

# KASHRUS KURRENTS

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## A GLIMPSE INTO THE SYSTEM:

**Kosher Certification of Industrial Food**

**RABBI MOSHE T. SCHUCHMAN**  
KASHRUS ADMINISTRATOR

Since antediluvian times, when Tuval Kayin began fashioning metal implements (*Breishis* 4:22), developments in how items were manufactured progressed gradually with only incremental changes. About two-and-a-half centuries ago, with the advent of the Industrial Revolution, that trajectory was rapidly accelerated.<sup>1</sup> Since then, continual technological advances have dramatically transformed manufacturing, to the point that modern methods barely resemble antiquated techniques. Food production is no exception.

Unless one was wealthy enough to enjoy spices transported over the Silk Road, pre-industrial food was locally sourced and made with familiar utensils. In stark contrast, much of what we eat today, whether the food itself or its sub-components (which are not necessarily disclosed on ingredient panels), is processed in distant factories on specialized equipment concealed from public view. Technicians wearing lab coats in laboratories serve as part of the contemporary food supply chain alongside the more traditional growers and pickers in the fields. Industrial methods are very different from scenarios discussed directly in the Talmud and classical sources, challenging our *Poskim*, more than ever before, to distill the fundamental *halachic* principles of *kashrus* from across multiple *sugyos* and adapt them to contemporary application.

### A Fair Question

In an age where food traveling across oceans to reach our plates is the rule rather than the exception, a necessary outgrowth has been the development of organized kosher certification. *Kashrus* has developed into a multi-disciplinary specialization requiring knowledge of *halachah* and food science, company organization and facility structure, mechanical engineering and transport systems. Expansion

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1. A predictive allusion to this unprecedented era is found in *Zohar* (*Parshas VaYeirah*, 117a), "In the sixth century of the sixth millennium [corresponding to secular year 1840], the gates of supernal wisdom will be opened above, along with springs of the lower wisdom below [interpreted as science and technology], preparing the world for elevation in the seventh millennium."



## MASHKE YISROEL: LIQUOR L'MEHADRIN COMES OF AGE :

A Behind-The-Scenes interview with STAR-K Israel's Director of *Kashrus*, Rav Aharon Haskel

**RABBI TZVI ROSEN**  
EDITOR, KASHRUS KURRENTS

It is an understatement to say that we as a global society are going through unprecedented times. Due to COVID-19, the word 'unprecedented' has taken on new and far-reaching connotations. On the lighter side, in the relatively new world of *kashrus* in the liquor industry, 'unprecedented' has become an appropriate term. In general, the world of alcohol has always been shrouded in mystery. However, during the past 25 years, there has been a genuine movement towards greater transparency, and kosher research/analysis has made great strides in revealing the underpinnings of the alluring world of kosher wine and spirits. With the realization that there is significant value in kosher certification, many companies have sought to become certified. As is the case with any company seeking kosher certification, the company must now reveal their ingredients and processes to their kosher certifier. All information is kept confidential under 'lock and key' in the annals of the *kashrus* data base. The secrets of success are shared only with the rabbis involved with that particular company.

Seeing alcoholic beverages with *hashgacha* has become the new 'norm' in the U.S.; in Israel, it goes a step further. The niche kosher market targets not only the kosher consumer but the 'Mehadrin' kosher consumer, who wields enormous influence in the Israeli kosher marketplace.

Through the great efforts of Rav Aharon Haskel, Director of STAR-K's Israel office, and his *kashrus hashgacha* team, STAR-K has been successful in implementing *Mehadrin* certification in facilities that would have not previously considered going kosher 25 years ago.

*Kashrus Kurrents* had the pleasure of speaking with Rabbi Aharon Haskel, who has been instrumental in forging the successful relationship with many newly certified manufacturers.

Today, in *Eretz Yisroel*, many popular products are STAR-K certified due to the efforts of Rav Haskel and his wonderful team. It is our pleasure to introduce Rav Aharon Haskel to our U.S. readership.

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# A GLIMPSE INTO THE SYSTEM: Kosher Certification of Industrial Food

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of the global marketplace has required *kashrus* organizations to establish a presence on multiple continents.<sup>2</sup>

Unlike certified foodservice establishments which operate with a *mashgiach* onsite<sup>3</sup>, it is not feasible for a full-time *kashrus* representative to be installed in every facility that makes certified products. What then is the *halachic* basis for certifying such food as kosher? How does a kosher symbol appear on food packages made in a factory located hundreds or even thousands of miles from the closest Jewish community?

## The Brisker Rov and the Farmer's Cheese

An anecdote about the Brisker Rov, *zt"l*, helps bring the question into focus<sup>4</sup>:

One year before Yom Kippur, the Brisker Rov's family arranged with a farmer from a *moshav* to supply chickens for *kaporos*.<sup>5</sup> The farmer, a simple Jew, was elated at the opportunity to provide a service for such a venerated rabbi. While loading up his truck with chickens, the farmer thought it would be most appropriate to present a gift. He brought along a container of his signature homemade cheese, which was considered a delightful treat by his friends and neighbors.

Upon entering the *gadol's* home, jittery with excitement and a wide smile on his face, he asked if he may place his cheese down in the kitchen. He was taken aback when the Rov responded with a silent gaze, followed by a serious tone, "Reb *Yid*, does your cheese have a *hechsher*?"

The farmer was not accustomed to being in the presence of men of such great stature, certainly not a persona as imposing as the Brisker Rov, whose very being was suffused with awe of Heaven. He stammered with embarrassment, "No Rebbe, it doesn't have a *hechsher*," trailing off.

"There's no *hechsher*?" the Rov clarified in a louder voice. At that moment, the farmer wished the ground would open up and swallow him. He became distraught, thinking how he could have done something so terrible by almost causing a *tzaddik* to eat food without a *hechsher*. *Chalilah v'chas!*

After he composed himself, the farmer replied, "Rebbi, I don't have a *hechsher*. However, the rabbi of my *moshav* occasionally enjoys my cheese. I can bring a letter from him attesting to its *kashrus*."

Hearing this, the Brisker Rov's features softened and he asked, "Please tell me, why don't you have a *hechsher* on your cheese?"

Encouraged by the gentler mood, the farmer answered, "I don't produce this cheese commercially; it's for my personal use, and to share with family and friends. I know myself that it's kosher, and everyone on the *moshav* trusts me so I never needed a *hechsher*."

The Rov wanted to be absolutely certain and pressed once again, "Are you sure that you don't have a *hechsher*?" The farmer answered affirmatively and volunteered, once again, to come back with a letter from his rabbi.

With this the Rov was satisfied and smiled, "Wonderful! Thank you kindly. Please place the cheese in the kitchen. It's good that it doesn't have a *hechsher*, because foods **with** a *hechsher* I don't eat!"

## Eid Echod Ne'eman

What was the Brisker Rov's objection to a *hechsher*? The story as written doesn't elaborate. We can conjecture that his line of questioning was to determine if the *halachah* of '*eid echod ne'eman b'issurim*' (עד אחד נאמן באיסורים), lit. 'one witness is trustworthy with regard to matters of prohibitions') was applicable in this case. This principle allows one to trust someone else regarding the kosher status of food items,<sup>6</sup> provided that they (he or she) are: 1) Obligated in kosher, 2) Possess rudimentary knowledge of kosher laws, 3) Is known to adhere to them, and 4) Is *shomer Shabbos*.<sup>7</sup> Eventually, the Brisker Rov was satisfied that this farmer was, indeed, a valid *eid echod* worthy of vouching for the *kashrus* of his cheese. But what is the *halachic* mechanism of a *hechsher*?

Whether or not the Brisker Rov would feel comfortable relying upon today's highly developed *kashrus* system is an academic question. For over a century, *Poskim* have endorsed kosher certification on industrially-produced food items. This is an unavoidable reality as one would be hard-pressed to find someone nowadays who subsists without some level of industrially-produced food.

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2. Besides the United States, STAR-K maintains offices in Australia, Brazil, China, Costa Rica, India, Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Eretz Yisroel.

3. STAR-K requires constant on-site presence of independent (non-owner) *mashgichim* for: meat restaurants, caterers, and supermarket departments. Dairy retail stores that involve cooking (e.g. pizza shops) must always have an approved *shomer Shabbos* on premises. Additionally, each location is reviewed frequently by roving STAR-K administrators who maintain regular communication with the *mashgichim*. Venues shared by non-kosher events require much more vigilance and employ multiple *mashgichim*. An extreme case is the AIPAC conference held in Washington, D.C. (pre-coronavirus) with upward of 18,700 attendees, necessitating a regiment of 55 *mashgichim* over 3 days. (See <https://www.star-k.org/articles/news/3665/what-it-takes-to-serve-kosher-to-18700-aipac-conference-attendees/>)

4. עבודת והנהגות לבית בריסק, חלק א', עמוד 7

5. Quite likely, the Brisker Rov himself did not participate in this practice. See <http://www.torahmusings.com/2012/11/rav-soloveitchik-and-kaporos/> Yet, he did not object when family members engaged in it.

6. בענין מי שאכל דבר ע"פ עד אחד נאמן ואח"כ נמצא שהעד טעה ובאמת המאכל היה אסור, אם נחשב כשווג או אונס לענין כפרה, וכן לענין טמטום הלב, ע' מאמר בנושא זה מאת הר"ר מרדכי פרנקל. שליט"א הנדפס בקונטרס דרך כוכב (לייקוואוד תשע"ה), עמוד לז'. ע' ספר מסורת משה, חלק א' יורה דעה אות א'.

7. Even when a proprietor meets the qualifications of an *eid echod*, accepted practice is that food produced for commercial sale needs an independent *hechsher*. See *Kashrus Kurrents*, Summer 5777-2017, *In Whom Do We Trust: Examining Conflicts of Interest in Food Certification*, by this author.







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**KK:** Rav Aharon, thanks for talking to our U.S. readership.

**RH:** It is my pleasure to share with *Kashrus Kurrents* readers the exciting new developments at STAR-K Israel in the area of alcoholic beverages.

**KK:** What has prompted companies to seek *Mehadrin* certification?

**RH:** In Israel, in order for an imported product to be advertised as kosher, it must bear a recognized kosher certification symbol. The vast majority of establishments in Israel are kosher-certified, at least on a basic level, and the *Mehadrin* segment is growing at a very fast pace. For an Israeli importer, ensuring that its products are certified at the highest level possible is critical to safeguarding the widest possible target market.

**KK:** Have companies conducted market research to prompt this change?

**RH:** Over the past 30 years, the Israeli kosher markets have matured significantly. There are PR firms, advertising/marketing and market research firms with exclusive focus on the *Chareidi* and religious markets. Today, the STAR-K Israel office is heavily involved with the largest Israeli food importers to ensure *Mehadrin* certifications for their products (i.e., Osem/Nestlé, Tnuva, Strauss and IBLS).

**KK:** Were they aware that significant changes would have to be made in their recipes?

**RH:** Most Israeli companies understand the requirements of kosher and *Mehadrin* quite well and usually educate the foreign manufacturers with whom they are working, to some extent. However, it is STAR-K's responsibility to complete the education and execution process to ensure that that *Mehadrin* kosher standards are implemented correctly.

**KK:** Was it a challenge to find suitable *Mehadrin* flavors for liqueurs?

**RH:** In some cases, it took time for the flavors to be certified properly. However, the overall buying power and significance of the Israeli market, as well as its kosher requirements, make the process a priority for the manufacturers.

**KK:** Are scotch manufacturers *kashering* their sherry casks for *Mehadrin* productions, or do some acquire kosher sherry casks from kosher wineries?

**RH:** In most cases, kosher scotches are produced from finishes that do not include wine barrel finishing. In the case of the Milk & Honey Distillery in Tel Aviv, a special production of kosher

*l'Mehadrin* sherry seasoned casks was made in Jerez, Spain. Israeli Kosher *l'Mehadrin* wine barrels were used for their wine cask finished extractions.

**KK:** Is there any difference in aging times for the *Mehadrin* scotch as opposed to their regular counterparts?

**RH:** No. Changes or compromises in process or quality are made for the sake of *kashrus*. If it can't be certified we don't certify it, and if it can't meet their quality standards it is not produced.

**KK:** What new STAR-K certified items will we see on the shelves of the neighborhood liquor store in Israel that we haven't seen before?

**RH** Ardbeg and Glemorangie Scotch, Captain Morgan Rums, Volcan, Don Julio and Espolon Tequila, to name just a few.

**KK:** I understand that Eretz Yisroel is also becoming a world-class producer of liquor and liqueurs. Can you share some of these exciting projects with our readers?

**RH:** There are three distilleries in Israel that we are proud to be working with: a) Milk & Honey Distillery in Tel Aviv, which is Israel's first whisky distillery; b) Thinker's Distillery in Yerushalayim produces the finest vodkas and gins; it will be producing bourbon in 2021 in the historic *Machaneh Yehudah* market, and c) Oak and Ash in *Beit Shemesh* which produces a line of liquors including apple brandy, gin, rum, and vodka in addition to brewing beer and hard cider.

**KK:** What has been the secret of success with these companies?

**RH:** The main focus has always been finding a way to respect their traditions, which are often centuries old, without compromising on *kashrus* standards. Bringing the knowledge, experience and STAR-K's passion for *kashrus* makes all the difference.

Rav Aharon, it has been a pleasure having you share your insights with *Kashrus Kurrents*. You should continue to be *matzliach*, *nosei chein* and make a great *kiddush sheim shamaiyim*. We will continue to enjoy our *Kiddushim!* Kol tuv. ✨



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For the most *kashrus*-sensitive categories of industrially-produced food, our question is not pertinent since *mashgichim* serving as *'eidim'* are present from the beginning of production through final packaging and sealing.<sup>8</sup> These categories, per STAR-K policy, include:

- **Meat** – Experts in *shechitah*, *bedikah*, *nikkur*, and *melichah*, are substantially involved at every step of production.<sup>9</sup>
- **Wine and grape juice** – Production takes place exclusively by *mashgichim*.
- **Fish** – STAR-K requires a *mashgiach* to check each fish for *simanei kashrus* (specifically, scales on the skin or a clearly visible outline of scales) before processing. This policy includes tuna and salmon (red pigment is not accepted as a *siman muvhak*).
- **Cheese** – A *mashgiach* must be present to add the rennet / coagulant that begins the curdling process<sup>10</sup>. Onsite verification of product identity is required before packaging.
- **Milk** – For *Cholov Yisroel* productions, a *mashgiach* is present throughout every step. This includes: *kashering* the tanks and pasteurizer, cleaning collection vats, checking the herd for questions of *triefah*, and supervising the process from milking through bottling.<sup>11</sup>
- **Kosher for Pesach** – A *mashgiach* is often present for Passover-certified productions, even when its year-round kosher counterpart does not warrant that degree of supervision.
- **Bishul Yisroel** – Products certified according to the STAR-S standard for *Sefardim* and *Eidot HaMizrach* require *mashgiach* involvement during production. STAR-K standard follows the *Ramoh*, allowing for a lesser degree of involvement, as long as a *mashgiach* adds to the fire.
- **Insect Checking** – For insect-prone produce, e.g., lettuce, broccoli or strawberries, an onsite *mashgiach* checks a sample from each batch to ascertain that the wash process is effective to remove bugs per *kashrus* standards.<sup>12</sup> If not, the kosher symbol may not be applied.

These categories demand a disproportionate amount of resources on the part of *kashrus* organizations. However, they comprise a

small minority of the million-plus kosher-certified products in the market. Most products have lower levels of kosher sensitivity and, as such, *Poskim* accept a reduced level of oversight. What are some of the considerations that allow kosher certification to be granted on industrially-manufactured products?

### Mirsas

*Yotzei V'Nichnas* (יֵרָצָא וְנִכְנָס / intermittent inspection) is a *halachic* principle recorded in *Shulchan Aruch* (*Yoreh Deah* 118:10, 129:1), which states that kosher integrity can be preserved even without a *mashgiach's* constant presence. Intermittent appearances are enough, provided: 1) The *mashgiach's* schedule is unpredictable; he does not divulge how long he will be away; 2) He can arrive unannounced without prior notice; 3) There is no lock barring his entrance; he can enter at will. Together, these criteria form a *'mirsas'*, an apprehension, on the part of a kosher producer lest he be caught introducing unapproved ingredients.<sup>13</sup> *Shach* (#32) comments that this type of supervision is permitted even ideally, *l'hatchilah*.

A strict interpretation of the second and third conditions is usually not fulfilled in modern industrial plants. Many facilities require visitors to register at the front desk due to food safety regulations and bio-terrorism protections (and for corporate espionage prevention), diminishing the effectiveness of *yotzei v'nichnas*. Often, a *mashgiach* must be accompanied by plant personnel throughout his visit.

The first condition is also affected by one viewpoint presented in *Shach* (*ibid.*) which asserts if the duration between visits is too long, the *hashgochah* can only be accepted *bdi'eved*, after the fact, surely not a foundation for a sound kosher program. What exactly is considered 'too long' depends on specific conditions in the plant (see *Chelkas Binyamin* 118:98). The second viewpoint in *Shach* does not differentiate between short and long intervals. In practice, visit frequencies at plants are determined on an individual basis;<sup>14</sup> whether or not they technically meet the duration mandated by the first viewpoint is debatable.

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8. See *Kashrus Kurrents*, Winter 5780-2020, *Signed, Sealed and Delivered: The Requirements for Chosomos on our Foods*, by Rabbi Nissan Dov Miller.

9. Furthermore, STAR-K facilities accept meat only from sources that are approved by STAR-K's Rabbinic Administrator, even when the meat carries a reputable *hechsher*. See *Kashrus Kurrents*, Winter 5776-2016, *Special Meat Edition*.

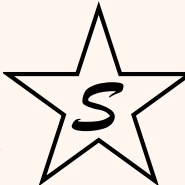
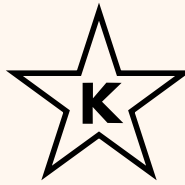
10. See *Kashrus Kurrents*, Spring 5771-2011, *Eating Her Curds...No Way*, by Rabbi Tzvi Rosen.

11. See *Cholov Yisroel: Does a Neshama Good*, by Rav Moshe Heinemann, *shlit"a*.

12. See *Kashrus Kurrents*, Spring 5778-2018, *Staying Up to Date on Insect Checking / Bedikas Tölayim*, by Rabbi Sholom Tendler.

13. In *Shulchan Aruch*, *yotzei v'nichnas* is applied in various places, including: kosher food production, *tzitzis* making (which must be done *lishmah*), and clothing manufacture (*shaatnez*).

14. Members of AKO (Association of *Kashrus* Organizations) are committed to minimum visitation frequencies that are based upon kosher-sensitivity assessments of various food production types.





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Nonetheless, the validity of using *yotzei v'nichnas* as part of a superior *Mehadrin* certification protocol is bolstered by other factors:

- *Beis Yosef* (Y.D. 118, in *Bedek HaBayis*) writes that when non-kosher ingredients are not commonly found in the vicinity, we aren't as concerned that something non-kosher will be intentionally introduced into the product. Many plants are conferred with an "all-kosher" status, which is verified by the *mashgiach* during his visits.
- *Shulchan Aruch* (based on *Tosfos* to *Avodah Zarah* 12a) rules that when no benefit is gained by substituting kosher ingredients with non-kosher ones, we may rely on *yotzei v'nichnas* even when some of the conditions aren't met.<sup>15</sup> An extension of this notion can sometimes apply even when a kosher version of an ingredient costs more than a compatible, non-kosher version. If the short-term savings is significantly outweighed by potential fallout from

**HaRav Moshe Heinemann, *shlit"á*, ... stands at the helm of STAR-K and remains actively involved with all *kashrus*-related matters.**

loss of certification and consumer trust, were they caught using unapproved ingredients, the *mirsas* factor might remain intact.

*Poskim* recognize other grounds for *mirsas* as a legitimate premise to confirm *kashrus*. For instance, *Ramoh* (*Teshuvos* #54), in 16th century Krakow, was asked to decide the kosher status of imported olive oil. At that time, it was common to transport olive oil in wooden barrels, and there was suspicion that the barrels were coated with lard to prevent absorption and seepage. Among the explanations given to permit the oil, *Ramoh* cites *Rashbah* (*Teshuvos* I:67) who ruled on a similar question presented to him in 13th century Barcelona. There was concern in Talmudic times that unsupervised workers might coat kosher cheese with lard (*Avodah Zarah* 35). However, *Rashbah* held that's no longer a problem when living among Catholics who don't consume meat on Fridays (especially during Lent). Fear of being penalized by the authorities for selling cheese with meat residue creates a *mirsas* that is adequate for *kashrus*. For the same reason, *Ramoh* concluded that we need not worry that olive oil barrels are coated with lard.

In his landmark *teshuvah*, *Igros Moshe* (Y.D. I:47, dated 5714/1954) similarly accepts that the prospect of government-imposed fines for tainting cow milk with milk sourced from other

animals is sufficient to create a *mirsas* that permits using regular non-*Cholov Yisroel* milk ('*cholov companies*') in the United States. Even those who disagreed with Rav Moshe Feinstein, *zt"l*, did not dispute the legitimacy of such a *mirsas*. Their argument was either that *halachah* places special restrictions on milk that cannot be satisfied by government controls, or that legal sanctions in most jurisdictions are not strong enough to deter fraud. (It should be noted that Rav Moshe, *zt"l*, himself wrote that it's preferable not to rely on this leniency, *ibid.* and Y.D. IV:8. Thus, the STAR-K symbol on dairy products is reserved exclusively for *Cholov Yisroel*. Products using standard milk are eligible for STAR-D certification.)

*Mirsas*, by definition, is a deterrent formed by the possibility of detecting irregularities. Therefore, it's important that *hashgochah* systems incorporate tools that encourage transparency and increase the chance of noticing unanticipated discrepancies. In addition to regular spot checks in ingredient storage (and disposal) areas and production rooms and warehouses, records should also be reviewed. Many STAR-K inspectors are trained in audit procedures, such as trace-back and mass-balance exercises.

### Reputation Protection

Another aspect of human nature which is recognized by *halachah* as a way to confirm honesty is the innate drive most people have to preserve their good reputation. As Benjamin Franklin pithily observed, "It takes many good deeds to build a good reputation, and only one bad one to lose it." One may expect scrupulousness, especially when one's livelihood is at stake, unless cause is given to suspect otherwise.

This assumption is applied by *Shulchan Aruch* in Y.D. 114:5 where he rules that pomegranate juice used for medicinal properties may be purchased from a retailer who lacks the qualifications of an *eid echod*. The *Rishonim* were not concerned the product was adulterated with cheaper non-kosher wine-vinegar because doing so would dilute its efficacy, and the seller does not want to tarnish his reputation.<sup>16</sup> *Ramoh* extends this permission to purchasing other similar items where product authenticity is expected.

The *halachic* term for professional integrity is '*uman lo mairah umnuso*' (אומן לא מרע אומנתו / a professional does not undermine his reputation). Commentators to *Shulchan Aruch* impose a few limits on its application. *Shach* (Y.D. 98:2, 302:4) writes that we may rely on a professional's word only when the truth is readily verifiable by other means. *Magen Avrohom* (O.C. 20:1) states this assumption works only when all customers, not just adherents of kosher, would be offended by product adulteration, like tainting olive oil with other oils.<sup>17</sup> But if it affects just the kosher segment, for instance when switching grape juice

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15. Albeit, some *Poskim* apply this leniency only when the food belongs to and is produced in a facility owned by someone with *ne'emanus* as defined above for an '*eid echod*'. See *Gevuros Eliyahu* (Rav Henkin, *zt"l*) Y.D. #12.

16. Today, one should preferably seek bottled pomegranate juice with a *hechsber* because it may have been pasteurized on equipment shared with non-kosher products, or it may contain additives (or can be *tevel*).

17. See further: *Chacham Tzvi* (#39), brought in *Pri Megadim* M.Z. 253:18

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concentrate in a sweetened beverage from a kosher source to a cheaper non-kosher one, we can't apply *uman lo mairah* since the substitution is inconsequential to the general public.<sup>18</sup>

In 5712/1952, Rav Yechezkel Grubner, *zt"l*, from Detroit<sup>19</sup> suggested it should be possible to ascertain that oil used in a product was of kosher vegetable origin and not from animals by obtaining a written statement from the manufacturer disclosing ingredient contents.<sup>20</sup> His justification was based partly on *uman lo mairah*, along with the ability to substantiate the claim by chemical testing and also the threat of legal reprisal. The veracity of the statement was further strengthened by the fact the question was posed to the company asking them to address allergen concerns, not exclusively *kashrus*.

Rav Moshe, *zt"l*, (*Igros Moshe Y.D. I:55*), in his reply to Rav Grubner (5715/1955), concurred that written statements officially issued by a company are a credible way to verify kosher status. Three decades later (*Igros Moshe Y.D. IV:1*, dated 5744/1984), Rav Moshe clarified that granting kosher certification to a factory on this basis alone is improper. It can only help in conjunction with regular visits by a *mashgiach* who is familiar with the layout and will notice any changes. Rav Yosef Eliyahu Henkin, *zt"l*, (*Gevuros Eliyahu Y.D. #34*) also corresponded with Rav Grubner. He distinguished between items that are inherently kosher, where *uman lo mairah* (under the right conditions) can be effective to resolve doubt that non-kosher components were added, and items that can either be kosher or non-kosher where *uman lo mairah* cannot be a factor in determining *kashrus*. Furthermore, even in the former case, it's only a device to rely upon occasionally when absolutely necessary.

### Practical Program

The crux of any reliable *kashrus* certification program is always the physical plant visits by *mashgichim* and administrative reviewers whose trained eyes can detect more than the narrow snapshot seen during the time spent in the plant.<sup>21</sup> But the complexity of modern food production demands employing other measures to assure the success of a kosher program. Based upon the principles established above, additional safeguards are implemented when providing certification at industrial plants. Among them are:

- Legally enforceable contract agreements signed by all relevant parties affirming compliance with the kosher program specific to the company.

- Partnering with companies whose professional management will develop a good working rapport with the *kashrus* administration team.

- Formal registration of all ingredients and processing aids used in kosher-certified products, and disclosure of all activities in the plant, verified onsite by the *mashgiach*. (With the understanding that maintaining strict confidentiality is integral to our work.)

- Approving labels affixed with the kosher symbol before printing; onsite label verification by the *mashgiach*.

- Occasionally sending product samples to a laboratory for component identification.

- Utilizing government legislation which compels companies to increase transparency, especially the Food Allergen Labeling Act of 2004 and the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) of 2011.

- Establishing failsafe systems in areas where *mashgiach* travel is limited, or standards of integrity differ from our expectations, only to certify products that will be fully kosher in any event. (Understandably, this begs the question: Why do such products need kosher certification at all? The short answer is because without plant inspections we don't know that to be the case.<sup>22</sup>)

- When a plant uses kosher/non-kosher compatible ingredients in the absence of a strong verification system, or when processing takes place on shared equipment, we may only certify special kosher productions in the presence of a *mashgiach*.

In this age of technology and specialization, we have witnessed the shift of responsibility for kosher certification from the local rabbinate to professional

organizations. In a sense, STAR-K Certification is a bridge between the old, traditional model and the new system. HaRav Moshe Heinemann, *shlit"l*, a leading *moreh hora'ah* (*halachic* authority) for the Baltimore *kehillah* to whom numerous Jewish communities world over turn for *piskei halachah* and guidance, stands at the helm of STAR-K and remains actively involved with all *kashrus*-related matters. Under his direct leadership and direction for over four decades, a robust organizational structure has developed that is equipped to stay abreast of developments in the food industry across the globe. With *siyata d'shmayah*, our efforts will continue to play a role in protecting *kedushas Yisroel*. ✨



HaRav Moshe Heinemann, *shlit"l*,  
Rav Hamachshir

18. See *Nodah Bi'Yehuda* (O.C. II:72) who argues on Magen Avrohom. In a *teshuvah* addressing the permissibility of granulated sugar on *Pesach* when there is suspicion it may have been transported in containers previously used for flour or perhaps the sugar itself was adulterated with (cheaper) flour, he appears to hold that businessmen will resist the temptation to cheat even when it affects only kosher consumers, since such behavior will undermine their reputation among all customers.

19. *Kneses Yechezkel Y.D. I:49-51*, corresponding with Rav Yosef Teumim, *zt"l*, also from Detroit.

20. This discussion took place in the 1950s. Today, it's understood that vegetable-based oils may have been processed on shared equipment with animal fats and are thus rendered non-kosher. See *Kashrus Kurrents*, Summer 5780-2020, *A Kosher View of Refined Edible Oils* by Rabbi Tzvi Rosen.

21. For many reasons, 'virtual' inspections via teleconferencing are not a replacement for this critical component.

22. This topic deserves its own discussion in another *Kashrus Kurrents* article, *iy"H*. Stay tuned!





# New Under STAR-K KOSHER CERTIFICATION

## CONSUMER PRODUCTS

(only when bearing STAR-K symbol)

### 2303332 ONTARIO INC.

CANADA  
CHEESE

### AGROTEQUILERA DE JALISCO S.A. DE C.V.

MEXICO  
ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

### AMERIA RUSS LLC

RUSSIA  
GLUTEN-FREE PRODUCTS;  
PASTA PRODUCTS

### ARCADE SNACKS

Auburn, MA  
FRUIT (DRIED)

### AZIZ BOUTHOUR

CANADA  
OLIVE OILS

### B.A.D. FOODS CO., INC.

Short Hills, NJ  
BAKERY

### BETTER LIVING BRANDS, LLC APPLE SLICES DIV.

Pleasantown, CA  
FRUIT (FRESH PACKAGED)

### BLANSH INTERNATIONAL

San Jose, CA  
PICKLED PRODUCTS

### BOTTLEOFWATER.COM LLC

Clifton, NJ  
WATER

### BROOKYN CRAFT WORKS

Brooklyn, NY  
ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

### BROOKSHIRE GROCERY COMPANY

Tyler, TX  
ICE CREAM CONES

### CANTINA CELLARO SOC. COOP. AGRICOLA

ITALY  
WINE

### CHROMADEX

Irvine, CA  
VITAMINS & NUTRITIONAL SUPPLEMENTS

### DIBAR NUTRICIONAL DE R.L DE C.V.

MEXICO  
ESSENTIAL OILS & OLEORESINS

### EMBASSY'S LUCKY BOY

Paterson, NJ  
VEGETABLES (CANNED)

### ENVIRO TECH CHEMICAL SERVICES, INC. DBA ORGANICLEAN

Modesto, CA  
DETERGENTS & CLEANSERS

### FLORIDA RUM COMPANY, LLC

Hollywood, FL  
ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

### FRESHLY ORGANIC LLC DBA SIMPLI

Washington, DC  
QUINOA

### FRUIT BLISS

Brooklyn, NY  
FRUIT (DRIED)

### GUSTO BUONO

ITALY  
FROZEN PRODUCTS

### IKRAM GIDA A.S.

TURKEY  
OLIVES

### JEFI ENTERPRISES (USA) INC.

Tustin, CA  
FRUIT (CANNED)

### KEMIN INDUSTRIES, INC. DBA AID4NUTRITION, INC.

Des Moines, IA  
VITAMINS & NUTRITIONAL SUPPLEMENTS

### KHROMA HERBAL PRODUCTS

Ogden, UT  
VITAMINS & NUTRITIONAL SUPPLEMENTS

### KOSHER MART FOODS

Cherry Hill, NJ  
MEAT/POULTRY PACKING

### MANI IMPORTS, INC.

West Sacramento, CA  
VEGETABLES (CANNED)

### MCLANE GLOBAL

Houston, TX  
CANNED FRUIT

### METRO BRAND G.P.

CANADA  
CANNED PINEAPPLE

### MITSUI FOODS, INC. CANNED FRUITS & VEGETABLES DIVISION

Norwood, NJ  
FRUIT (CANNED); VEGETABLES (CANNED)

### MONTALBANO INDUSTRIA AGROALIMENTARE SPA

ITALY  
SAUCES & DIPS

### NARANJILLO SOSTENIBLE SAC

PERU  
COCOA PRODUCTS; COCOA POWDER

### NUTRITIONAL MANUFACTURING

Chandler, AZ  
VITAMINS & NUTRITIONAL SUPPLEMENTS

### NATURAL MEDICINAL WHOLESALE

Framingham, MA  
CBD PRODUCTS

### OAK AND ASH (BUSTERS)

ISRAEL  
ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

### OPTIMAL HEALTH SOLUTIONS, LLC

Los Angeles, CA  
CBD PRODUCTS

### OSTL INC

Encino, CA  
HONEY

### PJ'S COFFEE OF NEW ORLEANS

Covington, LA  
COFFEES

### POCAS INTERNATIONAL CORP.

South Hackensack, NJ  
VEGETABLES (CANNED)

### PRAIRIE STREET PRIME LLC

Great Neck, NY  
RETAIL ONLINE BUTCHERY

### SAN ISIDRO PRODUCE

San Francisco, CA  
VEGETABLES (FRESH);  
FRUIT (FRESH PACKAGED)

### SPICES, USA

Hialeah, FL  
SPICES & SEASONINGS

### STAR FINE PRODUCTS

Fresno, CA  
OLIVES

### SWEEGEN

Rancho Santa Margarita, CA  
SWEETENERS

### WINCO FOODS, LLC

Boise, ID  
OTC MEDICINES

### WHITE LEAF PROVISIONS, INC.

White Pleasant, SC  
BABY FOOD

### Y&B MEATS LLC

Newark, NJ  
FRESH MEAT & PROVISIONS

### YEURVELAH LLC

Afton, VA  
HERBAL SUPPLEMENTS

## INDUSTRIAL INSTITUTIONAL PRODUCTS

(see letter of certification)

### BIOSAN LLC

Saratoga Springs, NY  
INDUSTRIAL CHEMICALS

### BLANSH INTERNATIONAL

San Jose, CA  
PICKLED PRODUCTS

### CAMERICAN INTERNATIONAL

Paramus, NJ  
FRUIT (CANNED)

### COLIMA PROCESSORS

MEXICO  
FRUIT BLENDS/PUREES

### CONGELADOS Y JUGO DEL VALLE

VERDE  
COSTA RICA  
FROZEN FRUIT

### GENESIS BIOTEC

ISRAEL  
FISH GELATIN

### CHEMTREAT, INC.

Glen Allen, VA  
INDUSTRIAL CHEMICALS

### IKRAM GIDA A.S.

TURKEY  
OLIVES

### IMPORT & EXPORT ALMENDRAS

CNAB  
BOLIVIA  
NUTS

### INDUSTRIALIZADORA DE FRUCTANOS TIERRA BLANCA SA DE CV

MEXICO  
FLAVORS & EXTRACTS; BASES & SYRUPS

### MANANTIAL LAS AMAPOLAS S. DE PR DE RL

MEXICO  
FRESH FRUIT

### NAHR ENGEL GMBH

GERMANY  
POTATO GRANULES

### NARANJILLO SOSTENIBLE SAC

PERU  
COCOA PRODUCTS; COCOA POWDER

### PROCESADORA DE PRODUCTOS DE LA AMAZONIA MONTE CARLOS "PAMOC"

BOLIVIA  
NUTS

### SKF MAINTENANCE PRODUCTS LUBRICANT DIVISION

NETHERLANDS  
LUBRICANTS

### SPICES, USA

Hialeah, FL  
SPICES & SEASONINGS

## ESTABLISHMENTS

### CONCEPT LLC DBA CROUSTILLE CAFE FRENCH BAKERY

Baltimore, MD  
BAKERY/RESTAURANT TAKE-OUT

## 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 NCYL, administers the kashrus of the STAR-D. All STAR-D products are dairy – cholov stam (non-cholov Yisroel).

### ALDI, INC. YOGURT SMOOTHIE DIVISION

Batavia, IL  
YOGURT

### THE COFFEE BEAN & TEA LEAF

5 Greene Avenue  
Brooklyn, NY  
COFFEE SHOP

### NEWMAN'S OWN INC.

Westport, CT  
CHOCOLATE PRODUCTS

### OH LAIT OH LAIT LLC

South Orange, NJ  
FROZEN DESSERTS;  
ICE CREAM & NOVELTIES

### TURKANA FOOD

Kenilworth, NJ  
YOGURT

**STAR-K CERTIFICATION, INC.**  
122 Slade Avenue, Suite 300  
Baltimore, Maryland 21208-4996

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# STAR-K wishes the community a Happy & Healthy New Year!



## STAR-K KOSHER CERTIFICATION

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