

# Kashrus Kurrents

Fall 5775-2014

## Shmitta 5775

BY RABBI DOVID STEIN  
STAR-K KASHRUS FIELD REPRESENTATIVE

For over nineteen hundred years, the Jewish people have longed to return to *Eretz Yisroel*, the Land of Israel. It is only in the Land of Israel that we can realize our full potential as a nation; it is only in the Land of Israel that the *Torah*'s blueprint for life can be completely fulfilled. For millennia, the most important dimension of this longing was the yearning to once again be able to fulfill the *mitzvos hatluyos ba'aretz* (agricultural laws), the commandments that can only be observed in the Land of Israel. With *Hashem*'s help, many of us in this past generation have realized part of this two thousand year old dream. Yet, this realization has presented us with new challenges.

Without a doubt, one of the greatest *mitzva* challenges of all times is the fulfillment of the *mitzva* of **Shmitta**, the year of Sabbatical rest for the land of Israel. The *Midrash* perceives this multifaceted *mitzva* as being so challenging and difficult that he who meets the challenge of *Shmitta* in all its details is called, in the words of the *Midrash*, an angel. True, observing the *mitzva* may be spiritual, but the details of the *mitzva* are very practical.

This article will outline some practical *Shmitta* insights so that we can gain a greater understanding and appreciation of this beautiful *mitzva*.

The laws of *Shmitta* can be divided into three major categories: laws regarding **working the land**, laws pertaining to the **produce of the land**, and **consumer halachos of pairosh sheviis**, fruit grown during the *Shmitta* year.

### I. Working The Land - What Is Prohibited?

The laws regarding the land are extremely complicated and not very relevant to people who do not own land in *Eretz Yisroel*, so it will be dealt with very briefly. In general, all work intended to enhance the land, to prepare the land for producing a yield, or to enhance vegetation is forbidden. Therefore, one may **not** plow the land, plant seeds or saplings, or even prune trees because these activities promote growth and are considered forbidden work.

Some other forbidden activities include watering, fertilizing, weeding and other essential fieldwork. If the purpose of the work is to protect what has already grown prior to *Shmitta* so it should not get ruined, or if trees are in danger of dying, certain activities are generally permitted to protect them. Since these laws are very complicated, a *posek*, *Torah* authority familiar with these laws, should be consulted.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

## Ta'am Tov B'Tuv Ta'am: A Flavorful Blend of Kashrus and Spices

RABBI TZVI ROSEN  
STAR-K KASHRUS ADMINISTRATOR;  
EDITOR, KASHRUS KURRENTS

Unquestionably, the one area of food ingredients that attests to the global nature of the food industry is the spice trade. The *Torah* is replete with reference to the spice traders who carried *Yosef* to Egypt, to the *ketores* that was fundamental to the *avoda* in the *Bais Hamikdash*. The spice commerce has thrived from the beginning of commercial trade. New World exploration forged forward fueled with the hope of finding shorter spice routes to the Far East. Centuries earlier, Marco Polo witnessed flourishing spice trade firsthand, during his travels to the Orient. Spice empires thrived as the European powers deepened their trade with the Far East. Today, spice trading continues to prosper. Spices hail from Albania to Zanzibar and arrive at these shores in many different forms as whole spices, spice extracts, oleoresins, and essential oils. What are the *kashrus* issues facing this fascinating ancient/contemporary industry? Have modern processing techniques simplified or complicated matters?

### What are spices? Are spices and herbs synonymous?

The term spice is derived from the Latin "species aromatacea", meaning *fruits of the earth*, and are defined as an "aromatic, pungent vegetable substance used to flavor food". Charlemagne defined herbs as "a friend of physicians and the praise of cooks". Herbs are defined as a "plant without woody tissue

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

### Inside this issue

<b>Shmitta 5775</b>	Page 1
<b>Ta'am Tov B'Tuv Ta'am</b>	Page 1
<b>New Under STAR-K Certification</b>	Page 7
<b>STAR-K Kosher Classroom</b>	Page 8



# Ta'am Tov BTuv Ta'am

A Flavorful Blend of Kashrus and Spices

RABBI TZVI ROSEN  
STAR-K KASHRUS ADMINISTRATOR;  
EDITOR, KASHRUS KURRENTS



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

that withers and dies after flowering". The FDA considers spices and herbs as one and the same and categorically defines culinary spice and herbs as an aromatic vegetable that gives flavor and seasoning to food, rather than nutritional value. Spice sources include bark, bulbs, buds, flowers, fruit leaves, roots, seeds, and plant tops. *Halacha* categorically classifies herbs and spices as products which are flavoring agents for food.

Below is a list of some popular spices obtained from different plant parts.

PLANT PART:	SPICES:
Fruit/Berry	Allspice, Capers, Capsicum (Cayenne-Red Pepper), Mace, Nutmeg, Paprika, Black Pepper, White Pepper
Bark/Stem	Cinnamon
Seed	Anise, Anise China Star, Caraway, Cardamom, Celery, Coriander, Cumin, Dill Seed/Dill Weed, Fennel, Fenugreek, Mustard, Oregano, Poppy, Sesame
Leaf	Chervil, Rosemary
Stem	Basil, Bay, Chives, Marjoram, Oregano, Parsley, Sage, Tarragon, Thyme
Bud/Bulb	Cloves, Garlic, Onion
Flower/Stamen	Saffron
Root/Rhizome	Ginger, Horseradish, Turmeric, Whole Spices

## Whole Spices

Today, much of the imported spices are shipped to spice facilities in the same fashion that has been done from the beginning of the spice trade. Spices are picked by hand, dehydrated, placed in burlap bags, and shipped to their destinations in their whole natural dried state. Most spice dehydration is done in the field, known in the spice trade as sun drying. Other spices are air dried in hot air drying tunnels. Drying reduces moisture content making it less costly to ship, and reduces the likelihood of the development of mold.

Much of the rigorous processing of the modern day spice house centers around the cleaning and decontamination of any undesirable adulterants. First and foremost, spices have to be cleaned. The spices pass through metal detectors and de-stoners to remove foreign material or debris. They are then sifted through many sifting screens so that any small contaminants or insects will be ferreted out. This process is only the initial stage of present day spice house cleaning.

Spices often have to be microbiologically cleaned, as well. To this end, one of three processes can be employed. Whole seeds and berries are cleaned through steam

distillation. Another treatment employs ethylene oxide gas. The third method is radiation. These processes generally rid the spices of almost 100% of bacteria, yeast, molds, insects and other forms of living matter. Due to these aggressive cleaning processes, the problem of insect infestation in spices dehydrates is virtually nonexistent. Any residual insect fragments that were not removed by cleaning, screening and fumigation would be *Batul*. Since drying and cleaning equipment are used exclusively for spice productions, cross usage of the equipment for other products is not a concern.

## Spices From Israel

Spices imported from *Eretz Yisroel* present different *kashrus* concerns. Modern cultivation techniques have given indigenous spices, *spices that have grown in its natural country of origin*, competition from countries that have similar climate which can produce the same spices as their indigenous counterparts. This has given rise to spices and herbs growing in all areas of the world.

Israel is a major supplier of onion, garlic, and bay leaves. Two imports not linked to spices are tomatoes and peppers, and these products require reliable kosher certification, ensuring that *terumos* and *maasros* were separated. *Kashrus* agencies are aware that Israel is a major supplier of parsley and paprika. Furthermore, some Israeli companies play a significant role in the dehydration of spices; hence, the country of origin becomes a major issue, and the separation of *terumos* and *maasros* in addition to other *mitzvos hateluyos ba'aretz*, such as *Shmitta*, is of paramount concern. It is crucial that the country of origin be determined when giving kosher certification to a spice company. When a consumer purchases a spice product and the country of origin is **not** stated, one can purchase spices without worry, based on the concepts of *Safek Derabanan LeKula* and *Holchin Achar Harov*.

Great care has to be taken regarding spices grown during the year of *Shmitta*. Produce grown during *Shmitta* are vested with *Kedushas Sheviis*, the sanctity of the year of Sabbatical rest. Produce grown during *Shmitta* may sometimes be eaten but cannot be sold in its typical commercial manner, nor can produce and spices vested with *kedushas sheviis* be exported. Some Israeli companies that are certified during the non-*Shmitta* years with reliable *mehadrin* certification will drop the *mehadrin hechsher* during the year that *Shmitta* produce is grown and harvested, and only certify the produce and spices with the regular non-*mehadrin* certification. The company will also put a disclaimer on the box stating that the company is kosher certified by a kosher *hechsher* that relies on the *heter mechira*,<sup>1</sup> i.e. selling the land to an *aino Yehudi* during the *Shmitta* year, thereby divesting the land from its sanctified status.

STAR-K and major *kashrus* organizations within the U.S. do not use products and ingredients that rely on the *heter mechira*. Since packaging for *Shmitta* and non-*Shmitta* year production appears the same, with either the presence

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

<sup>1</sup> See Rabbi Stein's article "Preparing for *Shmitta*".



# Shmitta 5775

BY RABBI DOVID STEIN  
STAR-K KASHRUS FIELD REPRESENTATIVE



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Flower pots at home in the Land of Israel present their own problems. Therefore, a *posek* should be consulted for instruction on proper *Shmitta* plant care.

## II. The Produce of the Seventh Year - *Pairos Sheviis*

In order to facilitate an understanding of what fruits and vegetables are permitted or forbidden, we must clearly define the four W's: Which produce are we speaking about? When was the produce grown? Where was the produce grown? Who owns the land?

**Which Produce?** There are essentially three categories of produce that we deal with: a. Vegetables, b. Grains and Legumes, c. Fruit grown on trees.

**When Was The Produce Grown?** New fruit trees cannot be planted 44 days or less before *Rosh Hashana* of a *Shmitta* year. New seeds cannot be planted after three days before *Rosh Hashana* or during the entire *Shmitta* year. The *halachos* regarding the produce included in this prohibition, and the produce to which the laws of *shiviis* apply, will be dealt with in Section III.

**Who Owns The Land?** There is a difference of opinion among the *poskim* as to whether produce grown on land owned by a non-Jew living in the Land of Israel is considered produce of *sheviis*. The custom in *Yerushalayim* is not to consider it produce of *sheviis*, while the custom in *Bnei Brak* is to consider it produce of *sheviis*.

**Selling The Land:** The *Heter Mechira* was formulated and instituted by many very prominent *rabbanim* (including the *Gadol Hador*, *Harav Yitzchok Elchanan Spector*) in the year 1887. There was a great deal of controversy among other prominent *rabbanim* surrounding the *heter*, the foremost of whom was the *Netziv* (*Harav Naftoli Zvi Yehuda Berlin*) of *Volozin*. Most of the controversy centered around the problem regarding the *Torah* prohibition of selling any part of the Land of Israel to non-Jews. Those who proposed the *heter* claimed that the situation in the Land of Israel was so precarious that not working the land for an entire year would put the entire Jewish settlement in danger, thus warranting this drastic measure. Others claimed that the prohibition of selling the land was worse than the prohibition of working

the land. Since then, every *Shmitta* there have been *rabbanim* who have sold the land. *Harav Avraham Yitzchok Kook* institutionalized the sale (although he, too, agreed it was to be done only under grave duress). Since its inception, the Chief Rabbinate of Israel has sold the land every *Shmitta*. However, there are presently many *rabbanim* who question whether the current situation in Israel warrants this type of sale. Furthermore, there is another more serious problem the consumer faces. The produce that is sold in the regular stores during the year of *Shmitta* predominantly comes from non-religious *kibbutzim* and *moshavim*, who would never agree to sell their land. This is compounded by the fact that the non-religious *kibbutzim* do not observe those prohibitions which *Harav Kook* instituted, and *Harav Kook* never permitted their current practices. Certainly, a tourist who is not knowledgeable concerning the *dinim* of *Shmitta* should buy produce only from stores that do not rely upon the *heter mechira*.

**Where The Produce Was Grown (Location)?** The laws of *Shmitta* apply only to produce grown within the boundaries of *Eretz Yisroel*, which are defined as those areas which were occupied by the people of Israel in the period of the Second Temple. These are not the same boundaries of the State of Israel that exist today. To which boundaries this does extend is a matter of great controversy. Some authorities state that anything grown south of *Ashkelon* is outside of the boundaries of *Eretz Yisroel*. Others extend the boundaries well into the Negev desert until *Eilat*. In the north, the *Golan Heights* is questionable. Each supervising organization will follow the *psak* of its own rabbis and advise their companies and facilities, accordingly.

## III. The Practical Laws of Produce of *Sheviis*

There are many laws regarding produce of *sheviis*.

- **There is a rabbinical prohibition against eating *s'fichin*.**

*S'fichin* is defined as produce that grows by itself during *sheviis*. The prohibition does not apply to any fruit from trees. The prohibition applies only to vegetables which started growing during the year of *sheviis*, and grains and legumes that reached one third of their growth during

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

# Ta'am Ta'ar B'Tuv Ta'am:

## A Flavorful Blend of Kashrus and Spices

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

or absence of the *mehadrin hechsher, mashgichim* must be very vigilant with ingredient inventories, especially those of spice companies. A wise rule of thumb is to avoid these issues and pre-plan with the companies by finding alternate suppliers; otherwise, pre-*Shmitta* inventories must be built up.

### Additives

Is it correct to assume that all spices that are sold in the spice and seasoning section of the supermarket are additive-free?

The answer is not always. True, most spices that state that they are 100% pure are indeed pure. However, even in many pure spices, in order to reduce caking or moisture, spices' natural nemesis, anti-caking additives are often added to help keep the spice dry and free flowing.

Typically, a silica gel (sodium silicate), is added as an anti-caking agent. Silica gel is a kosher anti-caking agent. Although it is not as common as it once was, calcium stearate, magnesium stearate and/or potassium stearate have also been used as effective anti-caking agents. Stearates are typically derived from non-kosher fats. Stearic acid can also be derived from vegetable sources. Therefore, even pure spices require careful scrutiny. Typically, pure spices list anti-caking agents in their ingredient declaration. However, if a pure spice does not list anti-caking agents on the ingredient panel, one can assume that it is not present.

### Spice Blends

Not all powders that come in little bottles in the spice section are pure spices. For instance, curry powder does not come from curry spice. Curry powder is a spice blend. American curry powder is a blend of eight spices. In India, curry powder changes from province to province. Curry powder can have hundreds of variations. Similarly, chili powder is a spice blend whose ingredient compositions change with the food applications. Chili powder is not only used in chili; it is used in sauces, frankfurters, meats and pickles. There are many tricks that a spice blender uses; consequently, spice blends generate a plethora of *kashrus* considerations and concerns.

There are no hard and fast rules to a spice blend. As with flavors, spice blending is very much an art form. Liquid flavors such as red wine vinegar, sherry and brandy can be added to the blend, and even liquid ingredients can retain their powdery nature with the addition of bulking agents.

Furthermore, flavor dehydrates such as dehydrated chicken, meat, and cheese powders can be added to the blend. These added flavoring agents, which are not kosher, can be generically listed as natural flavors. Each spice formulation has to stand on its own merit, and each formula has to be submitted to the certification agency for review and certification. Furthermore, spice blending equipment such as ribbon blenders and screen filters have to be checked for their cleanliness to make sure that no residual non-kosher spice blend remains are left behind. Sometimes, ribbon blenders have metal detectors that are difficult to clean. Another way to create a dry blend is to spray dry the formulation. If a contract spray dryer is used for other products, the kosher status of the spice blend can be compromised.

Today, ribbon blenders have the capacity to inject steam and actually cook spices in the blender. For example, a spice company actually steams chili peppers in the blender. Chili peppers are naturally sharp, *davar charif*, and have the capacity to "reawaken" taste in an *aino ben yomo kli*, a vessel that has been dormant for over 24 hours. If the ribbon was used for *treif* blending of products, such as rendered chicken fat, the peppers could become *treif* and, in turn, affect all forthcoming blends using seemingly worry-free hot chili peppers.

In a nutshell, spice blends require reliable kosher monitoring.

### Spice Extraction

Spice companies do not just use whole or ground spices. Spice extractions, such as essential oils and oleoresins, are fundamental to this burgeoning industry.

The extraction of essential oils and oleoresins provides food technologists with many advantages, as food manufacturers can select the specific flavor profiles with much greater precision than if they were to simply use blends of whole spices. In addition, hygienic concerns as well as transportation costs are greatly reduced if the oils and oleoresins are extracted close to the areas where the spices are grown.

Typically, oleoresins use an organic solvent such as hexane to extract the resin from the spice. The solvent is then drawn off, leaving the spice oleoresin behind. In the event that alcohol is used to extract the oleoresin, is the alcohol kosher and Kosher for Passover, and are the oleoresins stabilized with any non-kosher ingredients?

Essential spice oils are usually cold pressed or extracted with steam generally without the use of any solvent. Cold pressing or steam distillation does not present *kashrus*

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6





CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

**Shmitta.** The custom is that any vegetables grown from a plant which germinated before *Rosh Hashana* may be eaten. Therefore, all vegetables (tomatoes, lettuce, etc.) that one buys immediately after *Rosh Hashana*, while the laws of *sheviis* apply to them, may still be eaten. Charts are available in *Eretz Yisroel* providing dates for each fruit, legume, and vegetable regarding when the different *halachos* apply. Produce grown in a non-Jewish field, which may or may not be considered produce of *sheviis*, are not *s'fichin*. Produce planted during *Shmitta* in Jewish fields have the prohibition of *s'fichin*.

- There are some authorities who consider it a **mitzva to eat produce of sheviis**. Most authorities disagree.

• All authorities agree that **it is not permissible to destroy produce of sheviis** so long as it is fit for consumption. Left over food should be put into a bag and discarded only after it spoils. If this is impossible, it should be put into a sealed plastic bag and then discarded. Cooked food may be discarded if it was left unrefrigerated for an entire night and has spoiled. Similarly, an *esrog* grown during *Shmitta* must be discarded in this fashion after being used during *Sukkos* (5776).

• **Produce of sheviis must be used in its usual manner.** This means that fruits usually eaten raw may not be cooked, and fruits usually eaten cooked may not be eaten raw. Fruits not usually squeezed may not be squeezed; fruits usually eaten by people may not be given to animals.

• **Produce of sheviis should be treated as *hefker*,** ownerless, and not withheld from the public. Ideally, fences should be left open and permission given for anyone to harvest. However, since most people don't know how to pick fruit without ruining the trees, tree owners can insist on picking the fruit themselves for those who request it. Fruit under the auspices of an "Otzar Bais Din" should not be taken without its permission. Many authorities forbid consumption of any produce that is guarded during *sheviis*.

• **Produce of sheviis is not permitted to be sold in its usual commercial manner.** This means that it should not be sold in regular stores, where it is weighed and/or sold for profit in its usual manner. Furthermore, the money used to buy produce of *sheviis* becomes sanctified and whatever is bought with that money must be treated in the same sanctified manner as produce of *sheviis*. Because of these potential complications, a system of *Shmitta* produce distribution has been organized in order to ensure a steady supply of produce for the urban

population in a proper *halachic* manner. The distribution of this produce is administered by the local *Bais Din* of each city, commonly known as the *Otzar Bais Din*. Fees are permitted to be charged by the *Otzar Bais Din* to offset the cost of maintaining the warehouse, picking the produce, and doing permissible work in the orchards to maintain the fruit, but not for the fruit itself.

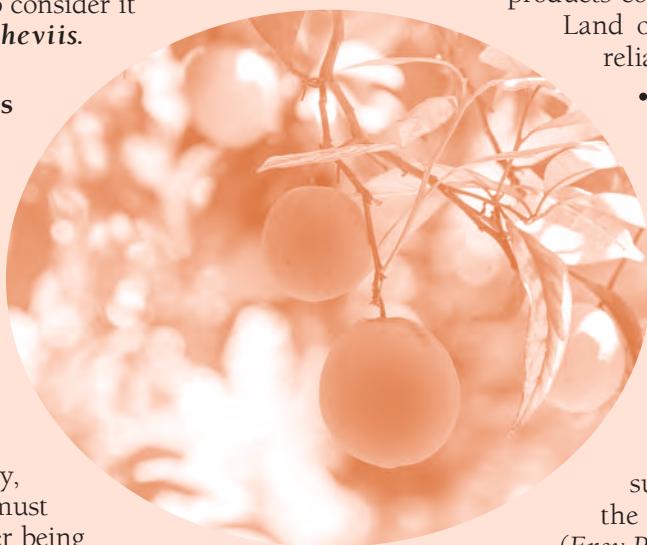
- **Under normal circumstances, produce of sheviis should not be exported.** It is for this reason that Israeli fresh produce and Israeli manufactured goods must clearly state that they are *Shmitta*-free. Many authorities permit the export of *esrogim* for *Sukkos*. When products come to foreign markets from the Land of Israel, one should look for a reliable kosher certification.

• **Last Shmitta, some kashrus agencies in Eretz Yisroel were very maikel with the *Otzar Bais Din* in order to discourage the selling of Eretz Yisroel to a non-Jew (the Heter Mechira).** This was especially apparent with wine; a great deal of wine was produced under the auspices of an *Otzar Bais Din* and was sold in regular supermarkets. Someone who buys the wine before the time of *Biur* (*Erev Pesach* 5776) can drink the wine.

However, after the time of *biur* it is very questionable as to what one can do with the wine. This wine became available in the United States, and STAR-K received numerous calls questioning what one could do with such wine. We suggest that before buying wine from *Eretz Yisroel*, even with a good *hechsher*, one should read the label carefully. If the label states 'Otzar Bais Din,' one should consult their *rav* as to how to proceed.

- **At the end of the season for each type of fruit or vegetable, one is required to remove from his possession all produce of sheviis.** This requirement is called *Biur*. The custom is to take all produce whose season has come to an end into the street, in front of three people, and declare it ownerless. The same person may then take it back into his own possession. The exact time of *biur* for most produce varies from one *Shmitta* to the next. Charts will be published later this year in Israel to give the consumers exact dates of *biur* for each fruit and vegetable.

Although *Shmitta* lasts for a full year, *Shmitta* produce is sold during the following year and beyond. Therefore, this *mitzva* extends far beyond the seventh year of Sabbatical rest. Unquestionably, it is a *mitzva* of great *mesiras nefesh*. However, if we look at the accomplishment of the *mitzva* as the fulfillment of our merit to keep *Eretz Yisroel*, this will be a source of blessing and spiritual enhancement for us all.



# Ta'am Ta'ar B'Tuv Ta'am:

## A Flavorful Blend of Kashrus and Spices

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

concerns, and essential oils are readily found with reliable kosher certification for Passover and year-round use.

As new avenues for industrial spice applications arise, new techniques for more effective, uniform spice extracts have arisen. Spices, oleoresins and essential oils are now shipped in dispersions of oil or other liquids. Furthermore, dispersions can be standardized with other ingredients such as mono and diglycerides or polysorbates, all requiring reliable kosher certification. Another technique for easier spice application is to make a liquid emulsion of spices, essential oils and a starch and spray dry the essential oil to a powder. In this case, the spray drying process has to be reviewed to make sure that non-kosher products are not being spray dried on a common spray drier, but only on a spray-drier dedicated to kosher spices.

### Custom Blending

Today, where creative spice blending is so far reaching, spice companies go far beyond the conventional mix of onion powder, garlic powder, and paprika. It is not uncommon for a spice company to have long complicated formulae going far beyond plain spices. Dairy blends typically include dairy powders, such as whey, butter oils, casein, and non-kosher cheese powders. Seafood seasonings can be seafood powders, such as oyster or squid, and can be blended on the same equipment as the *pareve* barbecue seasonings for potato chips. Because it is assumed that spice blending is achieved without the use of heat, it is commonly believed that the only issue involved is the cleanliness of the ribbon blender screens and blending equipment.

However, this is not always the case. Some spice companies stick to their market niche, while other custom blenders try to do it all and be all things to all customers. Some companies blend in sequence light spice blends to dark spice blends, non-allergen to allergen blends; dairy blends containing whey or milk powder are blended after *pareve* blends.

Generally, after an allergen blend, the machines are carefully cleaned so that they can be considered allergen-free. However, there are custom spice blenders that will do "just in time" custom spice blending and will fit in business to suit their customers' time constraints. It is conceivable that equipment is not thoroughly cleaned between these productions, which could cause a major meat/dairy/kosher/non-kosher issue with the equipment if not properly monitored or inspected.

In fact, in a company where proper kosher segregation was not implemented, the same vessels used to liquify solid rendered chicken fat are used to liquify solidified oleoresins.

Because oleoresins are unquestionably sharp (*davar charif*), even though the vessels were not used for 24 hours, the absorbed *ta'am* (taste) within the walls of the vessels were reawakened and the 'Rube Goldberg' domino effect began. The oleoresins were *treif*, and all subsequent formulations containing the oleoresin in any proportion was also *treif*. To resolve such a disaster, the entire spice company would have to undergo massive re-kosherization.

### Pesach Spice Blends

Spice seasoning blend formulations use flavor enhancers and other flavor ingredients such as MSG which has many applications, sodium erythorbate (used in deli meats), dextrose, maltodextrin and hydrolyzed vegetable proteins. Many of these flavorings and ingredients are corn or soy based. The halachic issue governing these ingredients is whether these products can be used in Kosher for Pesach spice blend formulations. Some ingredients are clearly *kitniyos*, legumes, forbidden by Ashkenazim on Passover. Other processed ingredients are derived from *kitniyos*-based products that go through a multi-stage conversion process until the final product is achieved. This category of *kitniyos*-based products has been termed *Kitniyos Shenishtanu*. There are divergent opinions amongst Poskim regarding *Kitniyos Shenishtanu*. Some Poskim say these processes have altered the *kitniyos*, the legume, and may be used on Passover. Other Poskim remain firm and maintain that these products retain their *kitniyos* status in spite of the conversions. STAR-K policy is not to use *Kitniyos Shenishtanu*.

Additionally, the Mishna B'rura 453:13 mentions that one should preferably refrain from using anise and kimmel on Passover since they grow in close proximity to wheat fields, and it is difficult to be sure that no grains of wheat are mixed in with these spices.

Since we are not sure what "kimmel" is, the custom is to refrain from using caraway, cumin, fennel, or nigella seeds (black caraway seeds), all seeds which resemble one another, and each of these could conceivably be the kimmel referred to above. Cumin also falls into this category. In addition, both fenugreek and coriander may be grown near wheat fields and should be avoided unless they have been carefully checked for extraneous grains. Some of the larger spice companies own their own plantations, thereby controlling the crops. Under these controlled circumstances, wheat and barley contamination would not be a concern.

Another spice which is considered *kitniyos* is mustard. Thus, all forms of mustard – including mustard essential oils and oleoresins – are not used on Passover.

In an era where blending *kashrus* and technology has become commonplace, the spice and spirit of kosher seasoning blends right in.



# NEW UNDER STAR-K KOSHER CERTIFICATION

## CONSUMER PRODUCTS

(only when bearing STAR-K symbol)

<b>ALCIDES BRANCO</b> PORTUGAL OILS/OLIVE OILS	<b>NTC MARKETING, MANGO DIVISION</b> Williamsville, NY FRUIT (CANNED)
<b>ANSON IMPORTS</b> N. Miami Beach, FL ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES	<b>ORHANOGLU GIDA</b> TURKEY OLIVES
<b>B K GRUP GIDA SANAYI</b> TURKEY JUICE & JUICE CONCENTRATES	<b>PERFORMANCE FOOD GROUP PEPPER STRIPS DIV.</b> Denver, CO VEGETABLES (CANNED)
<b>BGC GIDA TARIM</b> TURKEY PICKLED PRODUCTS; TOMATO PRODUCTS	<b>PURE LIFE TROPICS</b> McMinnville, OR COCONUT PRODUCTS; OILS/OLIVE OILS
<b>BODY BREAKTHROUGH, INC.</b> Deer Park, NY TEAS	<b>REUNION ISLAND COFFEE</b> CANADA COFFEES
<b>BRIDGEWELL RESOURCES, OIL DIVISION</b> Clackamas, OR OILS/OLIVE OILS	<b>ROSA LABS/SOYLENT</b> Los Angeles, CA HEALTH & NUTRITION
<b>C&amp;S WHOLESALE GROCERS CANNED VEGETABLES DIV.</b> Brattleboro, VT VEGETABLES (CANNED)	<b>S&amp;A ROASTERS, LLC</b> Monsey, NY COFFEES
<b>CAMPOMAR NATURAL</b> SPAIN OLIVES	<b>SAVOR BRANDS JASMINE RICE DIV.</b> Chesterfield, MO RICE
<b>CASTELLA IMPORTS</b> Hauppauge, NY VEGETABLES (CANNED)	<b>TAROMED</b> MOROCCO ESSENTIAL OILS & OLEORESINS; HERBS
<b>COOL FROOTZ</b> Boca Raton, FL FRUIT (FROZEN)	<b>THE CHOCOLATE BAR</b> Brooklyn, NY CANDY & CONFECTIONERY ITEMS; CHOCOLATE PRODUCTS; FRUIT (DRIED); NUTS & SEEDS
<b>DAIRYLAND USA CORP.</b> Ridgefield, NJ FLAVORS & EXTRACTS	<b>THE KOSHER FOOD TRUCK</b> Baltimore, MD FISH PRODUCTS; POULTRY PRODUCTS; SUPERMARKET (SELECT DEPARTMENTS)
<b>ECS COFFEE</b> CANADA COFFEES	<b>TOTAL FIT ALKALINE WATER</b> Capitol Heights, MD WATER
<b>EQUAL EXCHANGE</b> W. Bridgewater, MA COFFEES	<b>V&amp;K PINEAPPLE CANNING CO.</b> THAILAND DRIED FRUIT
<b>GLATT ORGANICS, LLC</b> Monroe, NY MEAT/POULTRY PROCESSOR; POULTRY PRODUCTS	<b>VALESCO TRADING REPACKAGING DIV.</b> Lyndhurst, NJ OLIVES
<b>GOURMET FOODS INTERNATIONAL</b> Atlanta, GA TOMATO PRODUCTS	<b>VITA FORTE, INC.</b> Pacific Grove, CA FRUIT (DEHYDRATED); ORGANIC PRODUCTS
<b>GROUPE PHOENICIA</b> CANADA OLIVES	<b>WEGMANS FOOD MARKETS ROASTED TOMATOES DIV.</b> Rochester, NY TOMATO PRODUCTS
<b>HAWAII COFFEE COMPANY</b> Honolulu, HI K-CUPS-COFFEE/TEA	<b>WEINS FOODS, LTD.</b> CANADA TORTILLAS/TACOS
<b>HUDSON TEA, LLC</b> St. Louis, MO BEVERAGES & DRINK MIXES; TEAS	<b>WHYTE'S FOODS, PEPPER DIVISION</b> CANADA VEGETABLES (CANNED)
<b>J R SPICE COMPANY</b> Holbrook, NY SPICES & SEASONINGS	<b>WINCO FOODS, CANNED VEGETABLES DIVISION</b> Boise, ID VEGETABLES (CANNED)
<b>KING'S HIGHWAY GLATT MEATS</b> Brooklyn, NY BUTCHER	<b>INDUSTRIAL/INSTITUTIONAL PRODUCTS</b> <i>(see letter of certification)</i>
<b>NAPOLI FOODS, INC.</b> Cheshire, CT TORTILLAS/TACOS	<b>ALCIDES BRANCO</b> PORTUGAL OILS/OLIVE OILS
<b>NOBLE DISTRIBUTORS, INC.</b> CANADA OLIVES	

**ATLANTIC CHEMICALS TRADING OF NORTH AMERICA**  
Glendale, CA  
SWEETENERS

**BASF NEDERLAND B.V.**  
NETHERLANDS  
INDUSTRIAL CHEMICALS

**BIERIG BROTHERS, INC.**  
Vineland, NJ  
MEAT/PULTRY PROCESSOR (STAR-S)

**B K GRUP GIDA SANAYI**  
TURKEY  
JUICE & JUICE CONCENTRATES

**BRENNTAG NORTHEAST**  
Reading, PA  
DETERGENTS & CLEANSERS

**CASIMEX S.A.**  
SUN DRIED TOMATOES DIV.  
FRANCE  
TOMATO PRODUCTS

**DENALI BIOTECHNOLOGIES**  
Homer, AK  
VITAMINS & NUTRITIONAL SUPPLEMENTS

**DIGNITY PRODUCTS AND SERVICES, INC.**  
PHILIPPINES  
COCONUT PRODUCTS; OILS/OLIVE OILS

**EDIBLE HAVEN**  
Union City, CA  
COCONUT PRODUCTS

**GLORYBEE INC.**  
QUINOA DIVISION  
Eugene, OR  
QUINOA

**GOURMET FOODS INTERNATIONAL**  
Atlanta, GA  
TOMATO PRODUCTS

**GREEN FRUITS SA**  
TUNISIA  
FRUIT (DRIED)

**HANCOLE CORP.**  
PHILIPPINES  
COCONUT PRODUCTS

**HIMALAYA INTERNATIONAL**  
Hamilton, NJ  
VEGETABLES (CANNED)

**J.A. KIRSCH CORP.**  
MUSHROOM DIV.  
Teaneck, NJ  
VEGETABLES (CANNED)

**JUICECO, INC.**  
Baltimore, MD  
BEVERAGES & DRINK MIXES

**KAIPING HEALTHWISE HEALTH FOOD**  
CHINA  
ESSENTIAL OILS & OLEORESINS; HERBAL EXTRACTS

**MARRAKECH TOPAGRO EXPORT**  
MOROCCO  
OLIVES

**NEELAM PHYTO EXTRACTS**  
INDIA  
HERBAL EXTRACTS

**NINGXIA DADE TRADING**  
FREEZE DRIED FRUITS & VEGETABLES DIV.  
CHINA  
VEGETABLES (DRIED)

**OISHI FOODS**  
INDIA  
PICKLED PRODUCTS; VEGETABLES (DEHYDRATED)

**ORHANOGLU GIDA**  
TURKEY  
OLIVES

**OSMAN AKCA**  
TURKEY  
FRUIT (DRIED)

**OZARK ORGANICS**  
Buffalo, MO  
OILS/OLIVE OILS

**PARI AGRO EXPORTS**  
INDIA  
RICE

**PERFORMANCE FOOD GROUP PEPPER STRIPS DIV.**  
ECUADOR  
VEGETABLES (DRIED)

**SCG GIDA**  
VEGETABLE DIVISION  
TURKEY  
VEGETABLES (CANNED)

**SHAKLEE (CHINA)**  
CHINA  
DETERGENTS & CLEANSERS

**SHIMIZU CHEMICAL CORP.**  
JAPAN  
FOOD GUM

**SICHUAN MIANZHU RONGHONG CHEMICAL**  
CHINA  
PHOSPHATES

**SUBURBAN CUISINE**  
Baltimore, MD  
RETAIL PRODUCTS

**TAROMED**  
MOROCCO  
ESSENTIAL OILS & OLEORESINS; HERBS

**TROPISOL PRODUCE**  
COSTA RICA  
VEGETABLES (FROZEN)

**UNIVAR USA INC.**  
San Pedro, CA  
DETERGENTS & CLEANSERS

**WELL LUCK CO., INC.**  
Jersey City, NJ  
RICE



The Star-D is a kashrus symbol of the National Council of Young Israel (NCYI). The STAR-K, in its relationship with the NCYI, administers the kashrus of the Star-D. All Star-D products are dairy cholov Yisroel.

**BAKEMARK**  
CHOCOLATE DIVISION  
Pico Rivera, CA  
CHOCOLATE PRODUCTS

**DREAMPAK**

New Berlin, WI  
BEVERAGES & DRINK MIXES

**HEB GROCERY COMPANY**  
San Antonio, TX  
CANDY & CONFECTIONERY ITEMS

**HOME TEAM SNACKS**  
Westminster, MD  
PRETZELS

**MCL, 4-EARTH**  
Los Angeles, CA  
BAKERY

**THEO CHOCOLATE, INC.**  
Seattle, WA  
CHOCOLATE PRODUCTS

## STAR-K CERTIFICATION, INC.

122 Slade Avenue, Suite 300

Baltimore, Maryland 21208-4996

NON PROFIT ORG  
US POSTAGE PAID  
BROOKLYN, NY  
PERMIT #7379



The STAR-K Kosher Classroom, a growing collection of curricular materials for elementary, middle, and high school classrooms, developed with support from Torah Umesorah, is now available at [www.chinuch.org](http://www.chinuch.org). STAR-K Director of Special Projects, Rabbi Zvi Holland, notes: "The STAR-K Kosher classroom is another STAR-K commitment to education. It is an expansion of our already existing educational efforts for adults, including *Kashrus Kurrents*, [Star-k.org](http://Star-k.org), and seminars for *rabbonim*, *mashgichim* and the community—in person and online—as

part of the Virtual Kosher University. We have consulted with *mechanchim* to ensure that these materials will be appropriate for the classroom and age-appropriate for children, across the spectrum. We are acutely aware, as adults, that *kashrus* might be our most extensive engagement with practical *halacha*. Yet, it is apparent from the phone calls we field that there is a gap in our schools' curriculums in this area. Educators have told us the reason why there is so little classroom education about *kashrus*-related *halacha* is because of a lack of information

and materials. Many of these topics require experts in the field, who are intimately involved in production procedures."

To date, the following informative posters are available: Cereal and Their Brochos; Bug Checking; Kosher Chicken; Chometz Chart; Glossary of Kosher Terms; International Date Line in Halacha; Pas Habaah B'kisnin; Terumos U'masros; Tevilas Keilim; Kitniyos. More posters are currently in development. For inquiries, call 410-484-4110. To receive access to the STAR-K Kosher Classroom, email [kosherclassroom@star-k.org](mailto:kosherclassroom@star-k.org).



## STAR-K Kosher Certification

A non-profit agency representing the Kosher consumer in promoting Kashrus through Education, Research and Supervision.

FOUNDING EDITOR:  
**A.J. Levin**

EDITOR:  
**Rabbi Tzvi Rosen**

MANAGING EDITOR:  
**Mrs. Pesi Herskovitz**

COPY EDITOR/COORDINATOR:  
**Ms. D. Rosenstein**

CONTRIBUTING WRITER:  
**Mrs. Margie Pensak**

Phone: (410) 484-4110  
Fax: (410) 653-9294

E-mail: [info@star-k.org](mailto:info@star-k.org)  
[www.star-k.org](http://www.star-k.org)

Copyright: 2014.  
STAR-K Certification, Inc.

All rights reserved.  
May not be reproduced in  
any form without permission  
of STAR-K Certification, Inc.

This publication is  
dedicated to the  
memory of  
**M. Leo Storch**,  
of blessed memory,  
through a grant from  
Mrs. M. Leo Storch  
& Family.

## Subscriptions

\$10(USD) annually for 4 issues -US & Canada  
\$15(USD) annually for 4 issues -Overseas

*Kashrus Kurrents* is also available on the web at [www.star-k.org/cons-kash.htm](http://www.star-k.org/cons-kash.htm).  
To receive an email when it is available online subscribe at [www.star-k.org/cons-kash.htm](http://www.star-k.org/cons-kash.htm) or send an email to [kashruskurrents-subscribe@star-k.org](mailto:kashruskurrents-subscribe@star-k.org).

(The Star-K Passover Book, not included in this subscription, is available for purchase in Jewish bookstores during the Passover season.)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Please send your tax deductible checks made payable to: **KASHRUS KURRENTS**

122 Slade Avenue, Suite 300, Baltimore, MD 21208-4996

Phone: (410) 484-4110 • Fax: (410) 653-9294

Receive late breaking kashrus news and alerts in your email.  
Send an email to [alerts-subscribe@star-k.org](mailto:alerts-subscribe@star-k.org) or visit [www.star-k.org/cons-new-alerts.htm](http://www.star-k.org/cons-new-alerts.htm)

Leadership in



Kashrus Education