

Monday May 14, 1:13 AM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Only UC's Barricades and Police Stand In Way of Gill Tract Scientists' Research

May 14, 2012

Albany, CA - The Gill Tract Farmers Collective has broken down camp and moved it off the plot of Class I agricultural soil and outside the gates of the Gill Tract. The only thing standing in the way of the Gill Tract scientists from conducting their research is UC's own barricades and police.* Last week current Gill Tract scientists Miguel Altieri and Sarah Hake and former Gill Tract scientist and professor emeritus Andrew Gutierrez attempted to access the land. They were denied access by a UCPD officer who stated the only person authorized entrance was the dean of UC's College of Natural Resources, Keith Gilles. We will continue to maintain access to the plot so that the farmers and community can continue caring for the crops. We intend to coexist with the scientists on the plot this season as interim and future governance is resolved.

Consistent with our statements all along, and consistent with our direct dialogue with the scientists over the past three weeks, we have made the collective decision to move off the plot of Class I soil where the researchers need to plant their corn so that we may coexist with them.

We hope our collective decision and action will be seen as measure of good faith toward the scientists. We ask UC administrators to allow us until 10am on Monday, May 14, before moving in with their tractors to till the land for the scientists. We need some time to wake up, stretch our legs, get our blood flowing (it's cold at night!), and do a final run-through to make sure the plot is clean and tidy.

As for the encampment, we never considered it permanent nor central to our long-term objective. An encampment on the Class I soil is not required to grow food in an ecologically-sound and socially-just way.

Having said that, in no way should our actions be interpreted as an abandonment of our resolve and effort toward building and maintaining an urban agriculture farm on this land. On the contrary. We had a great three week anniversary and Mother's Day celebration this weekend. We have been humbled and energized by the local, national, and international support for agroecology, food sovereignty, and Occupy the Farm. Until the gates are open to the public from sunup to sundown seven days a week, we plan to maintain a constant presence outside the gates of the Gill Tract to ensure our crops are safe and healthy and so that we may continue facilitating open dialogue about the future of the Gill Tract.

Notes

*Current UC Berkeley scientists conducting research on the plot of Class I agricultural soil include:

Miguel Altieri, professor of agroecology, dept of Environmental Science, Policy, & Management

Sarah Hake, adjunct professor, dept of Plant & Microbial Biology; center director, USDA Plant Gene Expression Center

Frank Harmon, adjunct associate professor, dept of Plant & Microbial Biology

Steven Lindow, professor, dept of Plant & Microbial Biology

Damon Lisch, associate research professional, dept of Plant & Microbial Biology

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Website: www.OccupytheFarm.org

Twitter: @OccupyFarm and #OccupytheFarm

Facebook: [Occupy the Farm](https://www.facebook.com/OccupytheFarm)

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