

PLASTICS NEWS

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Bacon Bowl's next frontier: the wholesale food industry

CHICAGO — As if the "Perfect Bacon Bowl" — made with Citadel Plastics Inc.'s Micropure thermoset material — wasn't already popular enough with consumers, the company that developed the bacon shaping system is now planning to expand sales to the restaurant industry.

Development of the wholesale side of the bowl, which allows users to create a bowl shape using three strips of bacon, is still under way, but Allstar Products Group said it is getting enough interest to support the expansion.

"It just hit retail in February and just blew up," said Teresa Sinapi, senior manager of marketing for Allstar during an inter-

view at the International Home + Housewares Show in Chicago March 15-18.

The wholesale growth comes following a media event to introduce the consumer product at New York's Ellen's Stardust Diner. Hawthorne, New York-based Allstar Products provided the restaurant with the molded bowls so it could develop recipes using them for the launch.

The restaurant liked them well enough to hang onto them for regular dining and created a menu just featuring products in the Bacon Bowl. It is now selling 200 meals per day featuring the Bacon Bowl, Sinapi said.

The bowl also is continuing to roll out to a wider retail market, a market that has already seen "millions" of sales, although the

company is not releasing exact sales numbers.

Sinapi credits both the ease of using the plastic bowl along with the enduring love for bacon with consumers for its popularity.

Citadel, based in West Chicago, Ill., has three production lines in North America and one in China devoted to turning out MicroPure for the bacon bowl. United States Dinnerware Inc. of Port Gibson, Miss., has molded more than 1 million of the bowls alone, while Allstar works with other contract manufacturers in China.

So far, Allstar hasn't determined whether it will introduce a larger package for the wholesale market — Bacon Bowls currently sell in sets of two — but Sinapi said it expects that business to grow just as quickly as the retail market has.