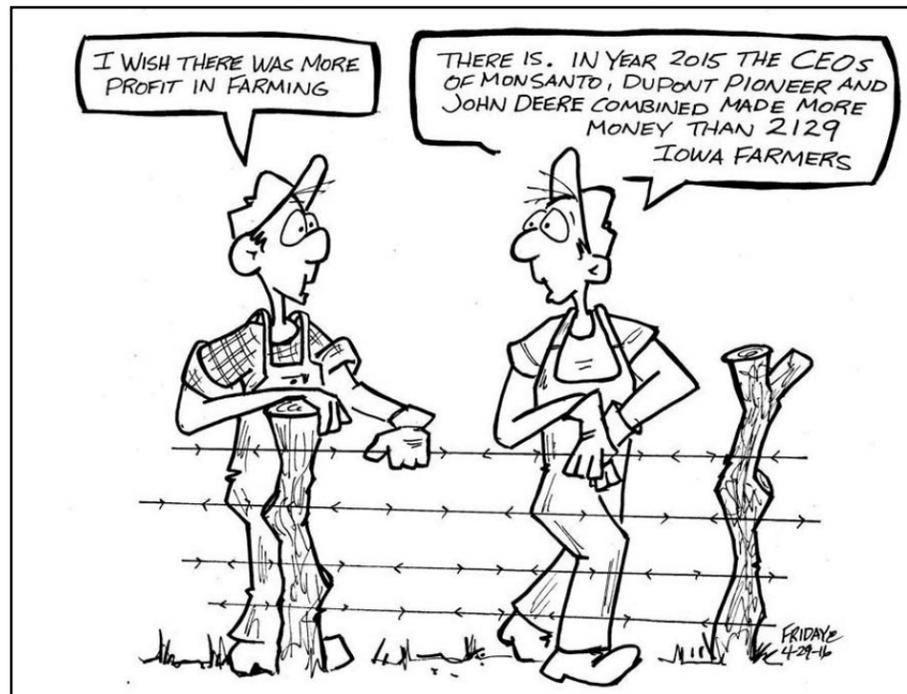


## A News Media Betrayal of Journalism

by: Jim Hightower

From *The Hightower LowDown*, May 24, 2016



Rick Friday's Editorial Cartoon that Got Him Fired from Farm News

Hard experience teaches that biotech, chemical, and other agribusiness giants have no sense of respect for Mother Nature. But Rick Friday has learned that they have no sense of humor, either.

Friday, a lifelong Iowa farmer He also happens to be a talented, self-taught cartoonist. For 21 years, he has supplemented his cattle-raising income with a dab of money he gets paid for drawing cartoons each week in an Iowa publication named Farm News. Friday really enjoyed this side job... until April 30. The day before, the News had published his drawing of two hard-hit farmers chatting at a fence about the low prices they were getting for their products. "I wish there were more profits in farming," mused one. "There is," exclaimed the other. "In year 2015, the CEOs of Monsanto, Dupont, Pioneer, and John Deere combined made more money than 2,129 Iowa farmers."

It wasn't exactly a harsh comment. but - WHAP! - the next morning, Rick was

slapped with an email from a Farm News editor announcing that at the direction of the publisher, Friday was immediately being terminated. The drawing "had caused a storm here," the editor wrote, adding that one of the named corporate giants had pulled its advertising. "In the eyes of some," the email confided, "big agriculture cannot be criticized or poked fun at."

And yet, Big Ag wonders why it is so loathed across America's farm country!

The petulant corporate bully that mugged Rick Friday won't identify itself - but why won't Farm News? Does its publisher and owners feel no journalistic responsibility to report actual news - in this case, news that farmers really could use? The publication's pusillanimous sacrifice of its longtime cartoonist is a shameful betrayal of both its farmer readership and the ethics of journalism.

They should rename it the Agribusiness Shill.

### UPDATE! July 6th 2016 Rick Friday Rehired!

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — An Iowa editorial cartoonist has been rehired by the farm publication that fired him earlier this year. The Des Moines Register reports (<http://dmreg.co/29ED1F6>) that Rick Friday's cartoons returned to the Fort Dodge, Iowa, based Farm News in Friday's edition. He was fired in May 2016 after an advertiser reportedly complained about a cartoon he drew complaining about dwindling farmer profits at the same time CEOs at agricultural corporations receive millions.

Friday says the Farm News apologized for his firing and negotiated a deal for his return.

The Farm News included a brief note with Friday's new cartoon announcing his return. The publication said Friday's "witty insight will regularly return to its home on our editorial page and our website

## KEEP THE HIVES ALIVE TOUR Brings Millions of Dead Bees to DC To Highlight Threat to Our Nation's Pollinators

By: Katherine Berko,  
*Friends of the Earth*

A truck full of dead bees made its final stop at a rally outside the headquarters of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on June 22nd, culminating a coast-to-coast Keep the Hives Alive Tour to raise awareness about recent massive declines in pollinators. Over two weeks the tour made stops in California, South Dakota, Minnesota, Michigan, Pennsylvania, and North Carolina.

"In the five years since I started keeping bees, I've seen many hives killed by pesticides," said James Cook, a Minnesota-based beekeeper who has been driving the truck across the country since last Monday. "If some fundamental things don't change, it's going to be really hard for beekeepers to adapt to the environment around us."

Bees pollinate most of the world's most common crops, including summer favorites like peaches and watermelon. But over 40 percent of U.S. honeybee hives die each year, costing the farming and beekeeping industry more than \$2 billion annually.

One culprit in the bee die-off is the widely-used class of pesticides called neonicotinoids, or neonics. Last spring EPA began a process to assess four types of neonics and their impacts on pollinators. In January the Agency acknowledged that imidacloprid could indeed harm bees, but the remaining assessments are still outstanding.

"Given the facts we have at hand about the links between neonics and bee die-offs, officials should move boldly and swiftly to stop any and all uses of these dangerous chemicals," said Anna Aurilio, the director of the Washington, D.C., office of Environment America.

Farmers, beekeepers and food advocates met with officials from the EPA, members of Congress and representatives from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, delivering letters from nearly 200 businesses and organizations urging action on bee-killing pesticides and support for sustainable agriculture, as well as 4 million signatures from concerned citizens.



EcoWatch Photo Credit - Suzannah Hoover

"The science is clear and convincing. To be truly effective, we need a nationwide policy to protect our pollinators before the crisis gets completely out of control," said Del. Anne Healey, sponsor of Maryland's Pollinator Protection Act, the first bill passed in the United States to eliminate consumer use of neonics.

"I have never seen any compelling reason to use systemic insecticides," said Jim Goodman, farmer and owner of Northwood Organic Farm in Wonewoc, Wisconsin. "Crop rotation as part of a diverse mix of crops, pasture and native plants seems to work quite well. Of course it makes little profit for the corporations that manufacture agricultural chemicals - and there is the rub."

"Bees are the most important thing for sustainable food growth, which is one of the reasons I have always sourced 100 percent organic food, free of pesticides that may cause pollinators harm," said Nora Pouillon, owner and founder of Restaurant Nora, America's first certified organic restaurant.

"What's happening today to pollinators is no different than what happened 50 years ago with the collapse of the osprey, bald eagle, and other bird and aquatic animal populations due to the use of DDT," said Scott Nash, CEO of Mom's Organic Market. "If we allow the chemical agribusiness industry to continue these short-sighted practices, food costs will increase as food supplies diminish."

"We have so many losses it's worse than break-even. It is getting harder and harder to keep bees and make a living," said Roger Williams, president of the Central Maryland Beekeepers Association. "And if we stop keeping bees, who's going to pollinate your fruits and vegetables? This can't go on."