

Wisconsin Farmers Union: Jurcek to represent Wisconsin on National Youth Advisory Council

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CHIPPEWA FALLS –Jessica Jurcek of Jefferson has been elected to serve on National Farmers Union’s National Youth Advisory Council. Jurcek is one of six council members elected by campers during the 81st annual NFU All-States Leadership Camp June 25-29 in Bailey, Colorado.

Farmers Union youth members from across the country gathered last week at the NFU Education Center, nestled among the peaks of the Rockies, for the All-States Camp, which encourages youth to explore their leadership potential, discuss issues important to their generation and identify ways to effect positive change in their communities.

Throughout the week, campers between the ages of 17 and 20-years old participated in programs that emphasize leadership, teamwork and cooperative education while also enjoying traditional camp activities. In addition, campers gained hands-on experience in Denver, Colorado while volunteering at Re:Vision, a food and farming cooperative co-founded by NFU Beginning Farmer Institute alum Eric Kornacki.

“Farmers Union has a long and effective history of providing young adults with tools and opportunities to lead. For 81 years now, All-States Camp has been the place

where our young members from across the country can come to learn more about the organization, the cooperative model, and leadership,” said NFU President Roger Johnson. “As a proud former All-States camper myself, I’m encouraged by the enthusiasm and high regard that our young members have for attending the camp each year.”

This year’s camp, themed “Stewardship: Care for the Land, Care for the People,” featured a number of notable speakers and presenters. Olympic Gold Medalist Rulon Gardner, a camp regular, spoke about overcoming the odds to become an unlikely wrestling hero, and retired CHS, Inc. Vice President William Nelson explained the value of cooperatives in agriculture.

NFU Government Relations Representative Matt Perdue walked the campers through NFU’s grassroots policy process and led a short policy simulation. Campers also enjoyed an interactive session on soil health and carbon cycling led by Brendon Rockey, a biotic farmer in Colorado. Rocky Mountain Farmers Union staff members Harrison Topp and Aubriel Jones shared their thoughts on leadership in agriculture. NFU Foundation Director Tom Driscoll closed the week’s festivities at the camp’s banquet, addressing the future of Farmers Union and the importance of youth involvement.

Other youth elected to NYAC, along with Jurcek, include: Hunter Cardinal, Minnesota; Marissa Holinka, South Dakota; Ben Lehman, Iowa; Shaun Heier, North Dakota; and Kirsten VanDerPol, Minnesota.

“NYAC builds leaders in the agriculture industry and ensures the voice of younger generations is heard and respected in what the organization does,” said Johnson. “For the next year, these six youths will serve as representatives of their peers, learn about the legislative process and lobbying, and present in front of hundreds of NFU members and press at the NFU convention. I’m confident they will be strong advocates for both the organization and young people in agriculture.”

“Wisconsin Farmers Union would like to thank outgoing council members Killian Harnish and Miriam Valley for their year of service to Farmers Union youth across the country,” said WFU Education Director Cathy Statz. “They have been thoughtful and energetic ambassadors for Farmers Union and I look forward to seeing how they put to work the leadership training they’ve had in their years within the Farmers Union Youth Program.”