

# Firm to develop estrogen activity-free resin

## PlastiPure using grant to expand technology

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PlastiPure Inc., which makes chemicals that companies can use to make bottles and containers that are free from estrogen activity, has received a \$1.1 million federal grant to develop new chemical formulations.

"We will be developing several polyolefins, polyethylenes, polypropylenes and additives that are free of estrogen activity," said CEO Mike Usey in an Oct. 29 phone interview.

Usey also said PlastiPure would use the funding to develop with its partners additional colorants, clarifiers, antistatic agents and antioxidants that are free of estrogen activity.

"This funding validates our innovative technology and will allow us to expand our development of PlastiPure-Safe materials," he said.

The Austin, Texas-based company, which was founded in 2000 and began selling commercial products and resins in 2008, also has raised \$2 million in funding from private investors.

PlastiPure products are certified to be free of estrogen activity by Austin-based CertiChem Inc.

The grant from the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences was an-

nounced Oct. 27, just two months after PlastiPure and cycling water bottle specialist Hydrapak LLC of Oakland, Calif., introduced the Purebot water bottle, a plastic reusable water bottle certified as free from estrogenic activity.

That activity, associated with chemicals such as phthalates and bisphenol A, has been linked to possible birth defects, low birth weights, reproductive cancers, early puberty and behavioral and learning disorders.

"The consumer focus has been on BPA and phthalates, but those are just two of the hundreds of chemicals that have estrogen activity. So just getting rid of those two doesn't help that much," Usey said.

"We are a strong supporter of the plastics industry, and we believe that plastics are an integral part of modern society," Usey said. "But we believe that there is a way to make plastic products safer and at a cost that is essentially the same. We believe that consumers will quickly embrace a safer plastic product. We want them to buy plastic products — not glass and stainless-steel products."

In addition to making resin for Purebot water bottles, PlastiPure makes resin for the 4-ounce to 32-ounce bottles used for premium soaps, shampoos, lotions and skin-care products sold at stores such as Austin-based Whole Foods Market.

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The products include the Sacred Sassy Soap line from Benedetta, based in Petaluma, Calif.; the organic baby product line of shampoos, oils and lotions from Lufe's Natural Body Care in Austin; and the organic Peter Rabbit line of personal skin-care products from EcoNatura Inc. in Deer Park, N.Y. "Those are the main retail products right now," Usey said.

Usey added that PlastiPure has partnered with a manufacturer and will launch an estrogen activity-free baby bottle in the next three months, and EA-free plastic bags, food-storage containers and can liners in the next six months. He also said the company will announce a distribution deal before the end of the year.

"Our markets are highly sensitive products where consumers demand more safety — baby bottles, water bottles, food packaging, cosmetics packaging and medical devices," Usey said.

"The main focus we have right now is to educate consumers, find retail partners and get some sexy, safe products out into the marketplace.

"In the next 18 months, we want to have a breakthrough bottle — either a highly visible baby bottle or a food packaging application," he said. "That will break this market open."

Usey said the company's biggest challenge isn't developing chemical formulations or finding product applications, but consumer awareness and education.



PlastiPure's Purebot reusable water bottle is certified as free from estrogenic activity.

"There is a lot of confusion around plastics and people sometimes are afraid of the wrong thing," he said.

"Our products give consumers the option to buy safer products at the same price. We are competitively priced with BPA-free products, but we also are free of estrogen activity — and we need to let people know that," Usey said.