Siman

It’s a Siman that it’s Kosher

Avoiding Bosor Shenisalaim Min Haoyin

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STAR-K RABBINIC ADMINISTRATOR

INTRODUCTION:

The world of kosher has played, and continues to play, a dominant role in the life of a Jew and the life blood of Judaism. This centrality is evidenced by the significant halachic treatment of kosher in the Shulchan Aruch, by our Poskim, and in contemporary Torah journals, as well as the particular attention paid to the kosher consumer stretching from the aisles of the supermarket to the media portfolios of the marketplace.

Throughout the development of practical kosher, the Torah’s halachic tenets have been interwoven with rabbinical safeguards, protective fences, known in the words of the Mishna as siyagim. Every halachic arena has been bolstered with the pickets of these fences. Some classic examples that are well known are: the prohibition of cooking poultry and milk, waiting six hours between meat and milk, stam yainum, and bisul akum.

Our Rabbis realized, that without protective measures built into the Torah’s system, there would be genuine concern that Torah statutes would be abused, adulterated, watered down or forgotten, chas v’shalom. Just as a dedicated farmer would exercise Herculean efforts to save the life of a beautiful tree whose life has been placed in jeopardy by predators, weeds, or disease, how much more care must be expended when we deal with the preservation of the Eitz Chaim - The Tree of Life.

One of the most detailed and involved areas of kosher is the production and processing of kosher meat. Because of its great scope, it would be impossible to do justice to the complete gamut of the kosher directives for shechita, bedika, nikkur, and melicha in a few brief paragraphs, but we can get a clear appreciation of the careful detail that needs to be given to every step along the production trail.

The shochet, the ritual slaughterer, who has to be armed with both technical skill and great moral integrity, has to give painstaking attention to all aspects of shechita. The concerns start from the source. From where is the packing house getting their stock? Before the actual shechita, the shochet’s knife, the chafet, must be carefully checked to make sure it is smooth and razor sharp.

In order to avoid the inadvertent slaughtering of a b’chor, a first born animal born in a Jewish herd, the sources of the cattle must be known. After the animal is slaughtered, every surface of the lung has to be double checked, internally and externally, making sure that the lung is free of lesions or disease. Then, when the animal is pronounced kosher, every surface of the lung has to be double checked, internally and externally, making sure that the lung is free of lesions or disease. Then, when the animal is pronounced kosher, its various parts are separated and sent to different areas of the packing house. In order to avoid intermingling and confusion with non-kosher look alikes, the different parts of the forequarter of beef, veal or lamb have to be properly tagged. This system of labeling, branding, and tagging is critical to the kosher control maintenance in the packing house and beyond.

At the post-shechita stage, slaughtered meat is further processed at the plant site or at an independent processing facility, possibly under a separate hashgacha, or at local kosher butcher shops, where further processing will take place under the supervision of the local Va’ad or Rav. Whatever the option, identification plays an integral part of the process. How else would the mashgiach know when the shechita took place, if the meat is kosher, if the meat is glut or not, or if the meat was kasherel - were it not for tags, plumbas, and letters?

In the neighborhood butcher shop where the meat and poultry is prepared for retail sale, more often than not, the cut-up chicken pieces or cutlets are not showcase with plumbas, nor is the brisket, rib steak or flanken. Furthermore, today with both husband...
and wife working, kosher households depend on the kosher butcher to make home deliveries. Many households employ domestic help whose duties include meal preparation. In addition, hotels and catering halls claim both kosher and non-kosher cuisine. In all of the above scenarios, beyond the Torah based kashrus requirements, an additional safeguard to protect us from the potential risk of inadvertent mixing, switching, or replacing kosher meat for a non-kosher look-alike was instituted. This stigay, protective measure, requires one to continuously identify or trace the trail of the kosher meat or kosher poultry. Failing to do so jeopardizes the kashrus acceptability of the meat, and this meat is designated as bosor shenisalaim min haoyin, literally, meat that is out of constant view of an observant Jew. Although the strict halachic context of the term bosor shenisalaim min haoyin refers to the suspicious possibility of kosher meat being switched with a non-kosher likeness, the contemporary usage of this term has far broader halachic context. Thus, the term has been extended to non-kosher likeness, the contemporary usage of this term has far broader halachic context. Thus, the term has been extended to

Q: How do we, in the broader halachic context, define bosor shenisalaim min haoyin?

RH: If a Jew left a piece of kosher meat or poultry, that has no distinct identification, unattended, in an area where a non-Jew has free access, and there is reason to suspect that the aino Yehudi may have exchanged the kosher meat with a non-kosher meat or poultry likeness, this piece of meat is deemed bosor shenisalaim min haoyin and may not be used.

Q: Could you list some of the circumstances that would arouse suspicion?

RH: 1) The kosher meat is of superior quality and the non-Jew would enjoy it more. 2) It is more convenient for the non-Jew to use the exposed kosher meat on the table at that moment and replace it later with non-kosher. 3) There is an outside benefit for the non-Jew to substitute the kosher meat.

Q: When a kosher meat or poultry order is being sent from the kosher butcher shop to a Jewish household for home delivery and the order is wrapped in plain wrapping paper and tape, can bosor shenisalaim min haoyin be avoided?

RH: 1) If the delivery man is, himself, a Shomer Shabbos and the order is delivered directly to the housewife or family member, the order can be sent out as is without additional identification. 2) If the delivery man is not a Shomer Shabbos, the meat order has to be marked with distinct and distinguishing simanim to avoid bosor shenisalaim min haoyin problems.

Q: When is meat considered adequately identified?

RH: Preferably lechatchila, the piece of meat or poultry should be sealed twice with kosher identification on the seal (two simanim), or be sealed with a foolproof seal that would qualify for two simanim. Any seal which makes it difficult to open the closed package without tearing or breaking the closure, tape, or packaging qualifies as a siman. An example of a foolproof siman would be the new frozen chicken products which are enclosed in a totally fused specially printed Chill Pack Bag that has to be ripped open to take out the products.

Q: Must a mashgiach be present at all times in a hotel kitchen during kosher meal preparation or throughout the function?

RH: The “glatt” kosher method of hotel haagacha is for the mashgiach to be present at all times. If the mashgiach has to leave the kitchen, he can only leave if (a) none of the kitchen help knows that he stepped out, (b) he leaves for a brief interval with the intention of immediately returning, and (c) he does not leave the hotel premises.

Q: Assuming there are no bishul akum problems, can a maid prepare meals for a Jewish household without being supervised by a member of the household?

RH: There are different scenarios that have to be considered:

(a) If the meat, chicken or fish have simanim on them (e.g. a plumba, a sealed casserole, fish with skin on) and the food is prepared and served for the household, it will remain throughout their total preparation and cooking process the maid would be permitted to cook it.

(b) If the maid knows that members of the household constantly come in and out of the kitchen at no set time or schedule, this would serve as a deterrent for any foul play, and the maid would be permitted to cook.

(c) If there is no distinct identification on the meat and the maid is alone in the household, you would be forbidden to eat any food item that requires identification prepared by the maid, unless the food can be identified through a member of the family’s t’vias ayin.

Q: What is t’vias ayin?

RH: If a Yehudi can recognize that this is the original piece of meat or poultry which was previously known to be kosher, and can be clearly identified without any question.

Q: Can a recent Baal or Baalas Teshuva eat at their parents’ home if the parents are still non-observant?

RH: If the parents agree to keep kosher for their child, the Rov or Rabbi should be consulted to work out the details of each specific circumstance.

Q: What foods halachically require identification?

RH: All foods that require kosher certification. That includes, among others, meat, poultry, fish, wine, cheese, bread, cake, and milk. These products that have a more severe halachic prohibition (m’dora’aisa), require two simanim (e.g. meat, fish, poultry, wine, etc.). Those that have a less stringent prohibition (m’doraisa), require only one siman (e.g. cheese, bread, cake, milk, etc.).

Q: Can you buy cryovaced, boxed, or bagged kosher chicken or meat provisions from a non-kosher supermarket or buyers warehouse?

RH: Yes, if they come appropriately sealed as outlined above.

Q: Do meat flavored sauces, or food items mixed with cheese or fish require simanim (sent from caterers or take-out)?

RH: If the meat, fish, or poultry is not halal (nullified) in the sauce or food item, two simanim would be required. Even if it is batel, it requires a siman identifying the sauce as kosher.

Q: How would a deli meat or tuna fish sandwich sent by a caterer or take-out be wrapped if they require two simanim?

RH: Wrapping the sandwich in a plastic wrap, sealing it on the bottom with a heat seal or label and labeling the top of the plastic only qualifies for one seal. An example of a second seal would be an additional band wrapped around the sandwich plus the sealed and labeled plastic. Another method would be to place the bill into the paper bag holding the sandwich and staple the bag and bill shut.

Q: Would plain unmarked sealing tape qualify for an acceptable seal?

RH: No, because there is no distinctive marking on the tape. In order for plain sealing tape to suffice, the mashgiach would have to sign his name across the tape and onto the box. If the box would be opened the signature would tear.

Q: Would a specially made box used to box fish sticks that has the name of the company and the hechsher clearly printed on the box qualify for a siman?

RH: No, the flaps of the box would have to be sealed to qualify for a siman. Sealed plastic over-wrap would qualify for a second seal.

Q: If a mashgiach forgot to seal a cholov Yisroel milk silo, but the weight of the poundage that was recorded elsewhere corresponds to the weight in the silo, would that qualify for an adequate siman?

RH: Yes, b’dieved.

Q: What is the halachah if only one of the simanim remains intact?

RH: If the remaining siman is foolproof, it would be fine lechatchila. If the remaining siman is not foolproof a competent halachic authority should be consulted.

Q: Is there any halachic recourse to permit the use of questionable chicken or meat if there are no distinct Simanim? (e.g. The plumbas fell off or the simanim are no longer recognized.)

RH: This meat can be used if the meat can be identified through t’vias ayin. If it was sent through an aino Yehudi, if the weight is the same as on the bill and it has a saltier taste indicating that it was kashered, one may rely on this t’vias ayin.

Q: Who can make this identification?

RH: The person who is the identifier must be a Shomer Torah U’Mitzenim, otherwise he has no halachic credibility and would not be believed in this instance.
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

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are commonplace in these varieties of greens. Insect ingestion is strictly forbidden by the Torah. If vegetables contain insects, Jewish Law dictates that these fresh vegetable varieties would be forbidden to be consumed until the insects are removed. Different seasons, different growing environments, and different countries of origin are all factors that contribute to a vegetable's contamination or cleanliness.

Summer and Autumn are the best growing seasons because insect infestation is kept to a minimum. There are more infestation problems during the rainy season, when the ground is muddy. The area best suited for quality vegetables is Salinas, California. Other growing areas include Florida, New Mexico, and Arizona. Even in these growing areas, there is a difference if the vegetable producer grows their own lettuce, or if the produce is purchased from the small independent farmer on the open market.

How are raw vegetables processed? Before entering the facility, the raw, unprocessed vegetables have to pass an initial inspection. If the product is infested or of poor quality, it is rejected. Not all sources of supply are similar. Some of the fresh vegetable producers grow produce in their own fields. This gives them an additional quality control edge. In these fields, the company can exercise good agricultural practices to help control infestation through controlled fertilization and pesticides. Others buy produce from high volume farmers. Buyers can be selective and can reject substandard produce from the field. The least desired method of raw product purchasing is spot-buying from the small farmer. This reduces consistent quality assurance results.

Upon reaching the facility, the raw material is initially checked on the dock. Once accepted, the product is ready to be processed. Some companies treat the vegetables with a pre-wash. Other companies send the untreated vegetables directly to the first inspection table. At the inspection table, the leafy vegetables are cored, and the outer leaves and any discolored or limp leaves are discarded. It is standard operating procedure to discard 35% to 40% of each head of iceberg lettuce and 50% of romaine lettuce. Some companies do the initial inspection, cutting and coring in the field, and ship the cut up leaves to the facility in large totes. This high percentage of discarding is advantageous on many counts. The consumer is happy because only the choicest portion of the greens is sold. Also, most vegetable infesters lodge themselves in the outer leaves which are discarded.

After the initial cleaning and coring, the heads are broken into pieces and are either sent on a belt to be sliced and shredded, or left as whole leaves. The produce is now ready to be sent to the main washer.

There are many high pressure washers on the market: the flood washer, and the open or closed and long or short flume. The three factors needed for effective vegetable washing are freezing cold water, chlorine, and aggressively agitated water. The industry standard for cold water washing is 34°F. Chlorine levels can vary. Today, it is not uncommon to have chlorine levels set at 100 plus parts per million, or to have special systems installed that automatically set and monitor the active chlorine dispersion to give the vegetables the best chlorination possible. The most versatile water system is the flood washer that has overhead sprayers and underwater jets. The most powerful system is the flume with high spray water jets on either side of the flume.

After the washing, the vegetables are dried in high speed spin dryers. Other systems dry the produce in special drying chambers. These processes also help remove any extraneous material that may have been left behind from the wash. The now cleaned vegetables are ready to be cello or vacuum packed and enjoyed.

The cleaning system seems great. Obviously, not every leaf is checked. What halachic provision assures us that these cleaned products are able to be eaten without checking? Whatever the system, the goal is to be able to establish a chazakah assuring that the system not only cleans effectively, but cleans halachically as well. What is a chazakah? A chazakah is a means to create a halachic assumption. In general, if any action, activity, or circumstance is repeated three times, or repeats itself three times, Jewish law dictates that we are permitted to assume that what has been consecutively repeated will now continue to repeat itself. This status quo is called a chazakah.

Can a chazakah be established with produce, and if so, can a chazakah be established with a produce cleaning system? Most definitely!
Leadership in
Kashrus Education

This is the way a standard chazakah is established with regular raw, leafy vegetables: If a consignment of produce comes from one source, and three heads from the vegetable shipment are completely and thoroughly checked and found to be free of infestation, a chazakah can now be established on the rest of the consignment. Halacha allows the assumption that the rest of the vegetable consignment is equally insect-free. For this test, the outer leaves of the three heads can be stripped off, since they will equally not be used in the rest of the shipment, but the leaves cannot be washed or treated before being checked. This chazakah check has to be repeated every time a new shipment arrives. The chazakah check only applies to the particular variety that has been checked, and not to any other variety of vegetables that is present at the time of the chazakah’s establishment.

With a vegetable cleaning system, the means of creating a chazakah is to see if the system can effectively clean three batches of lettuce, or any other leafy vegetable, that you know was previously contaminated. After going through the wash system three samples are checked. If the samples are found to be free of infestation, a chazakah on the system has been achieved. It can now be assumed that the system can effectively clean the vegetables and no more checking is required!

Of course, periodic inspections have to be done to be sure that the system is still cleaning properly so that the chazakah can be maintained. Different conditions, seasons, or different sources of supply can affect the status quo as well, so, again, the system must be monitored constantly. At times, due to atmospheric conditions, high humidity, heavy rain, or seasonal change, there is an increase of insect presence in the fields. Of course this means that there will be more toloyim in the leafy vegetables. This manifests itself with a higher insect presence in the vegetables when the company tests the quality of the unprocessed lettuce before it is brought into the facility for further washing and processing. During these times, the wash system may not effectively clean for toloyim, and the certification is removed until the field conditions normalize so that the wash system will do an effective job. Often this occurs around Pesach when the consumer will not see the Star-K symbol on the date code for a prolonged period until conditions normalize.

Occasionally a consumer will call the Star-K and report that an insect was found in their vegetable salad. Not pleasant. However, this would not break the chazakah, nor should the bag of salad be discarded. If this happens, a good insurance practice would be to check the remaining salad. The next bag does not require additional checking.

Unquestionably, this burgeoning industry has become a positive addition to quality kashrus supervision. It is encouraging and inspiring to see kashrus and technology working hand in hand.

The Star-K would like to welcome Fresh Express to the Star-K Family.

Star-K Certified Fresh Packaged Vegetables & Salads:
(When bearing a Star-K Symbol by the date code)
- Albertson’s
- Canadian Organic Sprout Co.
- Country Fresh Onions
- Cross Valley Farms
- Dole
- Earthbound Farm
- East Coast Fresh Cuts
- Eden
- Fresh I/Fresh ‘N Easy
- Fresh Express
- Hearn Kirkwood
- Hy-Vee
- Kidco Farms
- Krisp-Pak
- Leasa Industries
- Martens Country Kitchen
- Nash Finch
- Naturally Potatoes
- Old Erie
- Popeye
- Price Chopper
- Promark
- River Ranch
- Roundy’s
- Shaw’s
- Spice World
- Springwater Sprouts
- Sysco
- Taylor Farms Maryland
- The Farmer’s Market
- The Produce Stand
- Trader Joe’s
- Verdelli Farms
- Walter’s
- Wegmans Food Markets
- Weis Markets
Star-K Requirements For Vegetable Checking

**COMMON LEAFY VEGETABLES THAT REQUIRE INSPECTION**

Bibb Lettuce • Bok Choy • Boston Lettuce
Cabbage • Collards • Endive • Escarole
Iceberg Lettuce • Kale • Mustard Leaves
Red Leaf Lettuce • Romaine Lettuce
Spinach Greens

One of two methods may be used:

A. Leaf by Leaf Inspection:
1. Separate leaves.
2. Soak in water.
3. Make a complete, leaf by leaf inspection.
4. Wash off any insects prior to using.

B. Chazaka Check for Large Volumes of Leafy Vegetables:
1. Throw out outer leaves.
2. Separate leaves of three heads of the vegetable.
3. Do NOT wash leaves.
4. Check the three heads leaf by leaf.
5. If one bug is found in the test heads, all the produce in the consignment must be checked leaf by leaf.
6. If no bugs are found, the rest of the shipment does not require checking and may be used after pulling off the outer leaves of the heads of the remaining consignment.

Note: Leafy vegetable inspection is greatly enhanced when vegetables are placed over a light box. Therefore, all Star-K caterers and restaurants are required to use a lightbox during vegetable inspection.

**FLORETED VEGETABLES**

*Fresh Broccoli and Cauliflower*

1. Wash florets thoroughly under a strong stream of water.
2. Agitate florets in a white bowl.*
3. Examine the water to see that it is insect-free.**
4. If it is insect-free you may use the vegetable.
5. If insects are found, you may re-do this procedure up to three times in total. If there are still any insects, the whole batch must be discarded.

**SCALLIONS**

Examine three scallions in a bunch as follows:
1. Slit scallion tubes and examine inside of tube closest to the bulb.
2. If no insects are found, scallions may be used.
3. If one insect is found, then all the scallions must be checked.

**ASPARAGUS**

Examine three stalks in a bunch as follows:

Checking Asparagus Leaves:
1. Check under a few of the triangular-shaped leaves on the side of the asparagus.
2. If one insect is found, then all the stalks must be checked.
3. If no insects are found, proceed to check tips.

Checking Asparagus Tips:
After checking leaves, follow this procedure:
1. Wash thoroughly under a strong stream of water.
2. Agitate in a white bowl.*
3. Examine the water to see that it is insect-free.**
4. If it is insect-free you may use the vegetable.
5. If any insects are found, then this procedure must be done on all tips of all the stalks. You may re-do this procedure up to three times in total. If there are still any insects, the whole batch must be discarded or tips must be cut off.

**CELERY STALKS**

Cut off leaves and wash stalks well under a stream of water.

5. If insects are found, you may re-do this procedure up to three times in total. If there are still any insects, the whole batch must be discarded.

**FRESH STEM HERBS**

Basil • Cilantro • Dill • Mint Leaves
Parsley • Rosemary • Sage

1. Wash vegetables thoroughly under a strong stream of water.
2. Agitate in a white bowl.*
3. Examine the water to see that it is insect-free.**
4. If it is insect-free you may use the vegetable.

**VEGETABLES THAT ONLY REQUIRE WASHING**

Leeks • Mushrooms • Red Cabbage

**VEGETABLES THAT REQUIRE A VISUAL CHECK**

Corn on the Cob

**VEGETABLES THAT DO NOT REQUIRE INSPECTION**

Alfalfa Sprouts • Bean Sprouts • Beans
Beets • Carrots • Cucumbers • Eggplant
Green Beans • Kohlrabi • Onions
Parsnips • Peas • Peppers • Potatoes
Pumpkins • Radishes • Rutabagas
Squash • Sweet Potatoes
Tomatoes • Turnips • Zucchini

**VEGETABLES THAT CANNOT BE CHECKED**

Artichoke Hearts • Brussel Sprouts

**FRUITS**

Strawberries
1. Fill basin with water and some dishwashing liquid* or special strawberry wash (such as Tsunami 100).
2. Soak strawberries in soapy water.
3. Wash strawberries under a stream of water.
4. Strawberries may now be used.

Raspberries
1. Take three raspberries out of a pint.
2. Check outside of raspberry.
3. Blow into cavity of raspberry.
4. Check for insects crawling out.
5. If no insects are found, all berries may be eaten. If one insect is found, then all berries must be checked.

*Note: It may be helpful to add some dishwashing liquid to the water as it aids in removal of insects. (Be sure to use a food grade detergent that meets all federal, state, and local regulations, and rinse well to remove detergent.)

** Note: It may be helpful to shine a high intensity light or flashlight on the surface of the water to make it easier to detect any insects and distinguish them from bits of debris or detached florets.
Mrs. M. Leo Storch and Family.

through a grant from M. Leo Storch

homemade meal was made l’kavod yom tov, no one would be awake enough to

Even if everyone would have the patience to wait around until a freshly cooked

time you get home, every kosher restaurant and store in town will be closed.

traffic on the way home, with your five overtired, “spirited” children. By the

that will last a lifetime. Little did you know that you would be stuck in heavy

for a little assistance from NASA’s Glenn Research Center, the entrepreneur

years of returning home hungry from his sons’ baseball practices. With

With a flick of a switch, or rather a push of keypad keys, you can

Intuitive interactive menu screens allow you to plan and prepare

a wide variety of cook methods; easily store and retrieve your favorite

save it for a later time.

can let the meal finish cooking and set the refrigerator function again to

program it from your cell phone. And, if you miss dinner altogether, you

flexibility and convenience. You can set separate cooking times with

Star-K is proud to certify the new kosher consumer-friendly

Connect Io™ Refrigerated, Electric Double Wall Oven, which includes

separate Sabbath and Holiday modes, programmable prior to Shabbos

and Yom Tov. Each of the two ovens may be programmed separately.

In the Sabbath mode, you can either choose to BAKE, ROAST, or

WARM your meal. REFRIGERATE is yet another option. You can also

select REFRIGERATE BEFORE COOKING and/or one of the WARM

AFTER COOKING time periods. Your family’s meal will be warmed

and ready to serve when you are ready to dine. (Please note that food

may not be cooked on Shabbos. Contact the Star-K office for guidelines).

Since oven temperatures may not be set, adjusted or turned off on

Shabbos, Connect Io™ disables all oven controls with exception of the

OFF button (if ever needed) after Sabbath mode is initiated. In addition,

all other visible and audible signals - such as oven lights, displays, and

tones - are disabled in the Sabbath/Holiday mode, and opening one of the

door will not activate the heating elements.

In the Holiday mode, temperature adjustment is permitted at any
time because of the built-in random delay between the request for

temperature change and its implementation. You now have the ability,

before Yom Tov begins, to pre-set one or both ovens to operate over a 72-
hour multiple cooking or refrigeration period within the same cooking
day. With the extra convenience of three-day advance programming for

baking, roasting, warming, and refrigeration, you can now pre-set your

oven to refrigerate your fresh meal prior to the cooking cycle in Holiday

mode, then continue in warming mode or refrigeration after cooking is

completed.

The Connect Io™ self-cleaning implement, Green Clean, employs

a 100% safe, clean, environmentally friendly, and non-toxic self-cleaning

process. Not only is it energy-efficient, it uses no formaldehyde or other

harmful substances in its cleaning cycle unlike most ovens.

“TMIO™ ovens are both innovative and user-friendly,” feels Star-K

Engineering Consultant, Mr. Jonah Ottensooser. “These ovens expand the

integration of technology into our kitchens. Furthermore, these units

have combined our halachic requirements with technology to provide

significant flexibility in the preparation of food for both Shabbos and

Yom Tov.”

For complete guidelines regarding the use of TMIO™ ovens on Shabbos

and Yom Tov, or other appliance information and articles, please contact

our office at 410-484-4110 or www.star-k.org. ■

Star-K Kosher Certification

A non-profit agency representing the kosher consumer in promoting Kashrus

trough Education, Research and Supervision.

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through a grant from Mrs. M. Leo Storch and Family.
**SHAKLEE'S VITA-LEA MULTI-VITAMIN**

**Joins Star-K Family**

According to IMS Health, global pharmaceutical sales grew 7% to $550 billion in 2004. It is no wonder that the interest in kosher certification and approval for these products has also skyrocketed, as evident from the numerous calls received by Star-K's Kashrus Hotline regarding their kosher status.

Perhaps, this is partially due to the USDA's realization that its decade-old Food Guide Pyramid is now passe. Nutritional experts at Harvard School of Public Health have constructed their own alternative pyramid, with recommendations reflective of the latest research that has redefined the healthy American diet and lifestyle. With daily exercise and weight control at the base, off to the side of the “Healthy Eating Pyramid” is an icon of a pill bottle with a caption that reads: “Multiple Vitamins for Most”. This recommendation of a daily multi-vitamin/multi-mineral supplement as a “nutritional backup” is in sync with the American Medical Association's advice for all adults to take a daily dose of multi-vitamins. (See JAMA 2002; 287:3127-3129.)

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“All of us grew up believing that if we ate a reasonable diet, that would take care of our vitamin needs,” says Harvard University’s Dr. Robert Fletcher. That may be good enough to ward off such vitamin-deficiency disorders as scurvy, beriberi and pellagra, but the latest evidence, he notes, is that supplementing our diets with multi-vitamins may be able to prevent the usual diseases we deal with every day - heart disease, cancer, osteoporosis and birth defects.

However, vitamins often contain non-kosher ingredients, such as gelatin, that may not be listed on the label. As a result, the kosher consumer's rabbinic advisor would need to question if vitamins were prescribed by a health care professional for vitamin deficiencies, or if they were self-prescribed for supplemental or preventative purposes. [See Rabbi Heber's Kashrus Kurrents archival article: "A Kashrus Guide to Medication, Vitamins, and Nutritional Supplements", 25.2 (2005)].

Star-Ks newest kosher certified multi-vitamin, Shaklee's Vita-Lea, is one additional solution to this problematic situation. Until recently, it contained a trace amount of gelatin and was unable to be certified. Star-K worked together with Shaklee to remove the gelatin from its formulation, so it could become kosher certified.

According to Dr. Stephen Chaney, a Master Coordinator with Shaklee, Vita-Lea is the highest quality, best balanced and most complete kosher certified supplement on the market, having passed over 349 quality controlled tests for purity and bioavailability. Available with or without iron, Shaklee says it provides 23 essential nutrients and has twice the antioxidants, calcium, magnesium, and beta carotene, three times the selenium and vitamin K, six times the boron, and ten times the biotin, of other leading multi-vitamins.

"Of all the companies I work with I receive more calls about Shaklee than any other company," says Star-K Kashrus Administrator and pharmaceutical expert Rabbi Dovid Heber. "There is obviously a great interest in this company and certification of this multi-vitamin has been very well received. A lot of consumers have been waiting for this product."

Vita-Lea cannot be found on your pharmacy shelf, nor can the other Shaklee nutritional and home care products that Star-K has been certifying for over eleven years. Shaklee products are only sold by the more than 700,000 distributors found in your local yellow pages - throughout the United States (even Alaska and Wyoming!), Canada, Mexico, Japan, and Malaysia. Shaklee products are certified kosher pareve when bearing the Star-D symbol, and kosher dairy when bearing the Star-D symbol.

Sarah Stauber is a Master Coordinator within the Shaklee multilevel marketing company. The 17-year veteran Shaklee distributor, a member of the Satmar community in Brooklyn, is one of the most successful distributors in the United States. She has established sales territories in New York, New Jersey, and South Florida. (See Wall Street Journal, 11/19/2001, Page B1, “Closed-Circle Commerce, Networks of Hasidic Women, Other Tightly Knit Groups Help Shaklee Sell Products” by Heidi J. Shrager). What impact does she foresee the new Star-K logo having on her Vita-Lea sales?

“Vita-Lea is a bread-and-butter item, and not to have it kosher was a tremendous obstacle in our business,” feels Ms. Stauber. “With gratitude to Hashem, and with appreciation to His shluchim at Star-K, we can proudly announce that the world’s best multi-vitamin now also has the best kosher certification. From my years at Shaklee I have learned that Torah-true Jews - whether Litvish, Chasidish, or Yeshivish - all trust Star-K. We already see that we just can’t keep enough inventory of the Vita-Lea.”

Anjana Srivastava, Shaklee's Senior Director of Marketing, Nutrition, couldn't agree more. “We’re very pleased that our flagship multi, Vita-Lea, is now kosher-certified which extends the benefits of this product to the kosher community,” says Ms. Srivastava. “Shaklee is committed to providing more kosher products and is working closely with Star-K to make this come to fruition.”

Star-K annually publishes a list of companies with kosher certified supplements, health and pharmaceutical products. For the most recent list, please contact the Star-K office at 410-484-4110 or www.star-k.org.
Establishments
(see letter of certification)

NARGILA
1599 York Ave, New York, NY
Meat Restaurant

Consumer Products
(only when bearing Star-K symbol)

ALL MARKET
Brooklyn, NY

Vitacoco Juice & Juice Concentrates

CVS
Woonsocket, RI
CVS Nuts & Seeds

DUANE READE
New York, NY
Duane Reade Pharmaceutical, Drug & Personal Care Products

EDIBLE IMAGES
Bergenfield, NJ
Edible Imprints Chocolate Products

FRESH EXPRESS
Salinas, CA
Fresh Express Fresh Packaged Salads

GLORY FOODS
Columbus, OH
Glory Foods Canned Vegetables

GOURMET BY DINA
Brooklyn, NY
Gourmet by Dina Sauces & Prepared Foods

KENNEBEC BEAN COMPANY
N. Vassalboro, Maine
A-1, Sunshine Beans, Full-a-Beans, Kennebec Bean Company, Kennebec Bean Company Premium Select Beans

JAYS FOODS
Chicago, IL
Jays Nuts & Seeds

NATURAL VALUE
Sacramento, CA
Natural Value Canned Vegetables

POKONOBIE INDUSTRIES
Santa Monica, CA
Pokonobe Oils/Olive Oils

R.E.G. TRADING
Brooklyn, NY
King Juice & Juice Concentrates

TMIO, LLC
Cleveland, OH
Connect to Sabbath Mode Oven-Refrigerator (For Sabbath mode guidelines call the Star-K office at 410-484-4110.)

YUMMY SANDWICH LLC
Englewood, NJ
Yummy Sandwich Prepared Foods

Industrial/Institutional Products
(see letter of certification)

ADRIAN AMERICA
Rahway, NJ
Flavor Chemicals

AXIOM FOODS
Los Angeles, CA
Rice Products

CHANGZHOU SHENMA PHARMACEUTICAL CO.
Jiangsu, China
Herbal Extracts

CHEMSTATION DAYTON
Dayton, OH
Detergents & Cleansers

CHEMSTATION DES MOINES
Des Moines, IA
Detergents & Cleansers

EDIBLE IMAGES
Bergenfield, NJ
Edible Imprints Chocolate Products

GLORYBEE FOODS
Eugene, OR
Dried Fruit, Organic Products

HULIAN TRADING CO.
Hebei, China
Dehydrated Vegetables

HUZHOU TIANWANG FOOD CO.
Zhejiang, China
Frozen Fruit & Vegetables

LYNX ENTERPRISES
Fairfield, OH
Detergents & Cleansers

MONARCH CATALYST PVT.
Thane, India
Industrial Chemicals

NANJING YILONG FOOD CO.
Jiangsu, China
Canned Fruit & Vegetables

POKONOBIE INDUSTRIES
Santa Monica, CA
Oils/Olive Oils

SANMARK LIMITED
Liaoning, China
Oils/Olive Oils

SHENZHEN SHENBAO HUACHENG FOODS CO.
Guangdong, China
Coffee, Teas

SUQIAN CANNERY & FOOD CORP.
Jiangsu, China
Canned Fruit & Vegetables

TENGZHOU JITIAN AROMA CHEMICAL CO.
Shandong, China
Flavor Chemicals

TIANJIN KEJIAN TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT CO.
Tianjin, China
Enzymes

TOKYO KANEKU INTERNATIONAL CORP.
Elizabeth, NJ
Wasabi

YICANG SANXIA PHARMACEUTICAL CO.
Hubel, China
Amino Acids

ZHEJIANG BOSSEN INGREDIENTS CO.
Zhejiang, China
Industrial Chemicals

ZHEJIANG SHANGYU KING YEAR BIOCHEMICAL CO.
Zhejiang, China
Amino Acids, Industrial Chemicals

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, in its relationship with the NCYI, administers the kashrus of the Star-D. All Star-D products are dairy – cholov stam (non-cholov Yisroel).

CEREAL FOODS USA
Fort Myers, FL
Baklava Snack Foods

EDIBLE IMAGES
Bergenfield, NJ
Edible Imprints Chocolate Products

Late breaking kashrus news and alerts are available via e-mail by sending a blank e-mail to alerts-subscribe@star-k.org.