

Alfalfa County

Cooperative Extension News



ALFALFA COUNTY
EXTENSION

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Tax season is prime time for scammers

Tax season has arrived and with that comes another opportunity for scammers to take your money. Awareness of scammers' unscrupulous schemes can help keep taxpayers from becoming victims.

While scammers work year-round, tax season is prime time for them, said [Mengya Wang, Oklahoma State University Extension](#) finance specialist.

"Although anyone can get scammed, older people tend to be more vulnerable, along with individuals new to paying taxes," she said. "Scammers often use a sense of urgency, making people feel rushed into making a decision they might not otherwise. Your best line of defense is to remember the [Internal Revenue Service](#) will not call, text or email you. Any form of communication in these manners is not legitimate. The IRS communicates only through the U.S. Postal Service."

A popular scam involves answering a phone call in which the caller indicates the taxpayer owes money that must be paid immediately to avoid being arrested or fined. The scammer then asks for bank account information to withdraw the

payment.

Another ploy claims the IRS recalculated the tax return and the taxpayer is owed money. In this case, the caller asks to confirm bank accounts so the refund can be deposited.

Wang said taxpayers should also be aware of fraudulent tax preparers.

"If they offer an unusually low rate or base the rate on a percentage of the tax return, be cautious," she said. "Other red flags include guaranteeing a large refund without fully reviewing your financial situation, asking you to sign a blank tax form or requesting fees to be paid upfront in cash – especially if they don't provide a receipt."

To help prevent being scammed, Wang suggests filing taxes as early as possible. This will help avoid the last-minute rush to finish everything by the April 15 filing deadline.

Some taxpayers may discover during the tax-filing process that their identity has been stolen. If this happens, file an [Identity Theft Affidavit](#). This form alerts the IRS that someone has filed taxes using

your information. Be sure to check with the credit reporting agencies and put a freeze on your credit.

The IRS offers legitimate sources for taxpayers to get help filing taxes. The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance and the Tax Counseling for the Elderly programs offer free help for qualifying taxpayers. [More information on these programs](#) is available online.

"No matter what time of year, consumers who are tempted to take action due to a phone call, text message or an email, take a pause," Wang said. "Nothing is so urgent a decision must be made in that moment. Call someone and get a second opinion. Once you step back and consider everything, it's much easier to see the whole picture and determine it was likely a scam. That little bit of extra time can save you money and protect your assets."





OKLAHOMA COOPERATIVE
EXTENSION SERVICE

2025 “BACK TO BASICS” WORKSHOPS



Brought to you by OSU Cooperative Extension Centers in Alfalfa, Major and Woods Counties.

- Thursday, February 6: **“Tamales & Tortillas”** (\$25 fee)
1:00–5:00 p.m. at the Alfalfa County Fairgrounds in Cherokee.
- Thursday, March 6: **“Focaccia Breads”** (\$15 fee)
1:00–5:00 p.m. at the Alfalfa County Fairgrounds in Cherokee.
- Thursday, July 10: **“Biscuits, Jams & Jellies”** (\$15 fee)
1:00–5:00 p.m. at the Major County Fairgrounds in Fairview.
- Saturday, August 9: **“I Only Have Pies for You”** (\$20 fee)
begins at 1:00 p.m. at location TBD in Alva.
- Thursday, November 13: **“Holiday Happenings”** (\$40 fee)
10:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m. at the Major County Fairgrounds in Fairview

Please RSVP and pay the fee no later than the Monday prior to the workshop that you plan to attend. Contact the OSU Extension Center in your county:
Alfalfa County–580.596.3131 Major County–580.227.3786 Woods County–580.327.2786

OSU is an Affirmative Action, Equal Employment Opportunity, E-Verify Employer.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication or program information or reasonable accommodations, please contact Dana Baldwin at 580-227-3786 at least one week prior to the program.

CO-PARENTING FOR RESILIENCE

HELPING PARENTS HELP THEIR CHILDREN

The Co-Parenting for Resilience program is a 4-hour class based on current research to help parents discover effective strategies to promote their children's adjustment following divorce or separation.

This course meets the court mandated education requirement for divorcing parents. The course fee is \$3.

Who should take this class?

- Parents with a minor child who are experiencing divorce or separation
- Those who may be seeking custody, visitation, or paternity of minor children

Upcoming class dates...

- February 27, 2025- 1-5 pm
- March 13, 2025- 1-5 pm
- April 10, 2025- 1-5 pm
- May- 24, 2025- 1-5pm

Classes held at:

**Alfalfa County Fairgrounds
OSU Extension Office
602 W. 5th St., Suite 2
Cherokee, OK 73728**

Sign up today:

Megan Ferrell

Extension Educator
mferrell@okstate.edu
(580) 596-3131

**Alfalfa County
OSU Extension Office**

602 W. 5th Street
Cherokee, OK 73728



**For more information,
visit coparenting.okstate.edu**



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**OSU EXTENSION
FAMILY AND
CONSUMER SCIENCES**

ALFALFA COUNTY
OKLAHOMA HOME & COMMUNITY EDUCATION
WINTER NEWS
FEBRUARY/MARCH



Upcoming Calendar Events:

January 31st-How to Keep House While Drowning Leader Lesson

Training 2:00pm at the Extension Office - Susan Holliday

February 4th- Extension C.A.F.E- Noon- Easy Sewn Coaster and
Jarcuterie. RSVP Jan. 31 if possible

February 6th- Tamales & Tortillas 1:00-5:00pm- RSVP Feb. 3rd

February 10-12th- Spring Livestock Show

February 21st- Stay Strong/Stay Healthy Leader Lesson Training
2:00pm at Extension Office- Megan Ferrell

March 4th- Tentative Spring Association Meeting

March 6th - Focaccia Bread- RSVP 1:00-5:00pm- March 3rd

March 20th- 11:00-6:00- OHCE Blood Drive

March 22- West District OHCE Meeting- Watonga, OK

March 28-Who Gets Grandmother's Yellow Pie Plate April Leader
Lesson Training- 2:00PM Extension Office- Megan Ferrell

March 29th- Family Fun Fair 11:00AM-2:00PM

May 4-10- OHCE WEEK

May 7th- Alfalfa County Flower Show

May 22nd- 4-H Culinary Day & FCS Skill-A-Thon

We need sewing helpers

Suzie Salinas and I plan to offer sewing workshops in March/April for 4-H members. We need one on one sewing helpers, especially our beginners. We are looking for several caring adults that are willing to help us with sewing workshops. Please let Suzie or I know if you are willing to help.

Thank you for considering.



Agriculture Newsletter

Direct Impacts of Eastern Redcedar Part 2 -

Eastern Redcedar Supports Expansion of Tick Populations

Dana Zook, NW OK Area Livestock Specialist

In a past article, I noted the impact of the Eastern Redcedar on forage production and water use. This week, I wanted to highlight another area where the Eastern Redcedar has altered our environment. OSU research has identified a link between elevated tick populations and westward expansion of this tree species.

Readers may find it interesting that trees offer the perfect habitat for many tick species by providing an elevated level of humidity present in leaf litter below the tree. Some might also think that ticks are just a reality of life outdoors, however tick populations have not always been as widespread. Historically, it has been thought that the drier, more arid environment of Western Oklahoma could not support tick populations. However, evidence of increased tick transmitted diseases across the entire state of Oklahoma lead researchers to look more closely at where ticks were being found in Oklahoma. Some of these tick-borne diseases include Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever, Ehrlichiosis, and Anaplasmosis (cattle). If these diseases are being found throughout the state, could it be that ticks are now present in the drier areas of Western Oklahoma?

To evaluate Westward expansion of ticks in Oklahoma, OSU researchers collected ticks in areas of both Central and Western Oklahoma in 2015. The Lone Star tick (*A. americanum*) was their focus, but they also collected other species such as the American Dog Tick (*D. variabilis*). Researchers found an extensive population of both the American Dog Ticks and Lone Star Ticks in Central areas of Oklahoma (Mulhull, Norman, and near Stillwater). These areas were once open prairie, but now host a population of many different tree species, including the Eastern Redcedar.

To evaluate tick populations in Western Oklahoma, the study included sample sites near American Horse Lake, Roman Nose State Park, and Klemme Range Research Station. In these Western sample stations, researchers noted that American Dog Ticks were present but there were low numbers of Lone Star Ticks. Because of this, researchers noted this species may not yet be adapted to the new environmental conditions of Western

Oklahoma.

Readers are probably familiar with areas of Western Oklahoma with natural gullies and canyons. Many areas with this landscape have fallen prey to the dense Eastern Redcedar stands as well as many other tree species. These dense populations of trees offer ideal habitat for these ticks to continue moving West. In this study, researchers also note that dense trees provide habitat for other wildlife species that are reservoirs and transporters of ticks (deer, turkeys, coyotes, etc.). Cattle and other livestock use this area for shade and may also pick up ticks. This continues the spread causing increased risk for tick bites in hunters and livestock producers.

Some may believe that the westward expansion of ticks is just the natural progression of a species. Others might just accept the fact that ticks are a fact of life for livestock producers.

Unfortunately, tick borne diseases have an enormous impact on adults and children alike. People across Oklahoma enjoy the outdoors in many ways beyond agriculture and these ticks can really impact our health and wellbeing. For assistance identifying the impact of Eastern Redcedar on rangelands, or for more information about managing ticks in livestock, contact your local OSU Extension office.



Sources:

Noden, B.H. and T. Dubie. Involvement of invasive eastern redcedar (*Juniperus virginiana*) in the expansion of *Amblyomma americanum* in Oklahoma. June 2017. *Journal of Vector Ecology*. Pages 178-183

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EXTENSION

INTERESTED IN BECOMING A MASTER CATTLEMAN?

The Master Cattleman Program is a producer certification process with an educational curriculum based on the Oklahoma Beef Cattle Manual. The program began in 2004 and equips participants with research-based information on all aspects of beef production, business planning, risk management and marketing. The base cost for the program is \$175 and will be completed over the course of 14 sessions. Participants receive the Beef Cattle Manual, instructional materials, and if all program requirements are completed, a producer certificate, a personalized Master Cattleman farm gate sign and a notebook embossed with the Master Cattleman logo.

LEARN ABOUT

- ▶ **Emily Franke**
Ag Extension Educator,
Grant County
emily.franke@okstate.edu
580-395-2134
- ▶ **Scan and complete form to express interest**



CONTACT

Visit us at extension.okstate.edu

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication or program information or reasonable accommodation need to contact James W. Syzmore at (580) 623-5195 at least two weeks prior to the event.

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4-H Clover Connection

4-H Ambassador program provides leadership opportunities

Since 1994, the Oklahoma 4-H Ambassador program has provided club members additional opportunities to hone their leadership skills. Hundreds of 4-H youth have benefitted from the opportunities afforded them through this program.

Applications will soon be available to 4-H'ers who are interested in learning more about leadership, as well as promoting the 4-H program across the state, said Cathy Allen, 4-H curriculum coordinator at the state 4-H office at Oklahoma State University. The State 4-H Ambassador application deadline is March 15. Hard copies of applications must be postmarked by March 15. Electronic applications must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. on that day. Interested applicants must be 13 years old by the application date and have at least one year of high school remaining.

"We're looking for enthusiastic young leaders who are excited about 4-H and have a desire to share the organization's mission with others," Allen said. "Our ambassadors will work with club members and adult partners to make their local 4-H program more visible in their county and across the state. The ambassadors also take a role in communicating with 4-H alumni and supporters."

Once a club member becomes an ambassador, they may remain one for the duration of their 4-H career as long as they are in good standing. Be sure to check the guidelines for being an ambassador because they have recently been updated.

Based on application scores, the top applicants will advance to the interview selection day slated on May 3. The three-part interview process includes an extemporaneous speech, a face-to-face interview and a writing assignment.

Dani McTague has been an active State 4-H Ambassador for nearly two years and says filling out the application

was one of the best things she's done as a 4-H'er.

"I learned about the program through my county educator and by talking to current ambassadors," McTague said. "I knew immediately this was something I had to be a part of. Being an Oklahoma 4-H Ambassador lets me tell the 4-H story and share it with others. I love making people aware that 4-H continues to make an impact on the lives of Oklahoma youth, and it has helped me grow as a leader."

Throughout her time as an ambassador, McTague said she has been able to learn more about the other side of 4-H that many are not aware of.

"I've helped behind the scenes of the Oklahoma State Fair and learned how 4-H entries are judged and displayed. I've enjoyed learning more about Oklahoma 4-H donors and others who support the program," she said. "Before becoming an ambassador, I never thought about where the resources for 4-H come from. Now I know where funding comes from, and I have a personal relationship with a handful of 4-H donors with whom I get to correspond regularly."

Because of her positive experiences as an ambassador, she said she would encourage all eligible 4-H'ers to apply.

"The leadership skills I've learned through our retreats is helping me be a better and stronger 4-H member," McTague said. "I'm improving my public speaking, civic engagement and team-building skills. Being an ambassador has also helped me be more confident and shaped me into a strong leader."

For more information about the State 4-H Ambassador program or the application process, contact Allen at 405-744-8892 or cathy.allen@okstate.edu.



4-H



DATES TO REMEMBER

- February 3 & 6- Livestock Skill-A-Thon Practices
- February 5 - Northwest Area Livestock Judging Contest, Enid
- February 7- Pen of Calves Weigh-Back
- February 8- Burlington Local Livestock Show
- February 9- Cherokee & Timberlake Local Livestock Shows
- February 10/11- Alfalfa County Livestock Show- See Schedule
- February 12- Alfalfa County Spring Livestock Banquet & Premium Sale
- February 12- Communication Contest Entries Due
- February 13- Dog Obedience & Agility 6:00PM
- February 17- Alfalfa County 4-H Communication Contest
- February 18-24- Northwest District Junior Livestock Shows
- February 24- 4-H Simple Sewn Coasters
- March 3- 4-H Simple Sewn Coasters
- March 7- 4-H/FFA Alfalfa County Dance
- March 8- District Speech Contest & Parent Volunteer Conference
- March 10-21- Oklahoma Youth Expo
- March 29- Family Fun Fair
- April 16- 4-H Impressive Dress Fashion Revue Entries due
- April 18- Youth Beef Tour 4-H & FFA
- April 21- 4-H Impressive Dress & Fashion Revue 6:00PM
- April 23- 4-H Day at the Capital, OKC
- May 22- Alfalfa County 4-H Culinary Day/ FCS Skill-A-Thon Contests
- May 30/31- West District 4-H Horse Show
- June 25-27- Multi-County 4-H Camp

More information for most of these dates are in the 4-H section of this newsletter. Please look there for further info such as times, locations, etc. If it's 30-60 days out, we may not have the info on it yet.



OSU EXTENSION

**ALFALFA COUNTY
4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT**

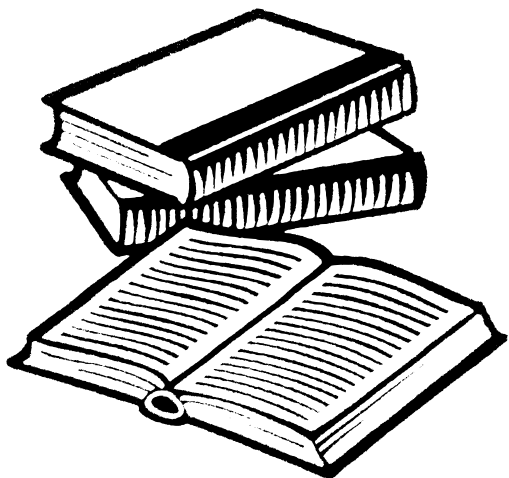
State 4-H RECORD BOOKS DUE APRIL 25TH

State record books are open to any
4-Her in 8th grade or older.

State record books are how you earn scholarships in 4-H!

Need help? Give us a call to set up an appointment to get
help completing your state 4-H record book.

(580)596-3131



OSU EXTENSION
**ALFALFA COUNTY
4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT**



Save the Date

4-H Under The Sea!

JUNE 25TH-27TH, 2025

Multi County 4-H Camp

ALFALFA- BLAINE-DEWEY-MAJOR-WOODS

at NW Baptist Association Camp- Vici, OK

