

American Society for Nutrition

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To the Editor:

We share Michael Pollan's concern about the diet and health of the American people but categorically reject the assertion that "scientists have ruined the way we eat." ("Unhappy Meals," Jan. 28) Blaming scientists for our poor eating habits may fit nicely with his view that old is good and new is bad, but here he is guilty of the oversimplification and reductionism that he allegedly abhors.

To cite one recent example of the benefits of nutrition science research: folate fortification of flour in the US and Canada (policy resulting from knowledge discovered through research by nutrition scientists) has resulted in a six fold reduction in the prevalence of low folate status in adults and a 20-50% reduction in infants born with neural tube defects. Science is not the enemy of good diet, and nutrition research underlies many of Pollan's recommendations.

Certainly there have been misinterpretations of research and exaggerated claims, but this is not the work of scientists. We have the ability to move beyond the confusion that Pollan laments, but this will take more research and not less.

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