



MSU Extension 4-H Virtual Learning Showcase & Auctions

Tips for Taking Photos and Videos



START WITH A CLEAN LENS This may seem obvious, but dirt and dust can ruin a perfectly good photo or video! Always clean off the lens on your phone/camera, especially if you are taking photos/video outside or in a barn. Try to use a clean cloth (or in a pinch your shirt will work just fine).



WHAT'S IN YOUR BACKGROUND Before you take a photo or video, go to the location and take a good look at your background. Is there anything in the background you would like to avoid? While taking the video, make sure to avoid items in the background such as cars going by on a road or other people.



NO ZOOMING IN On most smartphones you do have the ability to Zoom in on an object however, this is going to reduce the clarity of the photo. Instead of zooming in on an object – just take few steps closer!



KEEP IT STEADY Trying to keep a steady hand while taking photos is especially important in low-light areas. While taking video, it is especially important to keep steady as we have all seen videos which are hard to watch as there is a lot of movement by the person taking the video. Here are some suggestions:

- Prop your phone on a solid object such as a wall or a few bales of hay
- Hold your phone with both hands with a solid grip
- Keep your elbows close to your body or lean against a wall or building to keep from moving





LIGHTING IS KEY Lighting can make a big difference in your photos and videos. If you are inside, take into consideration natural lighting from windows. Drawing the shades and moving lamps can be a big help! If you are outdoors you may consider taking photos/video earlier or later in the day for good lighting and for cooler temperatures. At high Noon on a sunny day, you may see shadows and the person may squint with the sun in their eyes.



THE HORIZONTAL RULE Always take your photos and video horizontally (landscape) instead of vertically – especially when taking video, otherwise, you will have black lines on each side of the video once it is uploaded and shared.



DON'T TAKE JUST ONE – BUT MANY

Do not be afraid to take many photos and several videos so you have several to choose from. It is better to have several to choose from rather than realizing you need to take the pictures or video again another day!



HAVE A PRACTICE RUN When taking video have a practice run ahead of time – maybe even on another day. This will help the exhibitor practice leading their animal or in a public presentation exhibit, it will help them feel comfortable talking in front of the camera. Have fun while practicing – it does not have to be perfect the first time!

