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50p

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Anti vivisection campaigners have set up camp at Normanby by Spital. (DSCF5488)

PROTEST CAMP AT RABBIT FARM

By Michael Steed
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ANIMAL rights activists were outnumbered by police as they launched a protest against a local rabbit farm which will be escalated later in the summer.

This week anti-vivisection campaigners have set up camp close to the entrance to Highgate Farm at Normanby by Spital, protesting against the farm's programme of breeding rabbits and ferrets for the vivisection industry, allegedly including the controversial Huntingdon Life Sciences (HLS).

Half a dozen protesters arrived on

Monday morning, setting up tents and banners about 100 yards away from the farm entrance.

Nineteen-year-old leader Chris, who withheld his surname, gave reassurances the demonstration was '110 per cent peaceful'.

"This is the lawful side of of the animal rights movement," he said. "We are here to peacefully protest and are trying to keep it non-confrontational. We're here just to be here, to act as a gentle reminder to the farmer that it's an unacceptable way to make a living and to let local people know we're here."

He is a full time activist on animal and human rights and environmental issues and said that although this protest had been organised by him, he

was working in conjunction with the Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty (SHAC) campaign.

SHAC activists have previously proved more militant in a burglary and damage spree at the farm.

Closely monitored by police other activists have joined in. Chris said he did not expect there would be more than a dozen at any one time. The camp will last until Friday.

As news of the camp surfaced, Ally arrived from Spilsby. Involved in animal rights for years', "When we heard this was local we decided to come," she said.

A police spokesman said people had the right to protest in a peaceful manner within the law and that the farmer also had the right to carry out

his legitimate business.

"We are monitoring the situation which is peaceful," he said.

Farmer Geoff Douglas said much of the farm had been converted into a wildlife reserve.

"We are very much animal orientated and most of our animals go to develop vaccines for animals," he said.

He will be writing to The Mail with an explanation of the work that goes on at Highgate, to be published in The Mail and on our website as soon as it is received.

The demonstration is a precursor to a large national demonstration being organised by SHAC outside Highgate Farm on September 26, when around 500 demonstrators are expected.

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