



Rob Salamida poses with his newest product 'Pinch.' The Endicott native is getting some free sales help for his spiedie sauce from major publications.

Free spiedie publicity graciously accepted

By PHIL FAIRBANKS

If nothing else, credit Rob Salamida with spreading the good news.

The entrepreneurial spirit of the Endicott native has allowed the "spiedie" to go forth, multiply and and bring joy to hundreds of new taste buds.

Granted, Salamida has made money along the way. But in so doing, he has brought new attention to a dish that has long been recognized as the pride of Broome County.

For years, the marinated chunks of lamb, pork and beef have been admired by immigrant natives of the area. But now, they must share their treasures. The word is out and it's all because of Salamida.

"We don't appreciate that so many things in our area are unique," says Salamida, in part apologizing for letting the news escape and, at the same time, taking credit for bringing pleasure to those who have never experienced the joy of spiedies — sans gristle, of course.

Using his State Fair Spiedie Sauce, a ready-made bottled marinade, Salamida has spent the past nine years spreading the word.

Two years ago, *USA TODAY* picked up on the spiedie as part of a story on hometown food products. Salamida credits the exposure to a former *Evening Press* reporter and avid spiedie lover, who now works for the Washington-based newspaper.

More recently, his sauce was featured in articles in *Changing Times*, a consumer magazine, and *Food Finds*, a

mail order catalog on local foods.

Salamida says the attention has resulted in some news business, but nothing extraordinary. He concedes, however, that progress takes time. After all, Ray Kroc didn't sell his millionth burger until the 1970's.

Still, the future is bright. Salamida says he gets mail orders every day, some from as far away as Alaska and Hawaii. And, to prove the spiedie is apolitical, one order came from a devotee in Yugoslavia.

Salamida recently ordered special boxes to mail the spiedie sauce that people across the country and, apparently, the world long for. He admits most of them are displaced residents of the area, people who have tasted the spiedie and are wary of a life without it.

Financially, the new attention has meant increased sales for the Rob Salamida Co. The owner won't disclose the figures but he says sales increased 30 percent last year and have continued to rise this year.

He now markets the sauce throughout central New York and northern Pennsylvania and recently moved into North Carolina and the mid-Atlantic states.

The next plan is to diversify. His latest product, Pinch — a blend of seasoning spices, has been selling well, he says, and the time has come to consider an expansion into a new area. He says he will soon market a meat maranade for wild game.

"It's just a matter of Rob Salamida getting the time to do it," he says.