



# Along the Trail

► by *Dan Green*, “*Along the Angus Trail*” author

## Healthy vs. unhealthy

*I’m reminded once again, as an old wordsmith myself, that words mean something. When it comes to human nutrition, such as the excellent protein, B vitamins and zinc that come from — say, beef — those words mean something, too.*

### Meaning

A \$10 term for words is nomenclature. More precise, perhaps, as words themselves should be, but in popular usage some words have lost their true meaning. In America today, no words are more badly misused and abused than terms referring to the food we eat — terms like “healthy,” “nutritious” and “natural.”

Roxanne Sukol, a preventative medicine specialist at the prestigious Cleveland Clinic, says, “Healthy is a bankrupt word. The truth is that we are healthy. Our food is nutritious. If we eat nutritious food, we will be healthy.” That’s where diet advice falls off

the trolley, when foods are labeled “healthy” or “unhealthy.”

Just take the hip, politically correct dietary advice, for instance: Kale salad is healthy, and a Big Mac® with fries is not. Protein shakes are healthy, and pork cracklin’s are not.

The truth is kale salad is very nutritious, but if you ate nothing but kale salad, you’d starve and be unhealthy. The healthy human body requires both protein and fat, like that supplied by a Big Mac and fries, for example.

A protein shake, the uber cool staple of the exercise and healthy-eating set, can be nutritious. It can also be full of sugar, calories

and non-nutritive preservatives that severely compromise its nutritional value.

Pork cracklin’s, those tasty, crunchy bits of deep-fried pig skin, are roundly panned for their high fat and salt, in addition to being what the excruciatingly correct eater would call “offal” or worse. The truth is, when strips of pigskin are deep-fried, and the layer of fat under the skin is melted away, along with the oil it was cooked in, what is left is delicious little crispy puffs of pure protein.

Yes, that’s right. The skin of humans and animals is made up primarily of protein, almost 100%. With pork cracklin’s, you don’t have to worry about additives or preservatives. It’s just pure low-calorie protein. It’s not hip or cool, but it’s the pure, unadulterated real deal.

“Refined” is another important food word. In another context, “refined” means “elegant” and “cultured.” In terms of wheat and the flour made from it as the main ingredient of the staff of life (bread), “refined” actually means that wheat’s endosperm and bran have been removed, stripping it of the fiber, oils, iron and vitamins that make it nutritious.

Now, flour is called “enriched” and “fortified” because they have to add back some of the vitamins and minerals that were stripped away during the refining process. However, because refined flour still lacks the nutritional value of the whole-wheat kernel, and, along with the diglycerides and sulphates used to bind in the replacements, eating bread can result in diabetes and metabolic syndrome.

The big thing is knowing what you put in your body. Fat isn’t bad. Stupid is bad. We will be healthy if we eat nutritious food. Our food is either nutritious or it’s not. We’re healthy or we’re not. If we eat nutritious food, we enhance the health we’ve got.

For *Angus Talk*, I’m Dan Green, Along America’s Angus Trails.



**Editor’s Note:** *Dan Green is a Denver-based historian, author, retired editor of the The Record Stockman and the voice of “Along America’s Angus Trails,” a regular feature on Angus Media’s SiriusXM satellite radio program, Angus Talk. Angus Talk airs at 10 a.m., Central time, every Saturday on Rural Radio, Channel 80.*