



** This news release from K-State Research and Extension is available online at <https://ksre-learn.com/earth-day-money-saving-tips>

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Earth Day: Simple tips can help save money and energy

K-State's Kiss says many family expenses relate to how we might affect Planet Earth

By Pat Melgares, K-State Research and Extension news service

MANHATTAN, Kan. – Kansas State University family systems specialist Elizabeth Kiss says that Earth Day – which lands on April 22 this year – is an opportunity to make changes that not only are good for the environment, but also for the family's budget.

"If we think about the major spending categories that we have – housing, food, transportation – each of those has some relationship to how we might affect the Earth," Kiss said.

Kiss outlined some steps to save money and protect the environment.

Around the home

"This would be a perfect time to conduct a home energy audit," Kiss said. As Kansans transition from heating systems to cooling systems, a couple considerations include increasing insulation in the attic or crawl space, or installing a programmable thermostat.

Some homeowners may also be ready for upgrades to the furnace, air conditioner, water heater or refrigerator. "Any new appliance is likely to be much more energy efficient than one that is 10 years old," Kiss said. While there's an initial expense to these improvements, the long-term savings are often worth it, she said.

Some no-cost steps include drawing blinds and curtains during hotter portions of the day – especially on the side of the house where the sun shines – and decreasing the amount of time you use a clothes dryer. Consider hanging clothes outside, if possible.

Buying food

Kiss suggests not 'over-buying' fresh foods, such as produce, meat, eggs and dairy. Americans waste an abundance of food, which fills landfills and wastes the transportation and growing costs associated with those foods.

“But even if you’re buying local foods, there still are transportation and growing costs,” Kiss said. “Don’t waste this money in the trash can.”

Additional tips:

- Learn to rely on what’s already in your cupboard or freezer to make meals, rather than rushing out to buy more.
- Buy reusable grocery bags, rather than plastic grocery store bags. Wash your reusable bags to avoid contamination.

Transportation

Electric vehicles and charging stations have become more common. But regardless of what type of vehicle you drive, consider the sort of trips you take and whether you need a big car or small car. Combine trips, when possible.

“And think about how you drive,” Kiss said. “Do you drive the speed limit? Do you keep the windows open? Are the tires inflated correctly? Those are the kinds of things that can help you save money and save energy at the same time.”

Kiss recently spoke at length about money- and energy-saving tips on the weekly radio program, [Sound Living, which is available online from K-State Research and Extension](#).

-30-

FOR PRINT PUBLICATIONS: Links used in this article

Sound Living (K-State Research and Extension podcast), <https://soundlivingksu.libsyn.com>

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