**Dried Fruit**

**NATURE'S WAY OF WRINKLING GRACEFULLY**

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EDITOR, KASHRUS KURRENTS

It has been called nature’s candy and is a sweet source of nutrition whose popularity is on the rise. Commensurate with its growing popularity is its demand. In today’s global economy, the dried fruit trade literally spans the entire globe - apples from China, prunes from Bulgaria, figs from the Middle East, dates from Tunisia, raisins from South America, and of course apples, peaches, plums, raisins, figs, and dates from the good old U.S.A. Naturally, this growth presents a whole new set of challenges to kashrus agencies. How do they send a mishgacha to supervise date productions in Pakistan, raisin productions in Iran, or plum productions in Bulgaria? Let’s learn about this popular healthy snack alternative.

**THE PROCESS**

Fruit is dried through a process known as dehydrating, which removes enough moisture from the fruit to retard the growth of bacteria and mold while retaining the great taste and nutrients of the fruit. The two most popular methods used to dehydrate fruit are sun drying and tunnel drying. The best, most cost-effective and least problematic technique is to take advantage of the sun, the Ribbono Shel Olam’s natural dehydrator.

Sun drying avoids many of the kashrus issues that are perhaps problematic in other methods, such as oven or tunnel dried fruits and vegetables. When a fruit is sun dried, there are no kosher release agents or other processing equipment to consider. However, there is more to sun drying a fruit than just setting it out in the sun. Sun drying a fruit or vegetable properly requires great care and know-how. Every variety has its own protocol. Turkish apricots, for example, are dried where they are grown – in the Malatya region of East Turkey. Farmers must exercise great care as the apricots dry. Sun burning, poor cutting, or mushy fruit ruins this cash crop. The fruit must be dried to a certain moisture level, gently sliced, and the pit removed. (Next time you eat an apricot, look at the slit on the side). The fruit is then dried further to 24% moisture level, until it is ready to be collected and sent for further processing.

Sun drying appeals to the health-conscious consumer because relatively few processing aids are used in the drying process. However, sun dried fruits and vegetables are not additive-free. Pesticides are used to prevent infestation. In the case of light colored fruit, the color of the fruit is ready to be collected and sent for further processing.

**Insect Pressure Facts**

Most of the year, iceberg has less insect pressure than romaine or other leafy vegetables because it is a closed head. It is also typically less attractive to insects (and people!) because it is less green and has less nutrients than other lettuce varieties. For these reasons, Kosher-certified iceberg lettuce is generally easier to clean and check than romaine, it still poses some of its own unique challenges. To clarify this issue, it is important to understand some background about how iceberg lettuce is grown, harvested and processed.

**How Iceberg Grows**

Iceberg lettuce initially grows open, just like romaine [see pic. 1, page 3], during the first few weeks of its development, before cupping over and closing up. Once open, all of the newer leaves grow inside the closed head [see pic. 2, page 3]. If the time period when it was open was subjected to high levels of insect pressure, insects could crawl inside the open head and become trapped once the head cups over. They can then live quite comfortably inside this enclosed space - as they are well fed (with lettuce) and well protected from any applications of insecticides. During this time, they can reproduce very rapidly and therefore it may not be unusual to find entire families of insects inside a head, even all the way to the core. It is for this reason that the entire head must be checked every time, and not just the outer leaves.

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Leadership in Kashrus Education
such as apricots or golden raisins, sulfur dioxide is added to lighten the color. Some fruits use sodium metabisulfite as a preservative. Ascorbic acid could also be added. An organic sun dried fruit, however, is typically additive-free. It contains neither pesticides, additives such as sodium metabisulfite, nor chemicals used for fumigation. A good example of an organic fruit is a natural apricot, which is much darker in color and has a very different taste than its light colored, sulfurured counterpart.

Another method of drying fruit is known as oven or tunnel drying. The benefit of this method is that the process includes a dehydrator that is climatically controlled, and the fruit is not subject to the moods or pitfalls of Mother Nature. Nevertheless, the kosher consumer must be aware that inherent in tunnel dried fruit are more processing issues than in sun drying. It is not uncommon for oven dried fruit to use oils or release agents which require kosher certification. Some tunnel-dried raisins in Bulgaria are dipped in hot water before drying. Dried cherries from Michigan, the cherry capital of the world, is an excellent example of tunnel-dried fruit.

Most fruit, once dried, require no additional additives or sweeteners; others, however, do require the addition of processing aids or sweeteners. For example, some apricot companies season their apricots with fruit flavoring to give their apricots a unique taste. Potassium sorbate is added to prunes and sultana raisins. Pineapple, mango, and papaya from Thailand are sweetened with sugars and flavors (kosher certified Thai dried fruit companies have kosher approval for year-round use).

At times, the dried fruit undergoes further processing known as glace, meaning that the dried fruit is cooked in sugar and honey glazed. Consumers might find glace orange peels from Italy on their supermarket shelves. Glace is a process whereby liquid sugar – glucose – is infused into the fruit to give it a bright sheen and longevity. Often the fruit is colored to give a bright luster, hence the name glace. It is common for glace red cherries to be naturally colored with carmine, a lustrous natural red color derived from crushed coccineal beetles, which are not kosher. Obviously, synthetic colors do not present kashrus problems; however, carmine does.

Banana chips from the Philippines are another popular dried fruit. After drying, they are fried in vegetable oil and seasoned with flavorings. These products obviously require more rigorous supervision. It is interesting to note that in the Philippines, only refined vegetable oil is used which minimizes the concerns of non-kosher oil. Nevertheless, kosher certified banana chip plants are monitored regularly.

When you hear the name Thompson, Curtain, Sultana or Golden you think raisin. Raisins are probably the most globally marketed fruit on the market. They are grown not only in California but also Mexico, Argentina, Chile, Greece, Turkey and South Africa, as well. They often come to this country in boxes marked “Raisins”. It is very common for raisin producers to coat the fruit with a minute amount of oil to keep the raisins from sticking. Some companies use vegetable oil, such as soy or cottonseed; others may use specially formulated oils. Sometimes, the manufacturer states that the oil is GMO-free or non-GMO. This designation means that the vegetable seeds or oils used to make the oil are free from any genetic modification. Typically, these oils are referred to as polishing oils and are kosher certified.

PASSOVER ISSUES

One of the most important areas of the kosher dried fruit industry is Kosher for Passover fruit, as well as regular kosher. This is a new year-round certification request. Assuring that dried fruit is Kosher for Passover can be an arduous task. It is common practice for dried fruit producers to roll fruit pieces in flour to prevent them from sticking together. Rice flour is commonly used for apricots, oat flour for dates, and soy oil is typically used for raisins. These products obviously cannot be certified for Passover use. However, the question remains whether the non-floured dried fruit qualifies for Kosher for Passover certification. Before certifying any fruit for Passover, great care must be taken to ensure that the non-floured whole dried fruit is adequately segregated from the floured pieces, or that ascorbic acid is not used in the field. Many companies flour their fruit pieces in a separate room or separate area in the plant. However, this does not always guarantee segregation. In one instance, it was discovered that the flour shaker used to coat the date pieces created an oat powder cloud which spread and covered the packaging belts in an adjoining room. For Passover certification, this situation was disastrous. The solution was to package the Kosher for Passover dates in a different packaging area of the plant.

In the past, we have had requests for Kosher for Passover sugar sweetened pineapple from the Philippines. When we researched the project, we discovered that corn syrup was commonly substituted for liquid sucrose. The rabbi told us that it would be very difficult to segregate sugar lines “...even if the mashgiach would live in the factory.” Needless to say, we did not do a Kosher for Passover production.

In Argentina, we faced a different Kosher for Passover issue. A manufacturer wanted to import prunes that were specially produced for Passover use. In his facility, only prunes were processed in drying ovens. The company took great pains to clean the ovens for this production, and everything appeared to be in order – except for one item. Potassium sorbate was sometimes added to the prunes to regulate their moisture level. It is usually not difficult to purchase synthetic Kosher for Passover potassium sorbate in the U.S. However, the particular potassium sorbate that this company used has been produced in China, which is a legume (bean or pea) product and therefore not Kosher for Passover. This company’s product was disqualified from Kosher for Passover certification.

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home to most of the country's growing operations. The rest of the year (April-November), the Salinas, CA, region is the main growing area. This past winter, the Yuma region was subjected to above average temperatures and humidity. This caused very high levels of insect pressure in all the crops. Even once it subsequently cooled down, those initial weeks of abnormally warm weather were precisely the time when much of the iceberg crop was in its preliminary growth stages.

It was initially hoped that the insect pressure would subside once the seasons changed and the growers moved to California, especially since the lettuce that was to be harvested in Salinas in April had been planted during the cold winter. But the insect pressure in California has also remained elevated, as a result of the longstanding drought. Interestingly, the Salinas Valley actually sits on the largest underground river in the world, which means that produce grown there requires almost no rainfall. But since the surrounding areas do not have that benefit, insects from all the surrounding mountains (which are bare of vegetation due to the drought) have swooped in and infested the lush Salinas Valley produce fields.

**“TRIPLE WASHED” – REALLY?**

As noted above, iceberg tends to be easier to wash effectively than romaine. It is typically less infested and its leaves are smoother and firmer than romaine's; therefore, it is harder for insects to cling to them. This is especially true in a home kitchen, in which a decent wash will often lead to the lettuce passing the insect check. In industrial settings, however, where there can be thousands of pounds of produce washed throughout the day, a whole new set of challenges must be addressed.

In many plants, industrial washing systems operate constantly. The wash water is generally used again and again on the same processing lines. This means that you can have thousands of pounds of lettuce essentially being washed in the same water. If the lettuce has high levels of insect infestation, the sheer volume being processed increases the possibility that insects washed off the leaves will build up a presence in the water and either re-attach themselves to the produce or simply end up in the bagged finished product. Although the wash water is gradually turned over every few hours, the rate of replenishment may not be fast enough to avoid insect buildup.

Additionally, there are many different types of washing systems used in different companies, from flume systems and hydro loops, to shaker/sprayer tables and simple conveyor rinse tanks. The exclusive or combined use of any of these can permit a product to be called “triple washed.” Yet in terms of insect removal, some of these systems can hardly be considered significant or effective. Therefore, the fact that lettuce is claimed to be “triple washed” is not necessarily an indication of adequate cleansing from insects, unless it has a proper hashgacha verifying the kashrus of that particular product.

In order for processed iceberg to bear a reliable hechsher, careful monitoring is necessary. If the iceberg is only minimally infested, which in most years is the case, a decent wash system will usually be adequate to remove all the insects. If it is highly infested, however, it is unlikely to be certified without a rigorous set of filtration or flush systems in place in which the water either gets filtered properly or is flushed with enough fresh water on a constant basis to avoid insect buildup. Due to the fact that infestation levels can fluctuate and change suddenly, careful monitoring by trained mashgichim is necessary. This is why STAR-K has always required commercially produced iceberg to bear a reliable certification.

**CONSUMER AWARENESS**

We hope these seasonal/weather issues will end soon, allowing more iceberg lettuce to pass inspections. Consumers are urged to always check bags of prewashed lettuces for reliable kosher symbols that ensure the produce is properly certified and that no further checking is required.

There is much written about the tremendous rewards and kedusha that we merit by avoiding forbidden foods, particularly insects. During these turbulent times, when we are faced with great challenges to maintaining our level of kedusha, as well as the physical threats to many of Acheinu Bnei Yisroel, may our heightened awareness of these issues be a source of merit for all of us and strengthen the level of kedusha in our lives. May we all be zochi to a K所属 Vchusim Tova.
The mitzvah of shmitta poses many challenges for those who live in Eretz Yisrael. The main challenge, of course, is for the farmers. However, the consumer has his challenges, as well. It is always preferable to purchase produce from stores that have reliable kosher certification to ensure that there are no halachic problems. If there is no such store available, one must be certain not to transgress the laws of shmitta in the purchase, consumption, or interaction with shmitta produce. These are the different categories of halachos that one has to take into consideration:

1. **Sfichin**
2. **Kedushas shevi’is**
3. **Schora (doing business) with shevi’is produce**
4. **Dmei shevi’is** (shevi’is money)

The laws of sfichin refer to a rabbinic prohibition of eating produce that started to grow during the shmitta year, i.e., the plant started to grow from Rosh Hashanah until Yom Kippur. This is the opinion of the Chazon Ish, the most widely accepted custom among Ashkenazim in Eretz Yisrael. Regarding grains and legumes, there is a different critical date after which sfichin are not permitted to be eaten. Obviously, if one wants to buy vegetables he/she must be certain that the vegetables did not start to grow during the shmitta year. How can one know when the produce began to grow if it is bought in a store that is not under reliable rabbinic supervision?

In order to overcome this problem, charts were developed with the information needed to ascertain whether the produce started to grow during the shmitta year. For example, it takes between 58 and 78 days after a tomato seed is planted until it produces its first ripe tomato. It takes a few more weeks until the new tomato crop constitutes a majority of the tomatoes in the market. Until that time, we may be able to say “hol deparish meruba parish,” and assume that the fruit in question comes from the prevailing majority in the marketplace, which in this case is a non-shevi’is product. The date on the chart is usually when the majority of the vegetable production is shevi’is (although there are charts that give the date of the first produce on the market). One should be mindful of the cut-off date for a particular type of produce before buying any fruits or vegetables that might possibly be prohibited for consumption resulting from sfichin.

Kedushas shevi’is applies to all vegetables picked during the shmitta year. Picking, lekita, invests the vegetable with kedushas shevi’is when it is picked during the shmitta year. Since many vegetables (such as carrots and potatoes) can be stored for relatively long periods of time, most of the produce in the market does not have to be picked during the shmitta year until well after Rosh Hashanah. The date on the chart for a given vegetable for kedushas shevi’is indicates when a particular type of produce was picked during the shmitta year.

Besides the issur of sfichin, there are other issues regarding produce grown during the shmitta year without rabbinic supervision. The following are a few examples:

**Shamur v’navevad**: Some authorities prohibit using produce that was “guarded” (shevi’is produce is supposed to be “hekker,” ownerless, and permitted to be taken by anyone) or upon which non-permissible work was performed during shmitta. Produce without rabbinic supervision can fall under this category. The Chazon Ish permitted the use of shamur v’navevad b’shaas hadchak (in difficult circumstances).

**Schora**: Doing business with shevi’is produce. One is not permitted to buy produce that has kedushas shevi’is (weighting, buying in a regular store, etc.) in the usual way.

**Mesiras dmei shevi’is l’am haaretz**: When one buys shevi’is produce for immediate use, the money that is used to pay for the item is imbued with kedushas shevi’is and may be used only to purchase food. Therefore, it is not permitted to give this money to a storekeeper who will not observe the laws of shevi’is.

There are ways to circumvent the above noted problems. If one uses a credit card, there is no issue of dmei shevi’is. If one buys behalavnu (two things together, but paying only for the item that does not have kedushas shevi’is), there may not be a problem of schora.

If one buys produce in stores that have reliable rabbinic supervision, one does not need to refer to the charts. Produce that has kedushas shevi’is should be marked (sometimes there are codes). If you do need to use the chart, there is a column indicating when sfichin and kedushas shevi’is end. Produce that was picked during the shmitta year will always have the application of kedushas shevi’is/sfichin. Produce picked in the eighth year has kedushas shevi’is/sfichin, either until the new crop starts or until Chanukah (whichever comes first).

**Biur**: Produce that has kedushas shevi’is can be kept at home only while there is some of the same produce still in the fields. The column for biur indicates when one must dispose of all the produce (take it outside and make it hekker), after which time it can be taken back inside the house. If the z’am biur elapsed, and biur was not performed, the produce is forbidden to be eaten. The times for biur are very inexact, and it is not a good idea to store a lot of produce towards the end of shmitta (less than three meals for the whole family are exempt from the laws of biur).
### Last Dates of Kedushas Shevi’is, Sefichin and Biur 5775/5776

The following are ending dates of Kedushas Shevi’is, Sefichin and the dates of Biur.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>ITEM</th>
<th>Kedushas Shevi’is/Sefichin Until</th>
<th>Does Sefichin Apply?</th>
<th>Biur</th>
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<td>Almonds</td>
<td>17 Av 5776</td>
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<td>No Kedushah²</td>
<td>No²</td>
<td>No Biur²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kimmel (caraway seeds)</td>
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<td>No Biur²</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kiwi</td>
<td>17 Av 5776</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1 Adar I 5776</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kohlrabi</td>
<td>18 Cheshvan 5776</td>
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<td>No Biur³</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lemon</td>
<td>16 Iyar 5776</td>
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<td>1 Elul 5776</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lentils</td>
<td>No Kedushah²</td>
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<td>No Biur²</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lettuce</td>
<td>3 Cheshvan 5776</td>
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<td>No Biur³</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lychee³</td>
<td>6 Iyar 5776</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>11 Tishrei 5776</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mango</td>
<td>17 Sivan 5776</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1 Shevat 5776</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medlar (Shesek)</td>
<td>16 Shevat 5776</td>
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<td>1 Tamuz 5775</td>
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<tr>
<td>Melon⁸</td>
<td>25 Kislev 5776</td>
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<td>No Biur⁴</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mint</td>
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<td>No¹</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mushrooms</td>
<td>Laws of Shmittah are not applicable</td>
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<td>Mustard</td>
<td>No Kedushah²</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nectarine</td>
<td>21 Adar I 5776</td>
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<td>1 Teves 5776</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oats</td>
<td>No Kedushah²</td>
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<td>No Biur²</td>
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<tr>
<td>Olives</td>
<td>16 Tamuz 5776</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>6 Sivan 5776</td>
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<td>Olive Oil</td>
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<td>6 Sivan 5776</td>
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<td>Onion (incl. powder)</td>
<td>1 Shevat 5776</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No Biur⁴</td>
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<td>Oranges</td>
<td>17 Av 5776</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>15 Sivan 5776</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paprika (fresh)</td>
<td>28 Av 5776</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>20 Kislev 5775</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parsley (incl. root)</td>
<td>25 Kislev 5776</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No Biur⁴</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peaches</td>
<td>21 Adar I 5776</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1 Teves 5776</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peanuts</td>
<td>28 Av 5776</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No Biur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pears</td>
<td>9 Sivan 5776</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>11 Tishrei 5776</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peas (Dried)</td>
<td>No Kedushah²</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No Biur²</td>
</tr>
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<td>Peas in Pod</td>
<td>25 Kislev 5776</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>7 Sivan 5775</td>
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<td>Pecan¹</td>
<td>15 Elul 5776</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>19 Teves 5776</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pepper (Powdered Black)</td>
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<td>No²</td>
<td>No Biur²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pepper (Jalapeno)</td>
<td>25 Kislev 5776</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No Biur³</td>
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<td>Peppers²</td>
<td>25 Kislev 5776</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No Biur³</td>
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<tr>
<td>Persimmon</td>
<td>26 Sivan 5776</td>
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<td>15 Teves 5776</td>
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<td>Pineapple</td>
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<td>No Biur³</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pistachio</td>
<td>No Kedushah²</td>
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<td>No Biur²</td>
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<td>Plums (Euro. Longated)</td>
<td>16 Tamuz 5776</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>15 Cheshvan 5776</td>
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<tr>
<td>Plums (Japanese Round)</td>
<td>17 Nisan 5776</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>15 Cheshvan 5776</td>
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<td>Pomegranate</td>
<td>9 Tamuz 5776</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1 Teves 5776</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pomelo</td>
<td>17 Av 5776</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1 Sivan 5776</td>
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<tr>
<td>Popcorn</td>
<td>11 Av 5776</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No Biur</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poppy Seeds</td>
<td>No Kedushah²</td>
<td>No²</td>
<td>No Biur²</td>
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<tr>
<td>Potatoes</td>
<td>4 Teves 5776</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No Biur４</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pumpkin</td>
<td>1 Shevat 5776</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1 Cheshvan 5776</td>
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CONTINUED ON PAGE 6
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM</th>
<th>KEDUSHAS SHEVI'IS/SEFICHIN UNTIL</th>
<th>DOES SEFICHIN APPLY?</th>
<th>BIUR</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pumpkin Seeds</td>
<td>No Kedushah²</td>
<td>No²</td>
<td>No Biur²</td>
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<tr>
<td>Radish</td>
<td>13 Kislev 5776</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No Biur²</td>
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<td>Radish-Small</td>
<td>8 Cheshvan 5776</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No Biur²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice</td>
<td>No Kedushah²</td>
<td>No²</td>
<td>No Biur²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sabra</td>
<td>17 Cheshvan 5776</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>16 Shevat 5776</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scallion</td>
<td>20 Cheshvan 5776</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No Biur²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sesame</td>
<td>No Kedushah¹</td>
<td>No½</td>
<td>No Biur¹</td>
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<tr>
<td>Soya</td>
<td>No Kedushah²</td>
<td>No²</td>
<td>No Biur²</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spelt</td>
<td>No Kedushah¹</td>
<td>No½</td>
<td>No Biur¹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spinach</td>
<td>1 Kislev 5776</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No Biur⁴</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strawberries</td>
<td>4 Kislev 5776</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1 Tamuz 5775</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugar</td>
<td>No Kedushah²</td>
<td>No²</td>
<td>No Biur²</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We would like to acknowledge the contribution of Rabbi Shaul Goldman in the translation of the above chart.

1. Gidulei Nevi’im – in Israel
2. Imported
3. Multi Year plant
4. Available all year
5. Intended for Flavor Only
6. Most wheat products used in Israel are of imported wheat and not subject to shmittah laws. This must be ascertained from the baker or from the packaging label.
7. Most oranges for Succos 5776 (2016) will be available from the crop harvested through Ozen Reis Din and, therefore, the rules of kedushas shvi’is apply.
8. Most eggplant between Cheshvan and ‘Adar Aleph are from the Southern Arava and gentiles.
9. In the winter, most melons are from Southern Arava.
10. From Kislev until ‘Adar Aleph, grown in areas that may not have been inhabited during Aliyas Bavel.
11. 30% is from Import.

Dried Fruit

TO CHECK OR NOT TO CHECK – THAT IS THE QUESTION

Along with the rise of general consumer awareness, one of the most daunting kashrus challenges that kosher certification faces today is making sure that fruits and vegetables are halachically insect-free. Kosher food certification is now working with effective pest management programs in the field, as well as cleaning/washing procedures and preventative measures in their processing facilities. However, we know that with all the herculean efforts and well meaning intentions, nature is still nature and no system is infallible.

Halachic clearly forbids us to eat toloiyim, insects. The halacha also tells us that the obligation to check for insects in a fruit or vegetable is directly tied to the regularity and propensity of insect presence in a particular fruit or vegetable.

In short, fruits and vegetables can be categorized into four general groups:

1. Category 1 – Produce that never requires inspection; fruits and vegetables that do not have infestation issues e.g., bananas
2. Category 2 – Aino Matzuzi, rare to occasional; produce that one is not halachically obligated to be checked
3. Category 3 – Miut Hamatzuzi, occasional to prevalent; produce requiring further checking
4. Category 4 – Muchuzk, prevalent; produce that cannot be used without special handling and is not recommended for consumption

TO APPLY?

The need to control infestation and disease is of paramount concern for any fruit producer, dried fruit notwithstanding. If an infested container was used for a shipment, that container would be rejected and the manufacturer would suffer a great loss. All dried fruit is subject to some insect control. When dried fruits enter the production facility, they are placed in a special chamber and are treated with methyl bromide, a gas used to kill any insects. These fruits are then washed. The insects are then separated from the fruit before going through further processing. Furthermore, as an added precaution, if the fruit remains in the factory for 90 days this treatment is repeated. Even organic fruit is subject to some degree of treatment for possible infestation, usually involving freezing the fruit to kill any insects.

Based on these processing practices, statistics indicate that as long as the dried fruit is properly stored in a cool and moisture-free environment, infestation should be minimal. However, storage conditions that are less than optimum can promote new infestation. STAR-K ensures that proper insect control is in place at each production facility that it certifies. Even organic fruit is subject to some degree of treatment for possible infestation, usually involving freezing the fruit to kill any insects.

Undoubtedly, with our greater understanding, we will certainly appreciate the efforts of all of the hardworking men and women throughout the world who bring us these popular treats and allow us to truly appreciate the fruits of their labor.

Leadership in Kashrus Education

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2
CONSUMER PRODUCTS
(only when bearing Star-K symbol)
ALTER ECO AMERICA PBC
San Francisco, CA
QUINOA

ANHUI BEIBAO FOODS
CHINA
CAINENED FRUIT

AMEXIM, INC.
Glendale, CA
PICKLED PRODUCTS

APOTOSLOS NACOS SINGLE MEMBER P.C.
Greece
OLIVES

ARABICA COFFEE
Garfield, NJ
COFFEE

BIG Y FOODS, INC.
Springfield, MA
ICE CREAM CONES

CAFF COFFEE
Brooklyn, NY
KITCHEN APPLIANCES (SABBATH COMPLIANT)

CENTRAL GROCERS, INC.
Joliet, IL
BAGELS

COST PLUS MANAGEMENT SVCS
Oakland, CA
COFFEE

DAN D FOODS
CANADA
COCONUT PRODUCTS

FLAMINGO, LLC
Palm Beach Gardens, FL
CAINENED FRUIT

FLP, LLC
Tampa, AZ
PLASTIC PRODUCTS

H & M WAGNER
Glenshore, MD
COFFEE

INGLES SUPERMARKETS
Black Mountain, NC
COFFEE

INNHERB ISRAEL LTD.
ISRAEL
ESSENTIAL OILS & OLEORESINS; VITAMINS & NUTRITIONAL SUPPLEMENTS

MAMA’S MUNDEL BREAD
Owings Mills, MD
COOKIES (SPECIALITY)

MARGARITA’S TORTILLA FACTORY
Lockhart, TX
TORTILLAS/TACOS

MATERNAL SCIENCE, INC.
Montvale, NJ
TEA

MOLINO NICOLI SPA
ITALY
CEREAL PRODUCTS, GLUTEN-FREE PRODUCTS

NATURE’S WAREHOUSE
Howell, NJ
SALADS (PREPARED); SAUCES & DIPS

NEAL’S YARD REMEDIES
UNITED KINGDOM
HERBAL EXTRACTS

NIRWAMA FOODS LLC
Jersey City, NJ
COCONUT PRODUCTS, ICE CREAM & NOVELTIES

ON POINT, INC.
Montvale, NJ
COFFEE

ORIGINAL LIVING COCONUT, LLC
Stockton, MO
COCONUT PRODUCTS, ICE CREAM & NOVELTIES

RIGGIO DISTRIBUTION
Detroit, MI
FRUIT (FRESH PACKAGED)

SEDANO’S MANAGEMENT, INC.
Hialeah, FL
ICE CREAM & NOVELTIES

SHINN SPRING WATER CO.
Bridgewater, PA
WATER

SIAM MUD MUK
THAILAND
COCONUT PRODUCTS

TECNO SPA
ITALY
KITCHEN APPLIANCES (SABBATH COMPLIANT)

THE FRESH MARKET
GREENSBORO, NC
COFFEE DIVISION

U-LINE CORPORATION
Milwaukee, WI
KITCHEN APPLIANCE (SABBATH COMPLIANT)

WEAVER NUT CO.
Ephrata, PA
NUTS & SEEDS

WEGMANS FOOD MARKETS
COCONUT OIL DIVISION
Rochester, NY
COCONUT PRODUCTS

INDUSTRIAL/ INSTITUTIONAL PRODUCTS

(see letter of certification)

ACCURATE PACKAGING & FULFILLMENT
Mechanicsburg, PA
VITAMINS & NUTRITIONAL SUPPLEMENTS

AGRI EXIM GLOBAL PHILIPPINES
PHILIPPINES
COCONUT PRODUCTS

ALTER ECO AMERICA PBC
San Francisco, CA
QUINOA

APOTOSLOS NACOS SINGLE MEMBER P.C.
Greece
OLIVES

BRIDGEWELL RESOURCES
Clackamas, OR
COCONUT PRODUCTS

CABOT NORIT NEDERLAND B.V.
NETHERLANDS
FILTERING AGENTS

CHEMTELL ALL, INC.
New Providence, NJ
INDUSTRIAL CHEMICALS

ENI S.P.A.
ROMA
LUBRICANTS

FUYANG TONGCHUANG FOODSTUFFS
CHINA
FRUIT (CANNED)

GREEN VIRGIN PRODUCTS
Tampa, FL
VITAMINS & NUTRITIONAL SUPPLEMENTS

HANGZHOU OUQI FOOD CO., LTD.
CHINA
FOOD ADDITIVES

HUBEI XIQUAN FOOD & BEVERAGE
CHINA
CAINENED FRUIT

INNER MONGOLIA UNISPLENDOR
CHINA
INDUSTRIAL CHEMICALS

JIASHAN JIANQUIAO BIOCHEM
CHINA
AMINO ACIDS

LINCHENG GOLDEN SUGAR FOOD
CHINA
AMINO ACIDS

LINYI DASHAN FOOD CO., LTD.
CHINA
CAINENED VEGETABLES

MELIKA TARIM
TURKEY
FRUIT (DRUIZI)

MM8 GROUP LLC
Dresden, TN
COFFEE; K-CUPS; COFFEE/TEA

MUN KSJO ROTTERSAC
FRANCE
PARCERMENT PAPER

NATIONAL IMPORTERS, INC.
Canned Water Chestnuts Div. CANADA
CAINENED FRUIT

SHANXI LONGFU BIOCHEMICAL
CHINA
HERBAL EXTRACTS

SHANXI JC BIOLOGICAL TECHNOLOGY
CHINA
VITAMIN COMPONENTS

SHINN SPRING WATER CO.
Bridgewater, PA
WATER

SYSCO CANADA
CANADA
VEGETABLES (CANNED)

TAKAOAKYA USA, INC.
Los Angeles, CA
SEAWEED PRODUCTS

UNIVAR USA INC.
Downers Grove, IL
FOOD ACIDS

WUFENG CHICHENG BIOTECH
CHINA
ACIDS & ACCIDALANTS

WUHAN ZONECHEM NATURAL PRODUCTS
CHINA
VITAMIN COMPONENTS

WUXI TIANFENG FOOD INGREDIENT
CHINA
SWEETENERS

XINING YUANLAN ORGANIC AGRICULTURE SCIENCE & TECH
CHINA
FRUIT (CANNED)

YICHANG TIANYUAN CANNED FOOD
CHINA
VEGETABLES (CANNED)

ZHUCHENG HUAYUAN BIOENGINEERING
CHINA
FOOD ACIDS & PRESERVATIVES

NEW UNDER STAR-D
(only when bearing Star-D symbol)

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

BLENDING SOLUTIONS
Carmel, IN
BAKING MIXES

CREAM-O-LAND DAIRIES, LLC
Florence, KY
ICE CREAM MIXES

ERIN MCKENNA’S BAKERY
Buma Park, CA
ICE CREAM & NOVELTIES; ICE CREAM MIXES

TASTY TECHNOLOGY, LLC
Croswell, NY
BAKERY SUPPLIES; BAKING MIXES; DRY MIXES

THE FRESH MARKET
GREENSBORO, NC
DRIY MIX DIVISION

URBAN ACCENTS
Chicago, IL
PANCAKE MIXES

Leadership in Kashrus Education
Got Questions?  STAR-K HAS ANSWERS  BY MARGIE PENSAK

To further promote the mission of halacha observance “beyond milk and meat”, STAR-K Kashrus Administrator Rabbi Zvi Goldberg hosts a monthly 30-60 minute TeleKosher Conference Series. Listeners call in from across the U.S., Israel, Spain, Peru, Canada, and elsewhere around the world to learn about topics ranging from A Visitor’s Halachic Guide to Hospitals to Modern Appliances and the Kosher World.

“We try to pick a timely topic, one that will grab people’s attention, and not only about kashrus,” notes Rabbi Goldberg. “If there is inclement weather, we might discuss the halachos relevant to storm weather and what you can do about it on Shabbos. Obviously, before Pesach we talk about Pesach. We even received some requests for a webinar every day for two weeks prior to last Pesach. That wasn’t feasible, but our dramatically increased daily email and phone call volume were testimony of the need for consumers to get answers to their queries—from March 4 to April 1, 2015, the STAR-K Hotline received approximately 8,600 calls.”

“It’s most gratifying when the viewers are engaged and chatting with us, then we know we are accomplishing our goals,” says Rabbi Goldberg, who encourages audience participation. “There are lots of lectures people can listen to, but very few places to go to interact live with kashrus professionals. Some listeners are colleagues of ours from other agencies, which is especially gratifying. We all learn from each other!”

STAR-K’s Advanced Halacha Webinar Series features STAR-K’s Rabbinic Administrator, Harav Moshe Heinemann, shlita, who has always been on the cutting edge of advanced technology and halacha. Past webinars include such topics as Eruvinar (a two-part series for eruv professionals that discusses hilchos Eruv, as they apply to the challenges of a city-wide eruv), Mikvanar (addresses questions that arise during mikvah construction and maintenance), and Chicken Shayla Webinar (teaches how to differentiate between a chicken’s perfectly normal imperfection resulting from processing and an imperfection that presents a true shayla in need of being addressed by one’s rav).

Ask our Kosher experts your questions, the last Wednesday of each month at 12 noon, EST. For signup info, visit www.star-k.org/telekosher. Join the live video broadcasting via the web, Smartphone or telephone. Replays are available on STAR-K’s Vimeo channel https://vimeo.com/channels/721503.