

# Digital Photography 101

“A picture is worth a thousand words.”

**t**he evolution of digital photography has brought powerful tools to consumers. Agriculture teachers are applying this technology to enhance everything from classroom lessons to award applications to news coverage. However, as with all technology, understanding the basics is critical to success.

Today's digital cameras offer a wide range of features and come in an equally broad price range. If you're in the market for a new camera, take time to think through the features you will use versus those that you will never need. There is no use paying for extra bells and whistles if you never use them. If the technology is intimidating, find a student who is interested in the topic and ask him or her to research cameras and provide suggestions. The journalism teacher might also be helpful.

When shopping for gear, you'll want to test a few cameras, see how they feel in your hand and how easy it is to manipulate the controls. If the camera is too complex, it may not be the best choice for an FFA chapter where multiple people will need to use it.

## Important Features

The most important features on a basic camera are likely to be the speed at which the camera responds to the user (i.e. is there a long pause from the time you press the shutter until the camera saves

the image) and the resolution levels at which images may be saved. While lower resolutions are fine if you're going to be using the images on screen or in PowerPoint presentations, they will not



The top photo was saved at 300 DPI. The photo to the right was saved at 72 DPI.

many images to any given memory device, be it a memory card, CD or hard drive. As a general rule of thumb, file sizes of 1 megabyte or larger will print well. Refer to the chart for more information.

The National FFA Organization relies on teachers and members to provide images for use in a variety of materials—everything from this publication, *FFA Advisors Making a Difference*, to the *Chapter Innovators Guide*, national convention award presentations and more. When the only images that are available are of low resolution, the end product will not represent the chapter or members well.

## Resolution and Image Sizes

- 2560 X 1920 pixels = 8.5" X 6" print
- 1600 X 1200 pixels = 5.5" X 4" print
- 1280 X 960 pixels = 3.5" X 2" print
- 640 X 480 pixels = 2" X 1.5" print

As a general rule, it is better to save images in a higher resolution format so that they can be used for a wider range of end uses. While this will require more storage space, you'll have better results in the long run. And, because you can view pictures instantly, you can delete the images you'll never use and it won't cost a cent.