

# AltMeat®

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## VOW FORGES AHEAD

CEO Peppou lays out  
a vision for meat's  
future that's unlike  
anything that exists





# Bacon 'beta test'

TASTERS LOVED THE IDEA OF A **PLANT-BASED BACON** BUT WERE UNANIMOUS IN DECIDING MYBACON ISN'T READY FOR PRIME TIME.

**B**acon is one of those self-defining foods and flavors that knows no borders, showing up in everything from snacks to entrees, and even baked goods and desserts. When we spotted a plant-based bacon alternative made from mycelium, our interest was certainly piqued.

MyBacon Farm-grown Meatless Mycelium Original Recipe, from MyForest Foods, is an alternate meat product made with minimal ingredients. It is soy-free, dairy-free, gluten- and animal-free. The package touts “an undeniably irresistible, classic bacon-y experience and mouthwatering flavor.”

We immediately thought of BLT and bacon and eggs, but let’s hear what our tasters had to say about it.

## DEMOGRAPHICS

MyBacon was prepared by a range of men and women in their own homes. Tasters ranged from toddlers to seniors.

## FIRST IMPRESSIONS

A millennial male who loves trying new foods told us, “I liked the package but didn’t know until I started reading it that it’s made from mushroom. It contains minimal ingredients, which I like.”

“It looks strange with the coconut fat



## PRODUCT:

**MyBacon** Farm-Grown  
Meatless Mycelium

## PRICE:

**\$8.99/6-oz. package**

## NUTRITION PER SERVING:

**Calories 60, Total Fat 3g, Saturated Fat 2g, Cholesterol 0mg, Sodium 420mg, Total Carbohydrate 5g, Protein 3g.**

**by Anna Marie Cesario  
and Jennifer Vahalik, U&I  
Collaboration, LLC.**

Food product development and consumer research veterans, Anna Marie Cesario and Jennifer Vahalik, join *Alt-Meat* magazine as contributors to our regular “Taste Test” column. Here’s how the program works: The alternative meat item is distributed to consumers, including the core demographic, for preparation in their own homes. No instructions are provided to the consumer, other than to write their overall impressions of the product, as well as to evaluate the flavor, texture, packaging and ease of use. Cesario and Vahalik look for common threads by using *Getting It!*®, a system developed to listen to consumers about products. The sample of people is not intended to be a “taste test” in a controlled setting, nor is it intended to simulate a focus group. Others are doing both. Rather, the intent is to interpret the response of the people who might purchase a product like this and use it, simply based on their encounters with the product in their individual, unique home environment. That is how U&I has been developing cutting-edge product and people understanding since 1999.

and mycelium when you open the package,” said a female taster.

“I know what mycelium is, so it’s a cool alternative for someone who’s meatless. It has clean ingredients,” noted a Gen Z male.

“I like the package illustration indicating how to tell when the bacon is cooked, along with the drawing of mycelium, as I wasn’t certain what it was,” explained an adventurous female. She continued, “But inside the package looks gross, like congealed fat or very old, sliced roast beef.”

A young dad who prepared MyBacon for his family, including two toddlers, shared, “I like the clean and fun packaging. I really like how the coconut oil was included, but I didn’t realize it at first and was confused about what the white stuff was.”

“The bacon looked manufactured which was off-putting,” noted a young mom. “It’s all one color and needed some variation.”

A male in his mid-thirties told us, “The packaging was a little plain, but all the information was easily findable.”

## APPEARANCE, FEEL, TASTE, TEXTURE

“The product was questionable from the start. It looked to be covered in some sort of fat or grease and I couldn’t figure out what it was,” said a male in his mid-thirties. “It was tedious to take out of the package because the slices stuck to each other. They looked very dark, closer to sliced London broil. We cooked it in the oven, but it became greasy, and the smell was odd; didn’t really strike me as bacon.”

A female taster said, “I didn’t have coconut oil and was surprised they didn’t give any other options. And they didn’t say how much oil to

add. So, I used non-stick cooking spray and then realized as I peeled the ‘bacon’ from the package that the white chipped stuff coming off the ‘bacon’ was probably the coconut oil! The directions don’t say to turn the slice over during cooking and it illustrates to cook the slices until they’re ‘flat’, not floppy. However, that made them taste burnt and overcooked.”

Another female added, “I didn’t like the texture at all. It was fibrous, tough and chewy, almost rubbery. And it left a bad taste in my mouth.”

“It looks like leather,” shared a boomer-aged male. He added, “The texture and taste are like bacon, but it takes way longer to chew. The only objectionable thing is the sight of it. Looks like something made for dogs. It’s more acceptable in a BLT sandwich.”

A female in her twenties pointed out, “It seems like mushroom jerky. I wouldn’t sit and eat this like bacon by itself.”

“In a BLT it could very well be bacon,” added a Gen X female. “By itself it’s not bad — it’s smoky and chewy like bacon. But it was so hard to get apart. I ended up just putting it all in the skillet and gently separating it as the coconut oil melted. Ain’t nobody got time for that! If I bought it again, I would let it sit out until some of that oil softened so I could separate them and cook them in the oven.”

“The directions say to add the bacon and coconut oil, so I was confused because I thought I had to provide my own coconut oil,” explained a millennial male. He continued, “So I used a little avocado oil, but then I took the bacon out of the package and saw all these gross-looking chunks which I realized was coconut oil, so I took my oil out of the pan. It’s kind of smart that the coconut

## Taste Test

oil is in there, but it's messy and looks gross. It needs to be better explained."

### CONCLUSION

An adventurous female concluded, "As a person who is looking for new ideas, this idea is great. However, it is a work in progress. It looks weird, handles weird, and cooks weird. The bacon label takes me to a place of comparative and that is a bad idea since it isn't anywhere close to bacon."

Our young husband told us, "Price is probably our most important aspect, but it must be edible. I might buy it to get the kids to eat more vegetables, but my wife was not a fan of the taste or texture. I think the appearance before it was cooked ruined it for her."

Another young dad said, "This was not a fun one. From all aspects I wasn't a fan and would not buy this or eat it again. The taste was just kind of like bacon if you really thought about it."

Our millennial male concluded, "It's kind of gross thinking of it as bacon but thinking of it as eating a mushroom that tasted a little like bacon, I liked it a little more. However, it's not appetizing so I wouldn't buy it again. I eat meat and would rather have regular bacon."

"I enjoyed the texture and flavor, but the visual grossed me out — it looks like an intestine. That's bothering me the most. They have some improvements to make. Also, based on the packaging, I can see someone buying this thinking it's 'real' bacon, but it isn't," concluded a male participant.

"I wanted to try this out of curiosity, but it did nothing for me. I'd rather have a slice of 'real' bacon. There's just no reason to buy this," decided a female taste-tester.

I don't think we've ever heard the term "gross" more than we did with MyBacon, referring to the visual and textural appearance of the product after opening the package. Why would MyBacon feature coconut oil, which contains almost all saturated fat, in a plant-based product that many consumers think of as a healthier option compared to animal-based products? And why would they not do a better job explaining that the "white stuff" surrounding the strips is the coconut oil needed to cook the product? We're concluding that MyBacon is a great concept — making a plant-based "bacon" alternative from mushroom — but it needs work. As one taster noted, "It's like people are eating MyBacon's beta test."



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