

AAEA PHOTOGRAPHERS' CODE OF ETHICS

(ADOPTED 2013, UPDATED 2018)

Members of the AAEA, The Agricultural Communicators Network, a professional society that promotes the highest standards in journalism, have a commitment to publish photographic and video images that give an accurate depiction of people, events and places. Photographs can cause great harm if they are manipulated, and our members should avoid doing so. With that in mind, here are some basic tenets we expect our members to follow:

- The basic content of a photograph must not be altered in Photoshop or by any other means.
- We should never add objects to a photo that were not there when the photo was taken, and we should not remove objects that were there.
- Minor digital adjustments in images are acceptable but must be used sparingly. These include digitally lightening or darkening areas, conversion into grayscale, and normal toning.
- Color adjustments should be limited to those minimally necessary for clear and accurate reproduction and to restore the authentic nature of the scene.
- Use of digital tools is acceptable to eliminate dust on images.
- It is permissible to use software extensively to manipulate a photo or to merge photos but only when the intent to alter reality is made clear to the reader. We must label such work as “photo illustration.”
- For video, we permit the use of standard methods of improving technical quality, such as adjusting video and audio levels. These include: color correcting for white balance, eliminating extraneous noises and editing for length and clarity. We do not add or alter sound or video in any way that can mislead viewers or misrepresent subjects.