

# Reduce Food Waste on Earth Day (And Every Day!)

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**K-STATE** | Southwind District  
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With Earth Day coming up on April 22nd, it is timely to be thinking about what you can do to make a difference. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency reports that wasted food is responsible for more than half of landfill methane emissions. Clearly, reducing food waste can make a difference for the environment. However, did you know that reducing food waste can also save you money? According to the United States Department of Agriculture, the average U.S. household can save about \$370 per person each year by reducing food waste.

So, how can you reduce your food waste to help both the environment and your wallet? Check out these tips from K-State Research and Extension:

- **Shop your refrigerator first.** Check to see what you already have before you create your weekly meal plan.
- **Don't forget about leftovers!** Label your leftovers with the date to ensure you will eat them or freeze them within 3-4 days. All leftovers should be reheated to 165°F as measured by a food thermometer for food safety.
- **Make a shopping list and stick to it.** This will help curb that pesky impulse shopping that can cause you to purchase items you won't be able to use in time.
- **Store your food properly.** Food stored improperly will spoil more quickly and need to be thrown away. One key tip is to place an appliance thermometer in both your refrigerator and in your freezer. Keep your refrigerator at 40°F or below and your freezer at 0°F or below.

However, it is also important to keep in mind the following rule: When in doubt, throw it out! If you are not sure whether a food item is spoiled or still safe to eat, it is best to discard it.

For more information on the tips listed above as well as others, visit [bit.ly/ksrefoodwaste](https://bit.ly/ksrefoodwaste). In addition, consider attending one of the free educational programs I will be offering on Earth Day (April 22nd) to learn about food waste, meal planning, reducing a recipe, strategic grocery shopping, proper food storage, extending the life of food, and checking food product dates. Join me at the Woodson County Ambulance Building in Yates Center (114 N. Main St.) from 12:05 PM to 12:50 PM or at the Southwind Extension District Office in Iola (1006 N. State St.) from 5:15 PM to 6 PM. Contact me with questions at [clarawicoff@ksu.edu](mailto:clarawicoff@ksu.edu) or 620-365-2242.