



VALUING PEOPLE. VALUING MONEY.  
MANAGING IN TOUGH TIMES INITIATIVE



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## NOVEMBER 2020

### THIS MONTH'S TOPIC:

# BEING A MINDFUL HOLIDAY CONSUMER: USE LESS, SPEND WISE CHALLENGE

In honor of Use Less Stuff Day, which is celebrated the third Thursday of November, we invite you to take part in the Use Less, Spend Wi\$e Challenge! This year Use Less Stuff Day falls on Nov. 19, 2020. The holiday began as a way to raise awareness of the mindless spending and increased waste generated during the holidays. It encourages people to rethink the useless stuff they buy and consume. By changing these habits, we not only help the environment, but our wallets and relationships too!

#### Use less > useless

We are all guilty of useless spending. However, many families across Kentucky have less to spend this holiday season. When you couple tighter budgets with pandemic-related supply shortages, it is important to learn smarter ways to stretch our dollars and our resources. To manage better in these tough times, the University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service is challenging families to join the Use Less, Spend Wi\$e Challenge. Participants will complete activities designed to help them use less, spend wisely, and discover low-cost ways to connect with others.

#### Holiday waste and spending

It is reported that Americans discard 25% more trash from Thanksgiving to New Year's than any other time during the year. That 25% represents upwards of 25 million tons of garbage. All that garbage is filled with single-use disposable plates, napkins, cutlery, ribbon, and wrapping paper adorned with festive, holiday themes. In fact, it is estimated that enough ribbon is wasted during the holiday season to tie a bow around Earth. That's approximately 38,000 miles.





Americans also spent more than \$1 trillion dollars during the holidays in 2018. That number rose another 4.5% in 2019. With holiday spending at an all-time high pre-pandemic, the 2020 holiday season will likely look different for many Americans. COVID-19 financial challenges might cause people to adjust their holiday budgets. To avoid going into debt over the holiday season, shoppers should look for ways to use less and spend wisely. Kentucky Cooperative Extension is here to help.

### Curbing consumption

This year especially, as budgets are stretched thin and resources are tight, the Use Less, Spend Wi\$e Challenge can help you become more mindful of useless spending and consumption habits. The challenge has three main objectives. The first is to help Kentuckians USE LESS in order to reduce environmental waste. The second is to help Kentuckians SPEND WI\$ELY to reduce useless spending. Finally, the third is to highlight PRICELESS activities to connect Kentuckians in no-cost or low-cost ways.

Example activities include:

**FOREGO THE BOWS** – This holiday season, give gifts in useful containers that double as part of the gift. Don't use throwaway packaging and wrapping materials.

**PACK A LUNCH** – Commit to packing your lunch at least three days this week. Skip the drive-thru value meal. Value your wallet instead.

**BOTTLE UP 2020** – As if you could forget the year 2020! Make a time capsule with items to remember this unique time in history.

### Take the Use Less, Spend Wi\$e Challenge

To join in the Use Less, Spend Wi\$e Challenge, contact your county Kentucky Cooperative Extension office. They will give you a list of activities designed to help you become a more mindful consumer. The challenges are divided by three categories: USE LESS, SPEND WI\$ELY, and PRICELESS. Complete six or more activities, then visit <https://www.facebook.com/MoneyWise> for the official challenge link. From there, you can note which activities you completed. You must submit entries by 11:59 p.m. EST on Thursday, Nov. 19, 2020 – Use Less Stuff Day! Share the fun! Post a photo of you participating in a challenge activity on Facebook or Instagram with #UseLessSpendWise. The first 200 participants will receive a reusable lunch tote to save money on food when you're on-the-go! (One prize per family unit)

### References:

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