



Breaking News on Food & Beverage Development - North America

N2 launches multi-purpose gluten-free blend

By Jess Halliday, 15-Oct-2009

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Canada's N2 Ingredients is rolling out a new gluten-free blend for use in a broad range of applications, claimed to advance the sensory properties of products for the booming market for foods for celiacs and other gluten avoiders.

N2 began trading in 2004 as an organic ingredients distributor, but subsequently build its own dry blending operation. In addition to carrying out blending for customers, it decided to develop its own decided to develop its own gluten-free blend as an alternative to wheat and other gluten-containing flours and blends.

The result, Alterna, is a blend of a number of different gluten-free components, Bob Crane, president of N2 told FoodNavigator-USA.com – including rice, tapioca, corn, and gum systems to mimic the structure and volume normally provided by gluten. All the raw materials come from gluten-free, dairy-free and nut-free facilities.

Crane described it as *"an all-purpose gluten-free flour, with general application"*. It has been tested in some 20 applications, including pie crusts, sweet goods, pancakes, breads and cakes.

"We found in the gluten free market that many products were, well, lousy," said Crane. The young industry has made advances in texture and flavour in the last few years, but he added *"we wanted to produce something as close to real gluten flour as possible"*.

The company has received enquiries from the US and Canada, and from overseas.

Market research organization Packaged Facts clearly sees the trend toward gluten-free formulations as more than a fad, estimating that sales of gluten-free products will reach \$2.6bn by 2012.

In a recent report, it said that the gluten-free market has grown at an average annual rate of 28 percent since 2004, when it was valued at \$580m, to reach \$1.56bn last year.

The development of Alterna was made possible thanks to part funding of \$25,000 from the Food and Beverage Industry Innovation Fund, which is administered by the Agricultural Adaptation Council, in alliance with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Agricultural Adaptation Program, the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, and the Alliance of Ontario Food Processors.

Academic research was conducted with George Brown College, Centre for Hospitality and Culinary Arts.

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