

# From Farm to Health – A Vision for Regenerative Agriculture and Metabolic Wellness

Analysis by [Dr. Joseph Mercola](#)

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## STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- › Ashley Armstrong, co-founder of Angel Acres Egg Co., shifted from fitness coaching to health advocacy after discovering the connection between dietary choices and autoimmune issues
- › Adequate carbohydrate intake – approximately 250 grams daily – is necessary for metabolic health, while low-carb diets increase cortisol and disrupt thyroid function
- › Body temperature measurements three times daily provide a better indicator of metabolic health than conventional blood work, with 98.6 degrees F midday indicating normal function
- › Polyunsaturated fatty acids (PUFAs) and phytoestrogens in modern diets interfere with thyroid function and estrogen detoxification, leading to metabolic disruptions
- › Armstrong promotes regenerative farming practices, producing low-PUFA eggs and freeze-dried egg yolks while advocating for sustainable agriculture over conventional farming methods

***Editor's Note: This article is a reprint. It was originally published November 24, 2024.***

I interviewed Ashley Armstrong, co-founder of Angel Acres Egg Co. and a leading advocate for regenerative agriculture. Ashley's unique perspective bridges the gap between optimal health practices and sustainable farming, offering invaluable insights into how our food systems and dietary choices profoundly impact well-being.

Ashley began her health journey alongside her sister, Sarah, under the moniker "Strong Sisters." Initially focused on weightlifting and resistance training, they documented their progress and reveled in the empowerment that came with physical strength. "It was so empowering ... It's you versus you," Ashley shared.<sup>1</sup>

However, their path took a significant turn when both encountered health issues linked to their dietary choices, particularly the prevalence of polyunsaturated fatty acids (PUFAs) and processed ingredients. Sarah was diagnosed with a form of lupus at 21, prompting them to seek alternatives to conventional medicine.

"We went down rabbit holes of keto, fasting, carnivore, all of that ... we felt relief initially ... and then those decisions caught up to us. After about two years, we stumbled upon the work of Dr. Ray Peat, and the rest is history," Ashley explained,<sup>2</sup> emphasizing their shift toward understanding thyroid and metabolic health as interconnected facets of systemic well-being.

## **The Role of Carbohydrates in Metabolic Health**

The **importance of carbohydrates** in maintaining metabolic rate and thyroid function is often overlooked. Ashley said, "Carbohydrates are vital. They're optimal. They're required. They're necessary." Part of their importance is linked to their effects on body temperature. She explained:<sup>3</sup>

*"It's up to you as an individual to find what carbs work well for you, focus on those for a period of time. Work on implementing more slowly, increasing those that work well for you, because that, over time, is going to raise your metabolic rate. As you raise your metabolic rate, your body temperature rises.*

*And that is the whole goal. We want to be hot. We don't just want to look good. We want to be hot inside of us, because all the functions in our body, they run off of enzymes. And enzyme reaction rates depend on temperature."*

She criticized the dogmatic low-carb approaches prevalent in certain health communities, advocating instead for a personalized strategy to carbohydrate intake. By categorizing carbs into a traffic light system – green, yellow, and red – my book, "Your Guide to Cellular Health: Unlocking the Science of Longevity and Joy," provides a practical framework for you to identify and incorporate beneficial carbohydrates into your diet.

It's important to meet a certain carbohydrate threshold, approximately 250 grams a day, to support metabolic functions. If you don't reach that threshold, you're going to run into health troubles. Low-carbohydrate diets, for instance, increase cortisol. Short-term elevation of cortisol is protective and necessary for survival.

However, chronic elevation leads to detrimental health effects, including muscle wasting, bone density loss, and impaired cognitive function. Further, consuming enough healthy carbohydrates not only supports metabolic rate but also ensures the proper conversion of inactive thyroid hormone (T4) into its active form (T3), a process necessary for cellular energy production.

## **Measuring Health Beyond Conventional Blood Work**

Ashley recommends the use of body temperature as a metric for assessing your metabolic health. Unlike conventional blood tests, which provide only a snapshot and are influenced by various external factors, body temperature measurements offer a continuous, real-time indicator of metabolic rate. "If your body temperature is rising, that's a clear sign your cellular utilization of T3 is happening," Ashley explained.<sup>4</sup>

She advocates for taking body temperature three times a day – upon waking, 30 to 45 minutes after breakfast and midday. This approach is effective because T3 levels are generally higher in the morning and decline as the day progresses. This routine allows you to monitor your metabolic trends and make informed dietary adjustments.

Ashley highlighted, "This is an easy tool ... because blood work still doesn't tell you whether your mitochondria are actually using that thyroid hormone T3."<sup>5</sup>

Ideally, use a basal body temperature thermometer to measure your temperature, as they measure to 100th of a degree. A consistently low body temperature indicates a sluggish metabolism, while a morning body temperature of approximately 98 degrees F signifies healthy thyroid function. By midday, a temperature around 98.6 degrees F typically indicates a normal metabolic response.

Ashley also highlighted the limitations of conventional thyroid panels, which often focus solely on thyroid-stimulating hormone (TSH) levels. She stressed the importance of comprehensive thyroid testing, including free T3, reverse T3, and T4, to gain a true understanding of thyroid health and metabolic function.

## **The Dual Threat of PUFAs and Phytoestrogens**

We also covered the detrimental effects of PUFAs, like **linoleic acid** (LA), and phytoestrogens on metabolic health. Ashley noted, "PUFAs damage our ability to detoxify estrogen," explaining how these substances interfere with your body's ability to convert T4 to T3, thereby lowering metabolic rates.<sup>6</sup> This disruption not only hampers energy production but also fosters an environment conducive to autoimmune conditions and other health issues.

LA is found in seed oils, processed foods, and even some seemingly healthy options like chicken, nuts, and seeds. While it's believed to be an essential fatty acid that your body needs, the modern Western diet typically provides far more than necessary. Optimizing your **mitochondrial function** is necessary for improving your cellular energy, but LA is a mitochondrial poison and also damages your gut health.

She also addressed the pervasive nature of phytoestrogens in the modern diet, particularly through soy and flax products. "Phytoestrogens have been shown to activate estrogen receptors in the same way we're eating that through fake dairy products, soy milk, soy cheese," Ashley warned. The accumulation of these estrogen-like compounds exacerbates metabolic disruptions, leading to estrogen dominance and further impeding thyroid function.

Exposure to endocrine-disrupting chemicals (EDCs) like phthalates and bisphenol A (BPA), often from microplastics, also overstimulates your estrogen receptors. Estrogen increases intracellular calcium levels, leading to peroxynitrite formation, a potent reactive oxygen species that contributes to poor health.

As bioenergetic researcher Georgi Dinkov explained in our previous interview, **estrogen is carcinogenic and antimetabolic**, radically reducing the ability of your mitochondria to create cellular energy. Many people believe that they are low in estrogen due to bloodwork, when they actually have high levels in their organs. This is because serum estrogen levels are not representative of estrogen that's stored in tissues. Estrogen may be low in plasma, but high in tissues.

A better option for gauging estrogen levels in fat and tissues is a prolactin blood test. Estrogen promotes the production of prolactin, which is a hormone produced by the pituitary gland. Once you've dialed in your diet by reducing LA and consuming healthy carbs, an effective strategy that helps counteract estrogen excess is natural progesterone.

## **Transforming Agriculture – Regenerative Practices for Superior Nutrition**

Ashley's expertise as a chicken farmer is deeply intertwined with her health advocacy. She spearheads a movement toward regenerative agriculture, focusing on feeding chickens a diet low in PUFAs and free from harmful additives. "Our row crop farm partners are producing our grains that our chickens are eating regeneratively," she explained, underscoring the importance of soil health and sustainable farming practices in producing nutrient-dense animal products.<sup>7</sup>

This commitment to regenerative practices enhances the nutritional profile of the eggs and ensures that the chickens are healthier and more robust. "We're working with Mother Nature, with our row crop partners," Ashley affirmed, highlighting the synergy between sustainable farming and optimal human health.<sup>8</sup>

One of the most exciting developments discussed was the introduction of freeze-dried egg yolks. This innovative product addresses the perishability and logistical challenges of traditional egg consumption while preserving the rich nutrient profile of the yolks. When you freeze-dry food, specifically egg yolks, you essentially remove all the moisture, reducing perishability and extending the shelf life.

These freeze-dried yolks are not only nutrient-dense but also versatile, allowing you to incorporate them into various dishes, like smoothies, without worrying about spoilage. Freeze-dried egg yolks offer a convenient, long-lasting source of essential nutrients like choline and vitamin K2. Ashley emphasized their role in supporting neurotransmitter function and overall metabolic health.

**Choline** is part of an important neurotransmitter called acetylcholine, which is part of the parasympathetic nervous system. Unfortunately, conventional health and agricultural systems prioritize profitability over health and sustainability. The dominance of Big Pharma and Big Agriculture has led to widespread use of harmful PUFAs, phytoestrogens, and other additives that compromise both human and environmental health.

Ashley explained the economic challenges faced by small-scale farmers within these systems. "Farmers have to get off the farm jobs to support their farm," she lamented, pointing out the unsustainable nature of current agricultural practices.<sup>9</sup> Our collaborative efforts aim to create alternative markets and support structures that make regenerative farming viable and profitable, thereby ensuring the production of healthier food products.

She also touched upon the systemic issues perpetuated by federal subsidies, which have historically favored certain crops, leading to the overproduction of soy and corn — primary sources of PUFAs and phytoestrogens.

"The Farm Bill has subsidized the production of certain crops, and we've overproduced so much that now the costs are so low for feed producers," Ashley explained.<sup>10</sup> By shifting consumer demand toward regenerative and sustainable farming practices, we

will gradually diminish the influence of these subsidies and promote a healthier, more resilient agricultural system.

## **Practical Steps to Enhance Metabolic Health**

For those looking to improve their metabolic health, Ashley provided actionable advice rooted in her expertise. She emphasized the importance of:

1. Ensuring a sufficient intake of **healthy carbohydrates** to support metabolic functions and thyroid health.
2. Using body temperature measurements as a real-time indicator of metabolic rate and thyroid function.
3. Avoiding foods high in PUFAs like LA and phytoestrogens to prevent metabolic disruptions and support thyroid hormone utilization.
4. Incorporating nutrient-dense foods, including saturated fats and egg yolks to provide essential vitamins and minerals without harmful additives.
5. Supporting regenerative agriculture by choosing products from regenerative farms to ensure the intake of healthier, sustainably produced food.

Ashley's work serves as a reminder of the power of informed, sustainable practices. By prioritizing whole foods, minimizing harmful additives and supporting ethical farming methods, it's possible to create a healthier, more resilient society.

## **Building a Sustainable, Healthy Future**

As consumers become more aware of the profound connections between their dietary choices and overall health, the demand for regenerative products will naturally increase. This, in turn, will incentivize more farmers to adopt sustainable practices, creating a positive feedback loop that benefits both individuals and the planet.

Ashley concluded, "Health shouldn't be hard. You shouldn't be overwhelmed, and you are not forever broken if you give the body the tools it needs, remove the metabolic breaks and use simple body temperature measurements."<sup>11</sup> Her holistic approach underscores the interconnectedness of diet, agriculture, and systemic health, offering a roadmap for individuals to achieve optimal well-being.

Ashley and I also discussed the forthcoming launch of the revolutionary Mercola Health Coach app and Mercola Health Labs. These initiatives will change how individuals access and interpret their health data, making comprehensive lab testing more accessible and affordable.

The Mercola Health Coach app will provide personalized monitoring and recommendations that support your best possible health. Food Buddy, an integral part of the Mercola Health Coach, is designed to help you effectively navigate daily food choices to reach optimal wellness.

Mercola Health Labs will offer a range of lab tests at a fraction of the current costs, with plans to provide some tests for free along with supplement purchases. This initiative is designed to empower you to take control of your health without the financial and logistical barriers associated with conventional lab testing. If you'd like to join the waitlist for the Mercola Health Coach app, [click here](#).

As we continue to develop tools like the Mercola Health Coach app and expand regenerative farming partnerships, the vision of a healthier, more sustainable future becomes increasingly attainable.

We are pioneering a movement that not only transforms individual health but also redefines our relationship with the food we consume and the environment we inhabit. By empowering individuals with knowledge and supporting farmers with sustainable practices, we are laying the foundation for a thriving future.

**Low-PUFA Eggs Delivered to Your Door**

To assist with sourcing food that supports your metabolism, instead of hinder it like the conventional food system does, Armstrong is also heavily involved in food production.

What your food eats, matters – as pigs and chickens are vehicles for health-harming polyunsaturated fats (PUFAs). If their diet is high in PUFAs, the final product will contain more PUFAs. With the current agriculture system, knowing where your food comes from is vital.

Armstrong is co-founder of [Angel Acres Egg Club](#), which specializes in low-PUFA eggs. Angel Acres eggs are lab tested at Michigan State University to be significantly lower in linoleic acid (a metabolic poison).

 what we eat, eats matters

[Angel Acres eggs](#) have 76% less linoleic acid (LA) – you would need to consume 4.2 of Armstrong's eggs to have the same LA content of Organic Vital Farms and Cage Free Eggs. Assuming a 2,200 calorie diet, the linoleic acid content for 4 of Angel Acres eggs is only 0.24% of calories, whereas the others listed are at 1% or above, which is about half of Dr. Mercola's total daily recommended LA intake for the day (2% to 3% of calories).

Armstrong also co-founded [Nourish Food Club](#), a sister organization to Angel Acres, which specializes in the best low-PUFA chicken, low-PUFA pork, A2 dairy, 100% grass fed beef, 100% grass fed lamb, traditional sourdough, and more. Armstrong shares behind the scenes footage at partner farms on her "[Farmerash](#)" [Rumble channel](#) for food production transparency. [You can join and shop Nourish Food Club here.](#)

## Sources and References

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- <sup>1</sup> [Youtube, Dr. Mercola, A Vision for Regenerative Agriculture and Metabolic Wellness – Interview with Ashley Armstrong, 1:06](#)
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- <sup>3</sup> [Youtube, Dr. Mercola, A Vision for Regenerative Agriculture and Metabolic Wellness – Interview with Ashley Armstrong, 16:01](#)

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- <sup>6</sup> Youtube, Dr. Mercola, A Vision for Regenerative Agriculture and Metabolic Wellness – Interview with Ashley Armstrong, 1:27
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- <sup>9</sup> Youtube, Dr. Mercola, A Vision for Regenerative Agriculture and Metabolic Wellness – Interview with Ashley Armstrong, 59:05
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