive compensation for your participation.

Your Rights and Confidentiality: Your participation in this research is voluntary. There is no penalty for refusal to participate, and you are free to withdraw your consent and participation in this project at any time.

Confidentiality: The records of this study will be kept private. Any written results will discuss group findings and will not include information that will identify you. Research records will be stored on a password protected computer in a locked office and only researchers and individuals responsible for research oversight will have access to the records. Data will be destroyed three years after the study has been completed. Audio tapes will be transcribed and destroyed within 60 days of the interview.

Contacts: You may contact any of the researchers at the following addresses and phone numbers, should you desire to discuss your participation in the study and/or request information about the results of the study:

Shelly Sitton, Ph.D., Agricultural Hall, Dept. of Agricultural Education, Communications & Leadership Oklahoma State University, 435 Agricultural Hall, Stillwater, OK 74078, 405 -744-3690.

Jake Gankofskie, Graduate Assistant, Dept. of Agricultural Education, Communications & Leadership, Oklahoma State University, 435 Agricultural Hall, Stillwater OK 74078, 307-254-2504.

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

If you choose to participate: Participating in the interview indicates that you freely and voluntarily agree to participate in this study and you also acknowledge that you are at least 18 years of age.

APPENDIX C

Additional statements supporting theme 1

Ethical	Not Ethical
“If a calf had shavings on his body, you could easily bush them off, so this could be edited in Photoshop.”	“Cleaning the animal’s underline and deepening up the flank”
“If you had a little hair out of place on the tail head you could nick it off to make the animal look straighter.”	“Altering to enhance any part of the animal that is naturally visible.”
“Retouching that does not alter the outlines of the animal.”	“Anything less than the true representation of the animal is not ethical.”
“I use Photoshop to lift heads and necks up.”	“Manipulating an animal’s neck to make them look choke neck, or manipulation to their rib capacity and flank.”
“Proper tilt of the picture in order to level the animal.”	“Changing the structure of the animal or adding things to the animal.”
“Editing out of place hair or long hair.”	“Perfecting an utter or changing an animal to make it look better than it is.”
	“No physical manipulation to the animal should happen to any livestock photo.”

APPENDIX D

Additional statements supporting theme 2

Ethical	Not Ethical
“Cleaning out elements in a background like a fence post or telephone pole.”	“Extremely tilting a photo in a manner where the actual background is skewed.”
“Color and brightness are acceptable alterations.”	“Cropping an image that is misleading as far as representation of the animal is concerned.”
“Changing light or color because the sun doesn’t always cooperate, sometimes we need to enhance it.”	“Physically coloring an animal in a photograph with a marker to enhance its bone.”
“Removal of halters and manure.”	
“Change the background and crop debris from the background”	

APPENDIX E

Additional statements supporting table 3

“Photo manipulation has made producers a little more skittish about buying some things they haven’t physically seen.”

“No one likes anything to be misrepresented, so it’s very important that our industry is looked at with a lot of integrity.”

Photographers are here to please two customers; the breeder and most importantly the end customer. When we try to sneak something by them through manipulation they are going to catch on and it could ruin the industry integrity.”

“Showing manipulated photos aren’t always showing factual information and skews the public’s perception.”

“I feel sorry for all the producers who don’t see these animals in person and those who are making purchases based off pictures when the animal in real life is totally different.”

“When looking through a sale catalog and all of the photos are so similar the buyer can’t decipher one animal from another, it is very misleading.”

VITA

Jacob Ronald Gankofskie

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: LIVESTOCK PHOTOGRAPHERS' ETHICAL PERSPECTIVES
REGARDING DIGITAL PHOTO MANIPULATION

Major Field: Agricultural Communications

Biographical:

Education:

Completed the requirements for the Master of Science in your Agricultural Communications at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in July, 2014.

Completed the requirements for the Bachelor of Science in your Agricultural Communications at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in May, 2012.

Completed the requirements for the Associate of Science in your Agricultural Communications at Northwest College, Powell, Wyoming in May, 2010.

Experience:

Graduate teaching and research assistant for the photography classes for Oklahoma State University Agricultural Communications program, Stillwater, Oklahoma in August 2013 – Present.

Graduate assistant in Marketing and Communications for the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources, Stillwater, Oklahoma in August 2013 – Present.

Image Specialist at Show Champions livestock photography August 2010 – Present .

Intern at the American Shorthorn Association in Marketing and Communications Omaha, Nebraska, May 2011 – August 2011

Professional Memberships:

National Agricultural Communicators of Tomorrow member