

Wisconsin Farmers Union: Registration open for Farmers Union summer camps

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Registration is open for 2022 Farmers Union Camps. Each summer, hundreds of youth from across the Midwest participate in summer camps at Wisconsin Farmers Union's Kamp Kenwood on the shores of Lake Wissota near Chippewa Falls.

Farmers Union Camps started in the 1930s, when the organization developed leadership and cooperative training, believing that education was the cornerstone of a better future for rural communities. In the 1940s, Wisconsin Farmers Union (WFU) President Ken Hones inspired members from across the state to donate their time and funds to build a Farmers Union-owned summer camp where youth could come together to have fun and learn. Named after the visionary who inspired this work, WFU Kamp Kenwood's 23 acres feature rustic cabins, hiking trails, a sandy beach, and historic lodge.

The Farmers Union Camp program focuses on cooperatives, family farms, sustainability, leadership, conservation, rural communities, social justice, and civic engagement.

"For over 85 years Farmers Union Camps have focused on leadership development with a cooperative approach," said WFU Education Director Cathy Statz. "Youth learn about the Cooperative Principles and the benefits of cooperatives to Wisconsin's family farmers and communities."

Campers create their own Camp Co-op Store, elect a board of directors, buy shares and receive patronage dividends. They also enjoy traditional summer camp activities like swimming, sports, arts and crafts, hiking and campfires.

Camp sessions are open to ages 7-17 and available June through August. New this year is a Co-op Kids Camp, open to youth ages 7 to 11 who are looking for an overnight experience geared toward the beginning camper.

Family camps, open for families with children of all ages, will be July 22-23 or August 5-6.

Co-sponsored by a grant from the CHS Foundation, Farmers Union Camps are affordably priced at \$115 to \$125 per camper for WFU members. (Non-members add \$30 for a one-year Farmers Union family membership.) To register or see camp dates, visit www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com/youth-camp.

COVID precautions

As an American Camp Association (ACA) accredited camp, Wisconsin Farmers Union has been able to connect to a network of camp professionals, as well as advice from the Association of Camp Nursing, to establish appropriate measures for the 2022 season.

Up-to-date vaccination for COVID-19 will be required for all participants (campers, staff, and volunteers). Guidelines may be adjusted as we get closer to the summer season.

“We hope to continue moving toward a more familiar summer camp experience,” Statz said. “Safety has always been a top priority at Farmers Union Camp, and we will continue to use best practices in health and safety precautions as we consider the impact of COVID on the camp experience. We want our campers to feel safe and remain healthy throughout their time at camp, and for their parents to be confident that we are taking care of the health of their children.”

WFU is also hiring summer staff. Learn more at www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com/youth-camps or by contacting Cathy Statz at camp@wisconsinfarmersunion.com or call 715-214-7887.