Colombia
Land of (Kosher) Opportunity

SUCCESSFUL BAKERS
OU COMPANIES SPEAK OUT

KOSHER GELATIN
NOW IT’S FOR REAL

OU TRAVELS SOUTH
CHARM AND PRODUCTION

FDA RULING
ALTERNATIVES FOR THE COLOR RED
THESE ARE DIFFICULT TIMES.


There is a sense that nothing is certain.

Difficult times indeed.

At times like these, it might seem like a luxury to speak about a desire for security and meaning. After all, there is food to be put on the table! Ironically, it is often when the going gets rough that our vision is sharpest; and our ability to evaluate what is really important is at its keenest. There might be a sense that nothing is certain but, in fact, what is most certain is what has always been most certain. Those who placed their faith exclusively in relying on ever-expanding stock markets and home mortgages simply placed their faith in the wrong place.

Which begs the question, does the current, historic loss of wealth suggest that material worth is ephemeral and therefore meaningless? Or does it demonstrate that, in fact, material well-being is essential to our lives?

According to Judaism, the answer is... both and neither.

Judaism suggests that the “either/or” implied in the two questions is, in fact, a false choice. Judaism does not embrace the physical rather than the spiritual nor does it reject the physical in favor of the spiritual. God has instructed us that we are both physical and spiritual and that it is in recognizing this that we most fully
find meaning and honor the Creator of the Universe.

Our physical form and nature was taken from the “dust of the ground.” We are physical beings. To deny that would be to deny something essential and important, indeed something spiritual, about who we are. As Jews, we are taught to embrace the physical. To do anything less would be to question the wisdom and sanctity of God’s creation.

Life is good. Creation is good. The physical world is certainly good.

We share physicality with every living thing in creation but we are not the same as every living thing. Far from it. We are not only the physical form that we inhabit.

“And the Lord God formed Adam of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and Adam became a living soul.”

We have body and a soul. Man has a purpose in life. Not in spite of life, but because of it. The question then is, once again, “What is the purpose of life?”

Judaism teaches that we must be engaged with and in the world. Nothing brings home this teaching so clearly as our need to nourish ourselves, to eat.

Hunger is an essential drive of all living things. But like all essential drives, unless it is satisfied in a way that is both permissible and holy, it is impossible to enjoy a truly spiritual life. But how do we turn hunger, or any essential physical drive, into something holy?

Each of us has before us a choice in everything we do. There is the right way, and the wrong way. (Certainly the poor example set by many, many in the financial world has made that lesson clear!) We can satisfy our hunger drive as every other animal in creation or we can find the holiness in this physical activity and have it become a mirror of the Divine. After all, we all must eat. Still, from a Jewish perspective the adage, “you are what you eat” is not a comment on physical well-being but a comment on spiritual well-being and goes to not only what we eat but how we eat, when we eat, where we eat and why we eat.

We know that Adam fell by eating forbidden food. Certainly, there was nothing intrinsically wrong with his eating an apple. His health did not fail because of his choice. The lesson here is that — from the very beginning — health issues are not elemental to the eating of forbidden food. No, the reason that Adam fell was because he did what was forbidden by God. In doing so, he removed himself from that which is holy. He ate because he was hungry. Or because the food seemed attractive and tasty. Or simply because his “dining partner” — Eve — wanted him to. In other words, he ate of the fruit of the forbidden tree for all the same reasons that many people eat.

They are hungry.

The food appears appetizing. Someone suggests that they “try it, you’ll like it.”

But in Judaism, it is not enough to be sated. The goal is to be holy. Ultimately, these three words capture what it means to be Jewish. We are to be holy because our God is holy. We keep God before us in everything we do; we recite blessings and we perform mitzvot and, in doing so, we remain closer to our goal of holiness.

The laws of kashrut define the way God would have us eat. The fundamental basic-ness of eating makes it essential to our ability to distinguish and discriminate. In Judaism, laws and rules of conduct rarely concern themselves with that which is function of our “higher natures.” Our higher natures are capable of taking care of themselves just fine. It is our baser instincts and needs that offer the challenge. Certainly, that is the case in the financial world. Money — our need for it, our desire for it — brings us face to face with some of our most base motivations and gives us the chance to either reduce ourselves or enlighten ourselves.

As Jews, we do not seek separation from our essential natures, our basest wants and desires. We recognize that anything that God created is necessarily good. It is by our relation with each part of creation that we affirm its goodness and holiness. >> CONTINUED ON PAGE 21
Gerber Expands Kosher Baby Food Offerings

Gerber Launches Kosher 2nd Foods® Fruit & Vegetable Purees

FLORHAM PARK, NJ – Gerber Products, a part of Nestlé Nutrition, is introducing a line of purees that are certified kosher by the Orthodox Union (OU), a highly recognized and valued symbol of kosher certification.

These new purees products available in ten of Gerber’s most popular flavors, provide a kosher option for parents who want to feed their babies with the most trusted brand in baby food. Product details include:

**FLAVOR VARIETIES** Ten great tasting flavors certified by the Orthodox Union (OU): Applesauce, Pears, Bananas, Apple Strawberry Banana, Apple Blueberry, Sweet Potato, Carrots, Squash, Green Beans and Peas.

**NUTRITIONAL PROFILE** Made with 100 percent natural fruit and vegetable puree and no added sugar, salt, starch, artificial colors or flavors. Many of these products provide an excellent source of Vitamin A or C.

**PRODUCT AVAILABILITY** Available nationwide this Spring, and packaged in Gerber’s classic 4 oz glass jars.

“These purees are the latest Gerber products to carry the OU symbol, joining select infant cereals, juices and Graduates snacks,” said Cathy Abramski, Senior Marketing Manager for Nestlé Nutrition. “We are committed to helping parents make good nutritional choices for their children. One of the best ways we can do this is by offering them a variety of options for each stage of their children’s development from infancy through preschool.”

“We are proud to partner with Gerber on their new line of kosher purees. These new varieties expand the range of kosher products for parents who want to provide their babies with nutritious, certified kosher food,” said Rabbi Eliyahu Safran, Vice President of Communications and Marketing for the Orthodox Union Kosher Division.

Delivering the high level of quality that consumers expect from Gerber, the new line of certified kosher purees provide the nutrition that growing infants’ need, while introducing them to new tastes as they grow and develop.

About Gerber

Gerber Products Company officially joined the Nestlé Nutrition Family — part of Nestlé S.A. — on September 1, 2007. Combining resources, Nestlé and Gerber are leveraging research and expertise to become the leaders in early childhood nutrition. With headquarters in Florham Park, N.J., Gerber is a worldwide provider of more than 200 food products from cereals to GERBER® 1st FOODS® purees to GRADUATES® meals and snacks, the Gerber product line covers each phase of early childhood development with diverse flavors and textures.

Since its founding in 1928, Gerber has been committed to helping parents raise happy, healthy babies through extensive research aimed at understanding and improving infant and toddler nutrition and feeding. In 2002, the Company launched the Start Healthy, Stay Healthy™ initiative, providing stage-by-stage information, tips, tools and advice for parents and their children.

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Babies throughout the United States cooed contentedly and threw their pacifiers in tribute to the outstanding individuals of the Gerber facilities of Fort Smith, Arkansas and Fremont, Michigan, whose dedicated efforts have been recognized at the Babies Choice Kosherization Awards. Through the hard work of these people, who facilitated the kosherization of the Gerber plants, millions of babies can now sink their gums into the company’s quality line of fruits and vegetables. The mention of each group’s accomplishments was met with outbursts of pureed emotion, and the apple juice spilled freely at the post-awards nap.

Your humble correspondent, the RFR who planned the gala kosherization events on behalf of the OU, recounted numerous recollections from his experience in working with these teams to prepare the plants to produce kosher product. Prior to that, he named some of those at the Gerber facilities whose input into the kosherization process had made the project a success.

Members of the Fort Smith team included such outstanding luminaries as Steve Crider, Quality Service Manager and rabbi in training; Scott Duffey, Business Unit Manager for Glass; Mike Moore, the Production Scheduling Guru; Dave Stockberger, the veteran Process Leader who started at the plant when Stage 4 was labeled Stage IV; and Lee Lindsey, third shift Sanitation Manager and King of Kosherization.

Selvyn Smith, vacationing Supply Chain Manager and Patsy Price, Inventory Controller who steadfastly controls inventory, were also prominently mentioned.

The Fremont team was made up, among others, of a trio known as the “Masters of Mush” — Alan Stover, Quality Assurance Manager; Mike Hikade, Thermal Process Coordinator and amateur rabbi; and Chuck Durham, Formulation Supervisor and unofficial “Go-To Guy.”

Rabbi Stone noted that planning the transformation of Gerber’s fruit and vegetable products from non-kosher into kosher items was far from child’s play. Both Gerber facilities are large, multi-faceted production environments and the project was marked by its complexity and by the constant awareness that much of Gerber’s product line consists of items that are inherently non-kosher, which could potentially compromise the kosher status of certified products.

Referring back to his crib notes, the rabbi recounted that the strategy from the beginning was to try to split the facilities into the theoretical equivalents of...
The Tasty Muffin

By Rabbi Yisroel Bendelstein

From sea to shining sea, in this blessed country of the United States of America, there are a myriad of breathtaking views where nature’s wonders will enthuse and invigorate all that behold her. Each of this great nation’s fifty states has much to contribute in this regard. Whether it is Arizona’s Grand Canyon, Florida’s Everglades, New York’s Niagara Falls, Alaska’s glaciers, Colorado’s Rocky Mountains, or Utah’s Rainbow Bridge, the list goes on and on for anyone who seeks to become awe-inspired by America’s offerings of nature’s best.

And while adventurers are whetting the appetite of their souls with these American marvels, they would be happy to know that in the course of their travels, there are delectable state muffins to nourish their bodies. Some notable state muffins are Massachusetts’ corn muffin, Minnesota’s blueberry muffin and New York’s apple muffin. This doesn’t mean that one won’t be able to find a lemon poppy muffin in all of Minnesota. All states tender muffins at thousands of nationwide eateries in a host of varieties, flavors, and shapes. The state muffin however, is a source of pride and joy for the state among many other prized possessions.

What makes the muffins even more attractive is that so many bear the world’s premier kosher emblem – the on their packaging. The companies that manufacture these muffins are to be commended for adhering to the most rigorous standards of kosher supervision for which kosher certification is renowned. In order to appreciate the requisite kosher supervision entailed for muffins, an historical perspective of this fabled product proves quite revealing.

The origin of the word muffin is derived from the French moufflet or soft, and is usually used in the context of bread. In other words, muffins resemble a soft bread. The parallel drawn between muffins and bread insofar as kosher dietary law is concerned is extremely significant. This is because kosher dietary law precludes bread from containing any dairy or meat ingredients. Bread can only
be made pareve. This is attributed to the fact that bread, as a main food staple, can readily find itself available for either a dairy or meat meal. As a necessary precaution to avoid eating dairy bread at a meat meal, which is in violation of kosher law, the bread must be pareve.

By extension it follows, that if muffins are indeed a soft bread as their etymology implies, then kosher dietary law would mandate that they only contain pareve ingredients, and no dairy components. Notwithstanding the word’s French roots, whether or not muffins are bread is contingent upon what constitutes bread according to kosher dietary law. Three criteria that identify the distinctive nature of bread are: shape, taste and function. Concerning shape, it is most common for bread to come in the form of loaves, rolls, buns and baguettes. Regarding taste, bread is yeasty and not sweet. Pertaining to function, bread primarily is eaten as a whole meal as in a sandwich, and not merely munched upon as in a snack.

Americans have grown accustomed to enjoy their breakfast with one of two types of muffins. First there is the American muffin which is baked from a batter mix and deposited in uniquely configured muffin baking pans. This batter mix is very thin, does not contain yeast, and could be sweet as in a chocolate chip muffin, or savory as in a carrot cheese muffin. Since the American muffin is altogether shaped differently than any roll, bun or baguette, is sweet or savory, and is not normally used to make a sandwich, it does not qualify to be considered bread in any of the aforementioned three criteria of shape, taste or function. Accordingly, American muffins are considered more like cake than bread, and can therefore be kosher certified even when containing dairy ingredients. For this reason, there are literally hundreds of luscious American muffins that contain dairy ingredients and have been approved by my office as D. In addition, for the more health conscious, the trendy succulent real dairy low fat American yogurt muffins can also be certified D providing all ingredients meet schedule A specifications.

The second muffin enjoyed usually at breakfast time is the English muffin. In contradistinction to the American muffin, the English muffin is not sweet, but rather stems from a thick yeast dough that is proofed and then deposited in griddle cups while being conveyed through a
griddle oven. This difference in manufacturing leads to the English muffin satisfying two of the three kosher dietary law criteria for bread. English muffins have the yeasty taste of bread and function like bread since they are used to make a sandwich to be eaten for a meal. Their spongey texture however, disqualifies them from meeting the shape criterion for bread.

The upshot is that since English muffins resemble both bread and cake, it is in a singular category of kosher certification. For the most part, as in the case of bread, OU kosher certified English muffins do not contain any dairy ingredients nor share equipment with products made with dairy, and hence are in fact pareve. However, there are some brand English muffins that are certified D. This is either because the dairy component is less than 1½% of the total ingredients, or on account of the English muffins being produced on equipment that make dairy product. Companies that have been approved to manufacture D English muffins must keep the dairy component for these products below the 1½% threshold of the total ingredients. Rabbinical field representatives closely monitor the batch sheets for these dairy English muffins, to ensure the dairy components meet the requirements.

A further glance into history reveals another unique quality indigenous to English Muffins that serves as an additional benefit for many kosher consumers. Mr. Samuel Bath Thomas left England for the shores of this country in 1874 with an English Muffin recipe that Americans would absolutely relish. Thomas’ English Muffins were the very first English Muffins enjoyed by Americans. Mr. Thomas recommended that his customers toast the English Muffins before serving for maximum flavor. These same toasting instructions are to this very day included on the packaging of Thomas’ English Muffins.

The fact that English Muffins are most preferred when toasted is most important for a further expanding market among kosher consumers known as ‘pas yisroel’. Literally meaning ‘bread of a Jew’, the ‘pas yisroel’ status is an elevated level of kosher for baked goods. It is obtained by an observant Jew igniting the oven in which the product is being baked. The method that the OU recommends to accomplish this task is for the bakery to install an electric panel by a designated oven that enables that oven to be turned on off-site by a rabbinic field representative using a remote control telephone hook-up. This system meets the strictest of the kosher pas yisroel requirements and has received great approbation among leading rabbinic authorities. The device is known as the “Shain system,” named after a Rabbi Shain who made this innovation.

Accordingly, since English Muffins have their flavor enormously enhanced via the product being toasted before serving, this may facilitate a kosher Jewish consumer in effectuating a pas yisroel product by toasting the English muffin in their own toaster at home. This is a kosher bonus for English Muffins which is not found in most other commercially baked products.

For over one hundred years Americans have been enjoying the famous Thomas’ English Muffins. Kosher consumers too are delighted to be able to benefit from the premium taste of Thomas’ English Muffins because its packaging bears the worlds premium kosher D logo. Scores of other quality brand English Muffins have followed Thomas’ stunning example and are also proud bearers of the or D kosher logo. Regardless, if they are American or English, kosher consumers the world over have a great way to start off their day by eating any of the thousands of muffin products that are kosher certified.

Rabbi Yisroel Bendelstein joined the Orthodox Union as a rabbinic coordinator in 2000, administering the kosher program of many OU certified commercial bakeries. He has previously contributed baking features to this publication as well as to Jewish Action, the OU magazine. Rabbi Bendelstein frequently lectures to school and synagogue groups as part of the “OU Kosher Coming” programs and has posted several Kosher Tidbits on OU Radio relating to issues in the baking industry.

Rabbi Bendelstein attended Yeshiva University in New York City, where he received his rabbinic ordination and graduated with a bachelor’s degree in chemistry. Following his undergraduate studies, Rabbi Bendelstein completed a three-year postgraduate higher Jewish learning program as a member of Yeshiva University’s Gruss Kollel Elyon. He lives with his wife and five children in the Flatbush section of Brooklyn, NY, where he often lectures about kosher.
From the humble beginnings of a lone storefront in Manhattan to the present day of three rapidly growing, bustling plants, David’s Cookies has been a trend-setting icon in the gourmet food industry since its opening in 1979.

In the late 1970’s, when boutique cookie shops were popping up along the West Coast, Chef David Liederman decided it was time to bring this fad to the East Coast. The smell of freshly baked cookies permeated the New York City air, drawing in hundreds of customers daily. Over the course of the next few years, more than 200 David’s Cookies stores sprouted up internationally.

The 1980’s brought about an economic recession that left David’s Cookies and many other companies struggling. The company was bought by a New Jersey-based gourmet food company: Fairfield Gourmet Corporation. They helped introduce David’s to the wholesale and co-branding world. The cookies once again gained popularity and by the 1990’s, David’s was rejuvenated into a thriving industry!

Throughout the years, David’s has transformed from a mom and pop store front that specialized in simple, tasty cookies, to a company with three plants that produce cookie dough, brownies, cakes, tarts, muffin batter, rugalach, scones, crumb cakes, and more. David’s has developed a niche for pan-baked and IQF frozen ready-to-bake desserts. This greatly assists the chefs in high volume feeders like hotels, caterers, convention centers and cafes because they are able to save on labor, yet still produce fresh baked products daily.

David’s is currently in the process of introducing a new line of products to their wholesale customers: Fresh Baked Muffins. These muffins have a sour cream base rather than the more typical water base that is found in most store-bought muffins. In addition to this line, David’s has created Decadent Cookie Dough. Each cookie is roughly 5 inches in diameter and made with huge chunks of Hershey’s brand candy.

With such a variety of products and ingredients within these products, keeping strict kosher facilities would be near impossible without the help from the Orthodox Union. Since the OU provides a directory of certified companies, it makes purchasing kosher ingredients much easier. Without this, David’s would have to research every ingredient purchased to not only make sure that the specific ingredient is kosher, but that it hasn’t been processed on non-kosher machines or surfaces. In addition, the OU has greatly enhanced David’s quality procedures by implementing logbooks and record keeping on all raw materials to be checked by the rabbi which are also used for David’s Quality Control records. This also assists in the uniformity of the product as only certain manufacturers with detailed specs are approved.

David’s Cookies would not be where it is today, as one of the largest quality dessert producers in the Northeast of both kosher dairy and pareve products, without the assistance of the OU. The OU symbol does not just stand for kosher supervision; it stands for quality without compromise!

Rabbi Yisroel Bendelstein serves as Orthodox Union rabbinic coordinator for David’s Cookies.
At Premier Bakers, we are passionate about English muffins, and not just your ordinary plain English muffin. At Premier Bakers we make fifteen different types of English muffins (and growing). It all began in February of 2005 when Premier Bakers was acquired by Fresh Start Bakeries, a California company and a global supplier of top quality baked products.

Quietly tucked away in the sand covered deserts of southern Arizona, Premier Bakers is surrounded by thousands of acres of cotton fields. The bakery is actually located about halfway between Phoenix and Tucson, right near the junction of Interstate 10 and Interstate 8.

We are passionate about what we do so that we can be the best producer of English muffins. Our customers expect quality and we work very hard to exceed their expectations. Premier Bakers also produces crumpets and bagel/snack bars, all of which proudly carry the OU symbol.

We wanted our products to be readily available to all markets, and sought after the most respected kosher certification. Orthodox Union certification enables our products to be in a larger market, customers we couldn’t serve without this certification.

The kosher segment of today’s market place represents a loyal and strong customer; our OU certification shows customers that the goods we produce are safe and reputable. Consumers are looking more and more for items in the market they can trust. The OU symbol that is displayed on our products gives concerned shoppers that assurance. “Today’s consumer is more health conscious and moving quickly towards healthier options,” says General Manager and V.P., Eric Robinson. “It was an easy decision to go OU since it is the most recognized kosher certification globally and well-known by our customers.”

Additionally, eliminating dairy products from the entire production line allows even better market penetration. All of the English muffins produced at Premier Bakers are OU-pareve, which makes the bread product even more versatile to the consumer.

Our 35,000 sq. ft. manufacturing facility uses state of the art equipment to consistently create quality products. Once each month Rabbi Aharon Shapiro and plant manager Blair Gibbs walk out among the smiling faces of employees, inspecting and observing production. All formulas, ingredients and packaging are checked against a schedule to ensure only approved ingredients are used. “It’s a matter of mutual trust and respect,” says Blair. “Our customers trust and respect the OU symbol we display on our baked goods, and likewise our rabbinical field representative trusts and respects the job we perform under the Union Symbol.”

Much of Premier’s success can be attributed to a proud, stable and loyal work force led by Eric Robinson, vice president / general manager, and Blair Gibbs, plant manager, who combined have over 75 years in the baking industry. Albert Flores, production superintendent; Manuel Lujan, plant sanitarian; Jeff Rees, distribution manager; and William Facio, chief engineer are all totally committed to produce and distribute the best English muffin. They genuinely reflect our commitment to produce the finest baked goods for our customers throughout the world.

And like we said we produce it all, “Under the Union Symbol.”

Rabbi Yisroel Bendelstein serves as Orthodox Union rabbinic coordinator for Premier Bakers Inc.
It was 1981, that our founder, Cheryl Krueger, with the help of her college roommate, Caryl Walker, started Cheryl&Co. It was her desire from the beginning to create the best gourmet food and gift company. We are pleased to say that what began as a single cookie store in Columbus, Ohio, has evolved into a multi-million dollar business. But, as successful as we’ve become, it is still our goal to focus on offering delicious, high-quality baked goods, unique gift ideas and outstanding customer service.

Armed with just $40,000, a business degree and seven years of retail industry experience, Cheryl opened the very first Cheryl’s Cookie store at a time when banks were nervous about lending to women-owned businesses.

Today, Cheryl&Co. is a multi-faceted business comprised of retail stores in Ohio, a growing Internet business and a busy Business Gift Division, all headquartered in the Columbus suburb of Westerville. The company is comprised of five divisions: Retail, Catalog, Foodservice, Business Gift Services and Internet, which can be found at Cheryl & landCo.com. A 2005 merger enabled Cheryl& Co. to become a part of the 1-800-FLOWERS Family of Brands, while maintaining our company’s mission to be the best gourmet food and gift company, ever.

Our products have been featured on Rachael Ray, Ellen DeGeneres, CNN, Dr. Phil, the Today Show, QVC and the Food Network, along with multiple radio and print features across the country.

Our most famous product is our soft buttercream frosted cookies. We dominate in this category. Lots of companies produce hard iced cookies but, there is nothing like the soft buttercream frosting. Customers go out of their way to let us know how much they love this product. Today we make over 20 different varieties of these mouth-watering favorites from Buttercream Frosted Cinnamon Pumpkin (a pumpkin and spice cookie topped with cinnamon buttercream frosting) to Old Fashioned Holiday Cut-out Cookies topped with buttercream frosting and candy sprinkles. We have also perfected the sugar free buttercream frosted cut-out cookie this year. You have to try them to believe they are sugar free.

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We are also excited to report that following a year of preparation and hard work, Cheryl & Co. converted to a kosher operation. All products baked at the Cheryl&Co. facility in Westerville are certified OU Dairy under the supervision of the Orthodox Union. Our products are dairy, kosher for year-round use, excluding Passover. We are in the process of updating all films related to our baked products to reflect the kosher symbol.

The production facility went through a purification process known as “kosherization.” A lot of cleaning, sterilization and using high temperatures to sanitize were used to obtain the designation “kosher.” We are proud to be an OU Kosher certified company, which is regarded as being in the top tier of strictness and quality.

“I started receiving calls from potential customers years ago when I first became Director of QA. These calls were to inquire if we were kosher,” says Sara Reed, Quality Assurance Director. “As the years passed; the inquiries increased and it even crossed over into our business gift area. I did my research and found out what kosher was all about. It backed up my theory. It was an additional way and opportunity for a quality check. In 2007, I was given permission to do due diligence to become kosher. It took us almost a year to meet all the requirements, but we became kosher in February 2008. OU is the most recognized kosher certification. It has increased our customer base. We are proud to say we are kosher and now advertise that fact in our catalogs, and our website.”

“From the moment ingredients come in our back door; there are quality checks,” Sara explains. “Not only do we have checks in our mixing process but also in our formation processes. Baking and cooling are the next part of the process. Each individual rack, tray and cookie is inspected for quality and weight before being individually packaged.”

Not surprisingly, Cheryl&Co. has received a SUPERIOR rating from the American Institute of Baking for 2008. This is a goal we have achieved for the past seven years. A lot of extra effort, long hours and hard work from our entire team made this happen. Every year the requirements get a little tougher and the Cheryl & Co. Quality Assurance Team makes sure the strict guidelines are being followed and enforced throughout the company.

Thanks to loyal customers nationwide, Cheryl&Co. has the opportunity to give back. We have remained committed to supporting local food banks and educational organizations with our time and our hearts. We have also established partnerships with The Arthur G. James Cancer Hospital and Richard J. Solove Research Institute at The Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio, The Make – A – Wish Foundation, Kolman Race for the Cure and The Columbus Blue Jackets Foundation to name a few. We are honored to be a part of these outstanding organizations and have donated over one million dollars in support of their work. In addition, we have a range of philanthropic programs to serve a variety of needs.

All of us at Cheryl&Co. are very proud of our products and services. For over 28 years we have worked hard to provide the BEST and most innovative gifts and desserts to our customers. We will continue to strive for excellence with our ultimate goal being to be the best gourmet food and gift company, ever.


Rabbi Yisroel Bendelstein serves as Orthodox Union rabbinic coordinator for Cheryl&Co.
Is your OU Kosher running smoothly?

When your company’s kosher program runs smoothly everyone wins. The company’s reputation will be respected in the kosher market, rabbinic inspections are more efficient and in the long run, paperwork is significantly minimized. The following steps can insure that your kosher program is in the best possible shape.

- Be sure that purchasing of ingredients conforms to those listed on Schedule A (the ingredient list). Before ordering an ingredient that does not appear on the Schedule A, please fax or e-mail a copy of the new ingredients kosher documentation to the OU for prior approval.
- Always apply for and obtain approval of new labels, in-house or private, before placing the OU on the label.
- Inform the rabbinic coordinator before any changes that may affect kosher issues (e.g. installation of new equipment, cutting or connecting lines, modification of CIP procedures, changes in production sequences, etc.).
- So too, be sure to tell your company’s rabbinic coordinator of any changes in personnel relevant to the kosher program so that this information can be promptly recorded in our database.
- Carefully verify that Schedule A and B accurately reflect your company’s ingredient inventory and all packaging/labels that bear the OU symbol.
- Be sure that receiving personnel check all incoming deliveries against Schedule A to assure conformity with the kosher specifications and requirements of all ingredients. A column on the receiving log with the heading “Schedule A Kosher” is quite useful for this purpose.
- R & D and experimental ingredients must also be submitted to the OU for prior approval, unless an express arrangement with your Rabbinic Coordinator stipulates otherwise. Use of such ingredients when uncertified, even for test purposes may compromise the kosher status of equipment and tracking and reporting them unnecessarily burdens your staff and our Rabbinic Field representatives.
- Make sure to obtain letters of certification (LOCs) from the OU for your products, and carefully make sure that the LOCs exactly match product labels. These letters are extremely valuable in marketing your products. Please make sure that your distributors also receive copies of your LOCs in order to maximize distribution to kosher clients.
- Be sure that your certified products (retail and industrial) carry the OU symbol. This will not only benefit you in business, but will also make your products easily identifiable as meeting kosher specs by kosher supervisors and consumers throughout the world.
- A labeling checklist should ensure that the OU symbol does not appear on products not authorized to bear the OU symbol.
- If you have any questions about your company’s kosher program, call your rabbinic coordinator. It is his job to assist your company and to provide the service you deserve.

You can reach him at the OU Headquarters, 212-563-4000.
two facilities in each plant; a kosher and non-kosher one. However, this proved to be twice as challenging as was anticipated. He had expected that, since both facilities have similar lines and equipment and produce similar products, any solutions that would address issues at one plant could automatically be applied to the other. Instead, he discovered that the two plants have their own unique procedures, practices, customs and cultures that work for them based on the specific products and the markets they have dealt with over the years. To remedy a concern at one plant, using the same approach that would work perfectly at the other, would just not work. Each plant had to be addressed independently, as its own unique entity.

While there were many noteworthy aspects to this project, the rabbi specifically highlighted the measures that were taken to limit the impact and interference caused by kosherizations, an area that was of great concern to the company:

SCHEDULING Perhaps the key to the entire kosher system in both plants is the creative scheduling of kosher and non-kosher productions. Both plants do extensive non-kosher productions, and in each situation, by necessity, non-kosher productions will compromise to some degree the kosher status of equipment. Kosherization in such plants can be quite time consuming, and the goal was, as much as possible, to keep the kosher programs from interfering with the facilities’ normal way of operating. Use of resourceful scheduling by the amazing scheduling masters at both facilities has limited the need for kosherizations to only a few times per year.

DEDICATED EQUIPMENT After the rabbi explained in detail the parameters necessary for kosher productions, the team at one of the plants devised a method that would consistently maintain the kosher status of various pieces of equipment through as much of the system as possible, even when producing non-kosher products. This has resulted in kosherizations that are extremely limited in scope, and which affect only a fraction of the equipment in the plant.

DEDICATED PROCESSES By making minor modifications to aspects of the processes necessary for kosher productions, the plants succeeded in isolating significant parts of the process that will remain in kosher status all of the time. This eliminates the need to kosherize these areas and, more significantly, insures that the same fruits and vegetables regularly used in daily production in the plants are also always acceptable for use in kosher productions.

There were a number of other important facts discovered over the course of the project. Among them were:

Steve Crider and Rabbi Stone both grew up in St. Louis, where they attended different high schools. The rabbi’s school regularly beat Steve’s alma mater in football, a fact which shocked no one.

Alan Stover can leap tall buildings in a single bound and still make it home in time for dinner.

Keeping Gerber kosher is an >>
As part of its practice of providing a full range of services to its certified companies, OU Kosher has announced that it will recommend Organic National & International Certifiers (ON & IC) of Lincolnwood, IL to its client companies who are seeking certification that their products are not only kosher, but organic as well.

Organic food must adhere to standards of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), which require that crops be grown without synthetic pesticides, artificial fertilizers, biotechnology or radiation. Among other standards, there are also requirements for the feed given to animals on organic farms and how the animals are to be confined. Organic foods, therefore, can be said to provide a more healthful diet than standard foods while being more environmentally friendly.

The demand for organic products has been growing at a rapid rate in recent years, and ON & IC has proven to be a reliable and respected certifier in its field, just as the OU is in kosher certification.

The agreement is not the first in which the OU has reached out to a certifying agency in another field related to food production — in 2005 it entered into a relationship with the Gluten-Free Certification Organization (GFCO) to certify that products do not contain storage proteins found in grains such as wheat, rye and barley — a necessity for people on gluten-free diets.

Now it is organic’s turn. “For a long time, it’s been clear that the kosher consumer and the organic consumer share a lot of overlap and that many companies that are seeking kosher certification are seeking organic certification, and vice versa,” declared Rabbi Moshe Elefant, Chief Operating Officer of OU Kosher, who was instrumental in bringing the arrangement to fruition. “Organic certification is clearly a field of expertise — you cannot grant organic certification intricately. It requires a high degree of skill and experience. Charged with maintaining the kosher programs at the facilities and kosherizing the plants are some of the OU’s most experienced field rabbis, including Rabbi Weg at Fort Smith and Rabbis Weingarten, Smolensky and Turkletaub at Fremont.

The successful certification of Gerber would not have been possible without the tenacity of OU Kosher’s Vice President of Communications and Marketing, Rabbi Dr. Eliyahu Safran, who ceaselessly pursued his vision of providing these quality products to the kosher babies of America; the expert direction of Rabbinic Coordinator Rabbi David Bistricer, whose nieces and nephews no longer have to figuratively drool over these products; and, of course, the good people of Gerber and its parent company, Nestlé Nutrition, who steadfastly continue in their mission of providing even America’s youngest consumers with the best, high quality kosher foods.

Rabbi David Bistricer serves as Orthodox Union rabbinic coordinator for Gerber Products Company.

Rabbi Avrohom Stone serves as OU Kosher Senior Rabbinic Field Representative, visiting with countless OU certified companies throughout the country. His instructive, enlightening and entertaining features appear frequently in Behind the Union Symbol. His “Your Kosher HorOUscope,” which appeared in the Spring 2008 issue, elicited many positive responses. In spite of his demanding schedule, Rabbi Stone also shares his extensive kosher knowledge and experiences through the “OU Kosher Coming” forum. Most recently, he lectured to college students at the University of Pennsylvania.
It is hard to resist squeezing a bag of marshmallows as one passes it in the supermarket aisle. Who would have thought that a colorless, brittle, almost tasteless substance called “gelatin” can transform a lump of sugar into an irresistible confection? The truth is that gelatin is a very versatile and important ingredient whose value has long been recognized in many sectors of the food industry. Gelatin is a key component in a whole array of gummy and jelly-style confections. Typically, it is added to yogurts and ice creams to give them a thicker consistency. Pies, mousses and whipped creams are all enhanced with the inclusion of a small bit of gelatin. Because gelatin is also an excellent adhesive, it may even be used to affix sprinkles to pastries. New and innovative uses for gelatin are being created all the time. While this is wonderful news for the general population, it has not always been great news for the kosher consumer.

Gelatin is derived from collagen, a substance found in the skins and bones of animals such as pigs and cows. There is no vegetarian source for collagen, and while one might see “vegetable gelatin” listed on a product label, it would typically be, in actuality, agar agar, a seaweed derivative. In some products, it can be a fair substitute for gelatin.

Since “real” gelatin is derived from animal sources, it has been the focus of debate for nearly 100 years among leading rabbis. The question is: can gelatin from non-kosher sources be permitted? Although cows that were not ritually
slaughtered, and, of course, pigs, are certainly not kosher, some rabbis were lenient in allowing products that had very small amounts of gelatin added. This is because they felt that the gelatin extraction process caused the skins and bones to be sufficiently denatured, to the point that they are no longer considered food.

This is not the mainstream position. It has been rejected by every major kosher certifying agency. Indeed, equipment that processed gelatin products might need kosherization, depending on the nature of the contact between the equipment and the product.

Another variety of gelatin, which has proven useful in meeting the needs of kosher consumers as well as the Muslim and Hindu communities, is fish gelatin. Kosher fish gelatin is extracted from the skins and bones of kosher fish, those that possess both fins and scales. Since kosher fish skins are plentiful and relatively inexpensive, fish gelatin has been a boon for meeting the growing worldwide demand for kosher. There are currently several OU-certified companies that produce fish gelatin. Of course, there are products that require beef gelatin, and no suitable alternative exists. The kosher consumer will be pleased to note that the OU certifies such a gelatin as well. This special gelatin is made exclusively from the skins of kosher ritually slaughtered cows. Strikingly, this variety of beef-derived gelatin is considered pareve, and may even be combined with dairy ingredients! Although kosher laws are very strict concerning the segregation of milk and meat, the processing of these hides renders them pareve. Therefore, even kosher milk chocolate delicacies can be made with kosher beef gelatin. Orthodontists of the world rejoice: every sticky gummy treat is now available to the kosher consumer.

Rabbi Eli Gersten has been serving as OU Kosher rabbinic coordinator since 2007, serving as recorder of OU policy. In that important capacity he works closely with the OU’s senior rabbinic team that reviews and formulates OU Kosher policy. Prior to joining the OU he served as senior fellow at The Ner Israel Rabbinical College where he received ordination in 2003. Rabbi Gersten’s article, Devoting Energy to Saving Energy, appeared in the Winter 2009 issue of BTUS.
of natural fatty substances is incomparable. One taste of our Elyon® Gelatin Dessert, and you’ll know the difference.”

Moshe gets warmed up on the topic, and his enthusiasm about Kolatin® is apparent. “For manufacturers, Kolatin’s versatility is a dream. It serves as an ideal emulsifier, thickening agent, binder, and even clarifying agent. It’s used in frozen desserts, confections, chocolates, pharmaceuticals, wines, consommés, jellies, meat products, cheese cakes, syrups, and lots more.

Based on our customer’s requirements, Kolatin® is manufactured to the specifications of each customer’s needs, in areas such as bloom strengths, viscosity and mesh size. We also have a wide variety of gelatins readily available for immediate delivery. Manufacturers who switch to Kolatin® don’t have to retool – its integration into existing systems is virtually seamless.”

Because Glatech Productions has such hands-on experience in production techniques, they designed the company to incorporate modern hi-tech standards as well as extraordinary quality control. Only domestic animals are used, and each run is subject to an extensive series of quality tests, including microbiological analyses. In fact, depending on the end use, products containing Kolatin® may be marketed as USDA Organic Certified.

Additionally, Kolatin® is produced in as ISO-9001 certified facility. From a health conscious perspective, Kolatin® is hard to beat. It’s a low-calorie, fat-free, sugar-free and cholesterol-free ingredient. Moreover, Kolatin® is actually a good source of protein and amino acids.

For the kosher consumer, Kolatin® is nothing short of a breakthrough. “Manufacturing an animal-based gelatin that would also be strictly kosher as well as pareve, presented a number of formidable challenges,” says Moshe Eider. “Kolatin® is a product that meets the strictest standards of kashrut – it’s the only one in the world produced exclusively from Glatt kosher hides - and satisfies the most discerning palettes.”

The Glatech team is always exploring new concepts, both in products and in service. Currently on the horizon is an idea that consumers will surely appreciate: Recipes from Susie Fishbein, world renowned author of the best-selling Kosher by Design cookbook series, will appear on the back of Elyon gelatin dessert retail boxes and be available at www.KosherGelatin.com.

For Glatech, having the Orthodox Union certification was non-negotiable. “From a marketing perspective we wanted the agency that is most universally recognized,” says Moshe Eider. “But even more so, we wanted consumers to know that our kashrut is as genuine as our gelatin!”

For more information about Kolatin® Real Kosher Gelatin, please call 732.364.8700 or visit www.KosherGelatin.com.

Rabbi Chananel Herbsman serves as Orthodox Union rabbinic coordinator for Glatech Productions LLC.

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**Announcing the Arrival of Geliko OU Kosher Gelatine Hydrolysate**

for Kosher Food and Pharmaceutical Applications

A basic element missing from the kosher food industry for generations was affordable cattle-derived kosher gelatine. Geliko, a world leader in kosher gelatine production, has recently announced the arrival of Geliko Kosher Gelatine and Gelatine Hydrolysate.

Long hailed as a rich source of protein, gelatine
hydrolysate has not always been available to manufacturers of kosher food and kosher pharmaceuticals. Combining the resources of a global manufacturer with the technical expertise of the Orthodox Union, Geliko has optimized and streamlined the complicated process of kosher gelatine production. Today, Geliko manages the world’s largest and most reliable continuous systems for kosher gelatine production, and can support the production needs of any kosher food production facility.

Mr. Zach Rubin, President of Geliko, explains, “To make kosher gelatine available to the entire kosher industry, we needed to have the kosher certification with maximum acceptance. The OU was the natural choice. Not only are they accepted and respected universally, their rabbis have a deep understanding of complex technical issues. Their expertise was indispensable in making this project a success. With this project, the OU has helped numerous companies that could not manufacture certain kosher products because kosher gelatine was not available.”

Gelatine and gelatine hydrolysate are both valuable substances, and both play vital roles in manufacture. However, there are distinct differences between them.

Collagen (the protein substance from the hides of kosher-slaughtered cattle), is converted to a liquid form through enzymatic hydrolysis. Carefully-controlled partial hydrolysis yields gelatine, while complete enzymatic hydrolysis produces gelatine hydrolysate. Gelatine and gelatine hydrolysate can be used to enhance texture, thickness, and gel strength, (Gelatine is defined by its bloom, or gel strength.)

“Gelatine,” says Mr. Rubin, “has a neutral taste and no odor, so it can be used in food applications without altering taste or smell.” Gelatine forms a gel at room temperature and requires hot water to dissolve. Therefore, it can function in numerous ways: as a gel former and texturizer in fruit gums and gelatine desserts; a stabilizer in dairy products such as yogurts or puddings; and an emulsifier in soups, sauces and low-fat food. If a particular product needs its ingredients brought together with an optimal consistency or strength, gelatine is the perfect adhesive for the job. Furthermore, it can act as a whipping agent and foam former in marshmallows, ice cream, cake fillings and mousse desserts. It is also a great source of protein.

Gelatine hydrolysate, on the other hand, is defined by its viscosity. It forms a solution at room temperature, and most types dissolve at room temperature in cold water. Gelatine hydrolysate is also an ideal source of protein. It can be used as a thickening and binding agent, so it is able to replace sugar as an adhesive in some products, further improving their healthfulness. Gelatine hydrolysate, too, is neutral in taste, so it does not affect flavor adversely. It is used to improve a wide array of products, including protein bars, cereal bars, protein drinks, smoothies, and joint health and nutraceutical products.

The benefits that Geliko Kosher Gelatine and Gelatine Hydrolysate can provide are endless. Whether you are looking to improve the physical characteristics of your products or increase their nutritional value, Geliko Kosher Gelatine and Gelatine Hydrolysate are ideal ingredients.

For further information contact Zach Rubin at zach@danmaycorp.com or visit our website at www.geliko.com.

Rabbi Seth Mandel serves as Orthodox Union rabbinic coordinator for Geliko.
SGS and the OU, the world-wide leaders in food safety and kosher certification, respectively, have come together to provide a service which ensures that safety and quality management standards are met, while production steps and ingredients comply with kosher requirements. By combining kosher certification and food safety management systems certification, companies can gain access to new markets and at the same time, demonstrate a high level of commitment to producing a safe and quality food product.

“With the partnering of our organizations, kosher certification and food safety certification have now become one seamless process,” declares Mark Evers, SGS Business Development Manager. Mr. Evers further explains, “Companies wishing dual certification in achieving both kosher and food safety certification(s) such as HACCP, SQF, BRC, and ISO 22000 (as well others), can contact either of our organizations.”

“By gathering some basic information about the inquiring companies’ operations, we can share that information so they can receive the needed information from the OU for kosher certification and a proposal for food safety from SGS. Our respective organizations have an agreement of understanding and communication between us that can offer unparalleled service to the food industry. I am honored to be associated with such a well-operated and premium service provider as the Orthodox Union.”

Rabbi Eliyahu Safran of the Orthodox Union added that “the cooperative efforts between the OU and SGS can result in enormous benefits to companies seeking the best in kosher certification and food safety certifications.”

SGS PROVIDES THE FOLLOWING FOOD CERTIFICATION & TRAINING SERVICES:

- GMP — Good Manufacturing Practices
- ISO 22000 — Food Safety Quality Management
- HACCP — Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points Certification
- SQF — Safe Quality Food Standard
- BRC — British Retail Consortium’s Global Standard for Food Safety
- IFS — International Food Standard
- GLOBALGAP — Good Agricultural Practices (used to be Eurepgap)
- ISO 9001 — Quality Management System Standard
- ISO 14001 — Environmental Management Systems
- OHSAS 18001 — Occupational Health and Safety

>> CONTINUED ON PAGE 32
recognition and articulation that they are done because of and for God. That is why we say a blessing before we eat. In doing so, we acknowledge that it is God who “brings forth the bread from the earth.” We focus our trust and faith on the One who is most trustworthy.

Giving blessing is particularly important for the act of eating. Our rabbis teach that if three people enjoy a feast, a brilliant banquet, yet words of Torah are not discussed, it is as if they had engaged in something prohibited and repulsive.

Without a meal, we cannot recite Kiddush. The rabbis have interpreted this to mean that there can be no kedusha (holiness) in the absence of a meal. No holiness except when we eat! What greater statement can there be that the spiritual and material are wed. However, food only affords us the possibility of kedusha. We must recite brachot (blessings) both before and after we eat to render our “base” behavior spiritual and true. Our blessings wed the body with the soul. They turn our attention from our temporal and physical existence to the eternal bond we have with God.

Blessings enable material experiences to be elevated to spiritual heights. In the Talmud it is written, “It is forbidden for man to enjoy anything of this world without a blessing, and if anyone enjoys anything of this world without a blessing, he commits sacrilege.”

To bless is to be fully aware — of the pleasure of the material, yes, but more importantly of the spiritual One who is beyond this world.

Kashrut affords us insight into our desire to find meaning during these difficult times. Seeking wealth might appear to be a function of greed but it need not necessarily be. The wealthy are the ones who provide heat for the synagogue and food for the wayfarer. The desire for wealth is not necessarily a bad thing. Seeking wealth to the exclusion of caring about our fellows is. It is in our choices and our engagement with the world that we engage God; that we become Holy.

It would seem that those who rose most high only to fall the farthest did seek or find blessing in their material enterprise. They certainly did not understand that the true worth of their endeavors was in their seeking the kashrut of it. No meal, no wealth, can have real meaning or pleasure without blessing. And, when we trust God, even modest meals and material wealth are worth more than a king’s feast and kingdom.

Best regards and wishes for your continued success and well being.

Editor in Chief / Vice President, Communications and Marketing — OU Kosher

WHO ELSE at your company (in management, marketing, production) who should be receiving a copy of

BEHIND THE UNION SYMBOL?

Do let us know at safrane@ou.org. We will gladly add them to our mailing list.
Dear Rabbi:

I am aware of requirements for kosher certification of wines, brandies, liqueurs, vodkas, gin and more alcoholic beverages. Is there also a need to obtain kosher certifications for our bourbon, scotch and single malt lines. We are in the midst of deciding whether to go ahead with submitting our OU application. It has been brought to our marketing team’s attention that there is a growing tendency among kosher consumers to seek OU certified liquor product. Is that true? Your input and clarification would be appreciated.

Dear___________________:

Most kosher consumers understand and accept that certain food items require kosher supervision. For example, everyone can readily see that meat requires kosher supervision because of the fact that the procedure for preparing kosher meat is lengthy and involved. The processes of kosher slaughter, de-veining, and salting meat to remove capillary blood – each of these procedures requires training.

In addition, a product which obviously contains numerous ingredients and flavors, such as a pie or a pudding, will be understood to require kosher certification simply because of the multitude of ingredients contained in it.

However, when it comes to whiskey, none of the possible complications are obvious. After all, whiskey seems to be nothing but distilled alcohol, which has some residual flavor from wheat or rye. Adding to the impression of simplicity is the fact that the average consumer has no idea what may be contained in a whiskey. The reason? Alcoholic beverages are regulated by the Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms administration (ATF), not by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Thus the government does not require the disclosure of ingredients in alcoholic beverages, and they are not listed on the product label.

In actuality, however there are substantial concerns with whiskey. For starters, alcohol which is often added to recipes in order to standardize the product, though usually derived
from corn, may also be derived from grapes or whey, each one having significant kosher concerns. Colors are often added to a product in order to enhance its appearance. These ingredients can be kosher sensitive.

Blenders may be added to a number of whiskey products. A blender is a specially prepared component of whiskey which is mostly alcohol, but may also contain flavors and other ingredients. Blenders may constitute up to two percent of an alcoholic beverage. Now alcohol is the most highly taxed consumer product on the market. Blenders are not taxed, as long as they are not-potable even when diluted to 14 percent alcohol. Therefore, manufacturers use blenders as a way to increase the alcohol content of a beverage, without incurring additional tax.

Finally, aging presents an issue, because old non-kosher wine casks may be used. The casks, however, can be kosherized.

Thus there are issues involved with the kosher certification of whiskey products, but none of them is insurmountable. Bourbon has the least of these problems, while scotch has the most. However, manufacturers should bear in mind that today there is a large untapped market for high quality, brand recognizable, kosher certified, whiskey products. I suggest that you be in touch with us to follow through on your OU application for your bourbon and scotch lines.

Rabbi Jacob B. Mendelson
Rabbinic Coordinator, OU Kosher
Koval is a Yiddish word for ‘blacksmith’ or ‘to forge,’” but the term has also been used to refer to someone who does something out of the ordinary, or a “black sheep in the family.” It is thus fitting that Sonat Birnecker Hart and Robert Birnecker chose to name their company Koval, since it is not every day that one hears of a Professor of Jewish Studies and a Foreign Deputy Press Secretary leaving their careers to make spirits. Indeed they named the company after Sonat’s great-grandfather, a renegade in his own right, who left Vienna at the turn of the century for Chicago at the age of 17, in search of a new way of life, much to the dismay of his parents and gratitude of later generations, earning him the sobriquet, Koval.

Sonat and Robert thought about making spirits for a while before relocating from Washington, D.C. to found Chicago’s first boutique distillery. Robert’s grandfather, whose name Schmid coincidentally also means “blacksmith,” has made spirits in Europe for over 40 years. Robert felt that Americans are becoming more interested in low volume hand crafted spirits, similar to the regional spirits of Europe. Koval gains its inspiration from these European distilleries and thus plans to offer a variety of seasonal as well as annual products that make use of local flavors and produce.

In fact, Koval is now one of a growing number of artisan distilleries offering consumers an array of spirits made in small batches for more regional markets. These products are a welcome alternative to big name brands from abroad with little regional flair. Indeed, during this period of economic turmoil, many are turning away from such brands in order to support their local economy and revive what was once a flourishing American spirits industry largely lost due to prohibition. It is only recently that the American distillers have been able to follow the lead of the craft brewers in making a variety of creative new products that manage to capture national attention.

Koval is already making a name for itself as a unique spirits house, not least because it avoids the common practice of outsourcing the production of neutral grain spirits that are then only flavored in house. Koval makes everything from scratch, which includes the mashing of the grain and fruit to peeling sixty pounds of ginger by hand for each batch of organic ginger liqueur. They even label each bottle by hand including the number of each batch.

Koval is also trying to start a small revolution in the spirits world. Although they are producing organic rye vodka, they discovered that distilled grains have a smooth flavor and heady aroma that is completely stripped away when made into vodka. According to American law, vodka must be odorless and tasteless. Koval’s founders felt that it was a shame to remove the natural flavors of organic wheat and rye and so they created “Rye Chicago” and “Midwest Wheat,” both spirits that let the taste and aroma compounds of the grains shine through. In addition, Koval is producing a Ginger liqueur and is the only distillery in the United States to offer a Rose Hip liqueur. As soon as springtime arrives, Koval will be adding a variety of liqueurs and fruit brandies to its portfolio.

One of the reasons why Koval’s founders left their traditional careers is because they wanted to get back to basics, to
manufacture something of high quality, to participate in the kind of practices that made this country strong. They believe that by maintaining both organic and kosher certifications they are ensuring that their products are held to the highest standards. They use organic raw ingredients not only because they consider them more flavorful than conventional produce but also because it is a way to support sustainable agriculture. Koval sees its OU kosher certification as a key element of the company’s identity as well, one that not only serves as a measure of quality but also as a means of maintaining a sense of community with other Jews. Koval wants to be able to supply superior taste to all L’Chaims.

Koval is located in Chicago’s Ravenswood neighborhood and offers a variety of events and tastings throughout the year. To see what is happening now, check out the website: www.koval-distillery.com.

Rabbi Jacob Mendelson serves as Orthodox Union rabbinic coordinator for Koval.

Lucid Absinthe, the first genuine absinthe to be legal for import and sale in the United States in over 95 years, has acquired kosher certification from the Orthodox Union. After receiving enormous interest in Lucid from consumers who keep kosher, and committed to serving that segment of the market, Viridian Spirits, owners of Lucid, contacted the OU to determine whether Lucid would qualify for the certification. The company was delighted to learn that all of its existing processes and ingredients already were sufficient to achieve Orthodox Union’s hallowed seal.

Lucid Absinthe Supérieure was launched in May 2007. The launch was the result of extensive negotiations between Viridian and the U.S. government paving the way for the ban on absinthe effectively to come to an end. Viridian retained renowned absinthe historian and distiller T.A. Breaux to develop Lucid in France. Breaux had spent over a decade studying and perfecting his techniques after sampling and analyzing several unopened bottles of vintage absinthe. Consumers in the New York region were the first to sample the ultra-premium product, crafted exactly the same way absinthe was made 100 years ago. Due to the strong demand over the several months since the launch, Lucid is now distributed throughout the country in 28 states and more markets are expected to be added throughout the year.

“We initially felt that there would be a demand for absinthe in the U.S. after we witnessed its reemergence on the European scene and in American pop culture,” said Jared Gurfein, President of Viridian Spirits LLC. “Our expectations have truly been exceeded and we are looking forward to taking this brand to new levels.”

Lucid is an authentic absinthe in the tradition of absinthe from the Belle Époque period. Unlike many contemporary imitations currently available in the U.S. and abroad, Lucid, naturally green in color, is distilled entirely from spirits and whole European herbs and uses no artificial additives, oils or dyes. Lucid begins with a full measure of Grande Wormwood (Artemisia absinthium), Green Anise, Sweet Fennel, and other culinary herbs representative of European traditions and historical absinthe crafting.

Lucid is distilled at the historical Combier Distillery in Saumur, France, in the heart of the Loire Valley. T.A. Breaux chose to use the distillery’s original antique copper absinthe stills and apparatus, much of which was designed by Gustav Eiffel in the nineteenth century. As a testament to the brand’s early success, Lucid was recently

>> CONTINUED ON PAGE 33
Today’s consumers are increasingly demanding food that, in addition to tasting good, is also healthy and affordable. This poses a tremendous challenge to the food industry — a challenge that becomes still more sophisticated when kosher requirements are introduced into the equation.

Not only is Symrise one of the most important partners for food producers who can meet these challenges, the company is also the fourth largest producer of fragrances and flavorings in the world (sales). With sales of 1.32 billion Euros in 2008, Symrise continues to pursue its ongoing growth strategy. Clients of the company’s Flavor & Nutrition division include, among others, renowned producers of sweets, dairy products, beverages and convenience foods. The Symrise Scent & Care division produces raw materials and active ingredients for the fragrances and cosmetics industry.

The company is headquartered in Holzminden, A compounding machine for the flavor & liquid division that has been fine-tuned for kosher production.
Germany, a city that expresses its connection to Symrise through its nickname: “City of Fragrances and Flavorings.” Symrise currently has a presence in over 35 countries worldwide and employs more than 5,000 people. The company was established in 2003 through the merger of Dragoco Gerberding & Co. AG and Haarmann & Reimer GmbH, and became a publicly traded company in December 2006.

Producing kosher products has long had an important role to play at Symrise, where OU Kosher Rabbis Nosson Neuberger and Avrohom Schwartz provide the company with consulting services. Roughly 2,300 certified kosher products were made in Holzminden last year, 300 of which were produced with onsite supervision of an OU rabbinic field representative. These products, the lion’s share of which were made by the Flavor & Nutrition division, are primarily sold in the U.S. and Israel.

“OU certification means more to us and to our clients than simply an indication that our products are acceptable to a particular religious group,” says Norbert Kahmann, one of those who oversees kosher production at Symrise. “Certification serves as an important quality indicator for premium products.” According to Kahmann, many vegans and people who are lactose intolerant often turn to kosher products. The Kosher Coordinator is part of the Kosher Team with members from the departments Regulatory Affairs, Supply Chain and Sales that organizes kosher production. The Kosher Team also is in charge for a regular training for all employees in the supply chain.

“Kosher production is part of our day-to-day business,” says Kahmann, “and is a highly integral part of all of our production processes.”

New Symrise products are generally submitted to the OU for certification, which reviews raw materials, their sources, and individual production steps. Norbert Kahmann recently worked with the Symrise Kosher Team to produce a production calendar as a way to make kosher production more efficient. Buyers can then use this calendar to see exactly when production will take place. The reason for this is that kosher production is set for certain times of the year, as it requires extensive cleaning and preparation. “We make the kosher cal-

RABBIS NEUBERGER AND SCHWARZ INSPECT A PRODUCTION FACILITY AT THE SYMRISE PLANT IN HOLZMINDEN, GERMANY.
The Perfect Pet of the Pentateuch

By Rabbi Chaim Loike
Peace, loyalty, sacrifice and food are most often associated with the biblical pigeon. The tranquility of the post-flood landscape is forever immortalized in the torn olive branch which the pigeon dispatched by Noah carried back to the ark. The prophet Isaiah (59:11) urges the penitent to cry to the Lord as the cooing of a pigeon and return to the Lord in the manner of the pigeon to the dovecote (60:8). The pigeon, along with the dove, are the most frequently referenced of the bird sacrifices brought in the Tabernacle and later the Temple. The flight of the pigeon was admired by King David in Psalms (55:7 & 68:14), and its beauty was referenced by King Solomon multiple times in the Song of Songs (1:15, 2:14, 4:1, 5:2, 5:12, & 6:9).

On the most basic level, the pigeon was food. If properly maintained, the bird would forage and return nightly to its roost, rewarding the owner with eggs on a monthly basis. The birds could function as a rudimentary savings bank; when there was extra food, the pigeons would be allowed to multiply. When food was scarce, the eggs and ultimately the birds themselves could be harvested and then consumed or bartered.
The homing ability of the pigeon has been utilized by man since biblical times. Ancient mariners would take pigeons on their boats. If they lost their way, the sailors would release the pigeons and then follow the flight path of the birds to the safety of the shore. It was perhaps in this tradition that Noah released the pigeon to determine if the waters of the great flood had receded. The first bird sent by Noah was the raven, but it failed to complete its mission and refused to venture forth from the ark. The raven is described in the Bible (Genesis 8:7) as being sent forth, in contrast to the pigeon which in the language of the Bible (Genesis 8:8) Noah “sent forth the pigeon from him.” The implication of the verbiage is that the raven was merely one of the birds on the ark; the pigeon was dear to Noah and thus sent “from him” as one were to send one of his cherished possessions. This would make Noah the first documented pigeon fancier.

Although it is clear that pigeons were extensively raised in biblical times, aside from Noah, there is no indication of the birds being raised for reasons other than consumption until the Second Temple Period. The Mishnah and the Talmud, written at the end of the Second Temple Period, are replete with admonitions against racing and gambling with pigeons. An interesting game, enjoyed in biblical times, involved challenging the homing and flocking inclinations of pigeons. Birds belonging to different people would be flown at the same time, with the flocks being encouraged to mingle. The owner of each flock would fly his birds in such a manner as to entice the birds from the other flocks to join his own. The birds which deserted their flock, were then collected and either sold or ransomed back to their owner.

The Bible does not distinguish between the breeds of pigeon, although by Talmudic times there were a half dozen recognized breeds. The breeds generally had descriptive names such as, baysos, house pigeons; yonei aliyah, attic pigeons; and yonei shovach, dovecote pigeons. The different breeds were distinguished by their behavior, but it is unclear whether the behavior of the birds was the result of selective breeding or perhaps the conditions under which the birds were raised.

One exceptional pigeon breed was the Herodosios pigeon, which was named after the infamous King Herod, who ruled Israel at the end of the Second Temple Period. It is unclear whether the breed was actually developed by Herod, or he merely imported the birds. Some speculate that the bird might have been imported from Rhodes and as a result King Herod merely manipulated the name from Hordosios to Herodosios. These birds could be distinguished from other birds by physical characteristics, most importantly their inability to forage. Indeed, these birds needed to be maintained exclusively in the home. It is unclear if the Herodosios pigeons still exist, but based on Talmudic as well as the description of Josephus, who lived shortly after the Herod’s reign, the Herodosios pigeons were probably similar to the breeds now known as the Roman runts or the Hungarian house pigeons.

Although Talmudic law does distinguish between the breeds of pigeon, there is only limited discussion as to the definition of a pigeon. They were identified by a handful of physical characteristics as well as their lack of
any predatory tendencies (Hulin 59). The Talmud (Hulin 22) notes the distinction between doves and pigeons, but only so far as they can be compared and contrasted with each other. Interestingly enough, today pigeons are often derided as the rats of the sky. In the Talmudic times they were noted for their cleanliness, because unlike other birds which drank water which then dripped back from the mouth as the bird raised its head to swallow, the pigeon drank continuously from the water without any backwash.

In the two thousand years since the Talmud was codified, hundreds of pigeon breeds have been developed. Pigeons are raised in a rainbow of colors; the feathers have been manipulated to a dazzling array of patterns. Even the basic feather and bone structure of the breeds have been altered. The dominant scientific theory for the last three hundred years has been that all the domestic breeds of pigeon share an exclusively rock dove ancestry. There are dissenters who question the possibility that so many varied breeds could have been derived exclusively from the rock dove. The position of the Orthodox Union is that pigeons are kosher. The question which continuously arises is whether all breeds of pigeon are to be considered pigeon.

To research the pigeons, the OU has maintained a loft (that is, a pigeon coop), with a diverse selection of common meat pigeons as well as some of the more exotic breeds including owls, Brunner pouters, runts, frizzles, archangels and New York highfliers. Fantail pigeons were observed and kept in the loft of MD Laufer. The basic behavior of the pigeons was observed as well as their communication between other members of the respective breeds. With the exception of the runts, the birds were bred and eggs were produced. The breeds examined were observed to eat the same food and flock together, with the exception of the runts and the Brunner pouters, since the respective sizes required separate housing for these breeds. The shape, but not the size, of all the eggs observed was similar, as was the texture.

Pigeons tend to be monogamous and when not purchased as a pair, many of the birds seemed to disregard species classification when choosing a mate. Currently, the majority of the pigeon breeds raised for meat are the biblical pigeon (or some mutation) and are accepted as kosher by the Orthodox Union. The more exotic breeds are rarely raised for food, being slow to mature and extremely valuable. However, the research continues if nothing more than as a scholarly pursuit.

Rabbi Chaim Loike has served as OU Kosher rabbinic coordinator since 2007, administering egg, spice and chemical companies. His BTUS Summer 2008 feature, “Birds of the Bible — Solving the Mystery of Which of the Species Are Kosher and Which Are Not,” as well as “The Partridge of the Prophet,” BTUS winter 2009, have elicited much interest and positive feedback. Rabbi Loike co-stars with his exotic birds in the much acclaimed classroom DVD, “Kosher Birds Who Are They” (which can be ordered from Safrae@ou.org), part of OU Kosher’s expanded educational outreach. Rabbi Loike received his BS and rabbinical ordination from Yeshiva University.
0-48 months. By laying a foundation of good nutrition and establishing good eating behaviors early, parents can help their children prevent later life health problems like obesity and related diseases.

Over the last six years, Gerber’s Start Healthy, Stay Healthy™ initiative has delivered groundbreaking research, science-based advice and practical feeding guidelines for parents to adopt. For more information about Gerber, please visit www.StartHealthyStayHealthy.com or contact the Start Healthy Stay Healthy Resource Center (U.S. only) at 1-800-4-GerBer.

About Nestlé Nutrition

Nestlé Nutrition, part of Nestlé S.A., the world’s largest food company, is dedicated to infant, healthcare and performance nutrition and weight management. For consumer information about Nestlé Infant Nutrition products in the U.S. as well as expert advice on pregnancy, infant care and nutrition, visit www.StartHealthyStayHealthy.com.

Certification involving most of these standards is subject to the control of globally recognized independent accreditation schemes which ensure the depth, quality and consistency of the audit process leading to certification. SGS fully supports such schemes, and it is our policy that our audit approach and the qualifications of our auditors consistently meet their requirements.

Recent incidents related to food safety have demonstrated that weak controls in the supply chain can dramatically impact our day-to-day lives and turn the fortunes of successful companies, even whole regions, upside down. Consumers and governments are currently pushing for safer food management systems throughout the whole supply chain, from primary producers to exporters, feed manufacturers to restaurants. What’s more, customers want proof of your food safety up-front, in addition to being assured that your company will continue to meet SGS and Food Safety continued from page 20
their needs now and in the long term. That’s a challenge, but also an opportunity companies can benefit from.

If one tries to address food safety, quality or compliance no earlier than at the point of activity within the supply chain, it is too late. One needs to be two steps ahead and proactively ensure that the necessary systems and control mechanisms are in place and executed effectively.

INTERNATIONAL FOOD SAFETY CONCERNS

Before technological advancements, imports and exports were not as significant issues as they are today. In a global economy, lack of food safety regulations can lead to significant health concerns as well as to reduced consumer confidence.

International scares such as “mad cow” disease; melamine or cyanuric acid in food products from China; concerns about international pet food resulting in sick animals; and just recently peanuts, have been at the forefront of concern for individuals, businesses and governments.

When these food safety concerns are at their peak, everyone involved is negatively affected. The nation where the contaminated products originated is buffeted by negative press, often significantly damaging its overall exports. The companies at the core of the controversy are often forced to close their doors. And the individuals or animals affected by the food products frequently become sick or worse, they die.

While there have been numerous attempts to create cohesive certifications among food production and processing facilities to prevent such international catastrophes, it was not until recently that an international standard was adopted by a significant portion of the globe.

For additional information contact: SGS: Mark.Evers@sgs.com / 201-508-3011, Supreeya.sansawat@sgs.com / 201-508-3083
OU: Rabbi Eliyahu Safran, Safrane@ou.org; or Phyllis Koegel, koegelp@ou.org, 212-613-8237.

>>> LUCID DECISION CONTINUED FROM PAGE 25

named as one of The Top 12 Picks for 2008 by Beverage Industry News Magazine. Voted on annually by a panel of key retailers, distributors and beverage professionals, B.I.N. award recipients are selected as influential spirit brands to watch for in the coming year.

The OU rabbinic staff responsible for the certification of Lucid agree with the raves. Rabbi Yony Kantor, OU Senior Wine and Liquor Supervisor, who visited the distillery was “impressed with the meticulousness with which this premium product is crafted.” Rabbi Yisrael Hollander, OU Director of European Supervision, said, “This product has been manufactured the same way for over 150 years – same recipe, same process, same taste.” And Senior Rabbinic Coordinator Rabbi Nachum Rabinowit “welcomes this fine product into the growing ranks of OU certified spirits.”

The suggested retail price for Lucid is $59.99 for a 750 ML bottle. Lucid is currently available in high-end retail shops and finer establishments in Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Washington D.C., Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Wisconsin and Wyoming. Viridian also sells classic absinthe accessories such as fountains, glasses and absinthe spoons. For more information, please visit www.drinklucid.com.

Rabbi Jacob Mendelson serves as Orthodox Union rabbinic coordinator for Viridian Spirits.
TAGANINGA BAY IN THE CARIBBEAN SEA, COLOMBIA

Colombia

By Rabbi Aharon Brun-Kestler
In Colombia, it seems the people are as bright and warming as the tropical sun. Like most of Central and South America, this is a country with a disturbing past and a bright future. Once known more for cocaine drug lords and kidnapping than for legitimate businesses and opportunity, Colombia is coming into its own. OU certified companies there offer excellent products ranging from consumer items like coffee, hot pepper sauces and tuna fish to industrial ingredients like tropical oils and citric acid. All are made with the finest ingredients – and just a bit of the brightness that comes with the tropical sun.

Like many Latin American countries, Colombia offers a number of opportunities to food manufacturers. Its weather and history provide for an abundance of agricultural based products and old-world know how in food manufacture. Because of its colonial and European roots, there are long established ties with the European Union. Due to relatively low labor costs, increasingly favorable trade terms and geography, Colombia offers special benefits to North American concerns. While the unfortunate past of the drug cartels continues to weigh heavily, a strong will and strong government are changing things.

This was my second trip to Colombia in the past two years. During my first trip, the focus was primarily on palm oil products used in chocolates and other industries which use tropical oils. Interestingly, Colombia is one of the few places outside of Malaysia able to develop a significant palm industry. It is blessed with just the right weather and growing conditions: the palms that produce palm oil only grow in a narrow band around the equator. The company Acegrasas, a long established name in Colombia and in the oil business, is working hard to expand its United States exports. To date, the OU has worked with them on a limited basis to make special productions of palm olein and stearin. Long term, the hope is to develop a broad certification for a wide range of specialty fats and oils.

It is much more common in Latin America to find production and consumption of animal fat based products. As a result, oil companies are commonly more complicated than in the United States and Asia. This is especially true in facilities...
making hardened fats and margarines which often contain tallow and lard. As these items are intrinsically not kosher, their presence makes any kosher program much more complicated. Sometimes the effect is limited to specific equipment where items are blended; sometimes the entire plant may be non-kosher. For example, if there are common supply and handling lines or a common steam system – even between separate production areas — the entire plant may be affected. At the very least, it becomes necessary to set up segregated and non-compatible systems. When possible, we work with a company to segregate kosher and non-kosher in completely different facilities.

Of course, there are also more familiar issues with dairy components, many of which require careful kosher monitoring in and of themselves and must be sourced from acceptable kosher suppliers. For example, whey is a byproduct of cheese production and has special considerations. When curds and whey are separated to make cheese, a number of kosher concerns are involved. For example, Swiss cheese is traditionally started by adding rennet to milk. Rennet is a naturally occurring enzyme in calf stomachs and itself subject to many kosher complications. If the rennet is not kosher, the cheese is not kosher.

Since Swiss cheese making includes cooking the cheese and whey before separation, the whey itself is also not kosher. Other common dairy ingredients – milk powder, lactose — are often spray dried or processed in facilities that handle non-kosher production. Then, of course, there is the generic problem of making certain that dairy and non-dairy are strictly segregated.

Because of its tropical climate, Colombia is blessed with miles and miles of sugar cane production. The result is a prime opportunity for not only year-round kosher but for Passover as well. Many key products used in industry, including citric acid and alcohol, are products of glucose fermentation. In the United States, the primary glucose source is corn; in Europe, it is wheat and other grains. The Bible specifically forbids the use of anything made from wheat, barley, spelt, oats and rye during Passover. Additionally, Jews of Ashkenazi (Western European) descent do not use products made from kitniyot, including corn and soy. Cane sugar, however, is clearly permitted.

The multinational Tate & Lyle is a global producer of citric acid with a strong interest in providing Passover-grade product to the international market. Their Sucromiles facility near Cali, a world center for cane sugar production, is an excellent potential source. Since citric acid can start from any glucose source and since the plant also manufactures alcohol and other potentially grain-based products, the need arose for a thorough forensic audit of both raw materials and products to determine if cane sugar was, in fact, the only glucose source for the production in question. After many hours of work in the plant as well as extensive follow up, it was determined that the citric acid in question met strict Passover requirements for this year.

Among Colombia’s kosher assets is a long established Jewish community. While it has suffered during the country’s dark years, its presence means there are qualified people on the ground to develop and service kosher. The OU continues to work with these communities to make certain their kosher standards meet the highest standards and to help them bring those companies which are ready into the international kosher marketplace. Of course, having people on the ground also presents us with the ability to service companies locally —with all of the attendant benefits.

During my two trips, I have seen the areas around Barranquilla, Bogota and Cali as well as the surrounding countryside and have worked with local rabbis from all three cities. I have visited plants making exotic fruit
purees and juices, candies and a wide array of other top-notch consumer products. While many of these firms have not yet joined the OU family, we are working with them and the local rabbis to make the transition when they are ready to enter the international kosher scene.

This tropical paradise, whose climates range from temperate mountain regions to steamy Caribbean coasts, produces a wide array of other OU certified products as well. These include world famous Juan Valdez brand coffee as well as hot pepper pickles and tuna fish. By working directly with companies, importers and local communities, the sincere hope is to bring more Colombian products to the world kosher marketplace. Especially as the world community increasingly embraces Latin influences, Colombia is well poised to be a key contributor to the world of OU certified products and ingredients.

Rabbi Aharon Brun-Kestler enjoys addressing all aspects of kosher operations and assisting companies which seek to better understand the “Ins and outs” of kosher certification. His feature, “In the Plain of Spain,” appeared in the Summer 2008 issue of BTUS. Rabbi Brun-Kestler serves as OU rabbinic coordinator for snack companies and services companies in China, Greece and Spain.

**DAABON OF COLOMBIA**

Environmentally
Natural Agricultural Products
And, Oh Yes, They Are OU Kosher as Well

Daabon is a grower, refiner, and producer of OU certified kosher palm fruit oil-based organic and natural shortenings, hard fats and fry oils. All products, organic as well as natural, are the result of sustainable agricultural and socially responsible business practices. Numerous melting point fractions are available to meet the needs of a wide variety of food and personal care manufacturer’s requirements. Palm kernel oil in various presentations is also available. From the soil to the market, Daabon is a vertically integrated producer of highest quality and superior performance functional products and your best choice for organic and natural, trans-free fats.

Daabon Group of Santa Marta, Colombia is a family-owned business that was founded in 1914. In the last 20 years, Daabon has focused on environmentally and socially sustainable palm oil production, among other things. Our company is progressively committed to ensuring that we are socially, economically and environmentally sustainable. It is with great satisfaction that we offer customers and consumers worldwide delicious tasting and healthy certified organic and kosher natural food products. We export our products to the United States, Canada, Europe, Australia and Japan.

Our unique food products are natural, organic and sustainable palm fruit fractions: olein, stearin, and shortenings for trans-fat free baking, frying & manufacturing. All of our oils are expeller pressed and mechanically refined without the use of chemicals ensuring the freshest, most natural ingredients for your product applications.

All Daabon products are certified kosher by OU. Having the OU certification insures customers that our high quality kosher products are suitable for anyone observing a kosher diet.


Rabbi Nosson Goldberg serves as Orthodox Union rabbinic coordinator for Daabon Group of Santa Marta.

Rabbi Aharon Brun-Kestler enjoys addressing all aspects of kosher operations and assisting companies which seek to better understand the “Ins and outs” of kosher certification. His feature, “In the Plain of Spain,” appeared in the Summer 2008 issue of BTUS. Rabbi Brun-Kestler serves as OU rabbinic coordinator for snack companies and services companies in China, Greece and Spain.

**OU COMPANIES**

**SPEAK**

Delicious
Organic
And, Oh Yes, They Are OU Kosher as Well

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Since 1927 the National Federation of Coffee Growers of Colombia, a non-profit organization, has represented the interests of more than 500,000 coffee growers in different areas through the commercialization process. One of the steps taken to increase the awareness of 100 percent Colombian Coffee® was to develop one of the most advanced plants manufacturing Freeze Dried Coffee in the world. Buencafe®, formerly Freeze Dried Coffee, has been helping not only the most demanding customers in the industry to build brands and products for more than 35 years, but works to improve the livelihood of the community of coffee growers.

When Buencafe® was established in 1973, one goal was clearly defined: To be a leader in the industry thanks to our process and products. Today, we proudly count on the most recognized international standards such as ISO 9001, ISO 14001, ISO 18001, Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP), Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP), British Retail Consortium (BRC), International Food Standard (IFS), Business Alliance for Secure Commerce (BASC), Accredited Organic Certifications by the Japanese Agricultural Standards (JAS), European Standard CE2092, by the National Organic Program of United States (NOP) and by the Soil Association; also the Fairtrade Certification (FLO), Rainforest Alliance Certification and Kosher Certification by the Orthodox Union (OU).

This last designation has special meaning, as it recognizes that our 100 percent Colombian Freeze Dried Coffee is a natural product manufactured according to OU standards, using only coffee and water; and in the manufacturing process we use the proper equipment and cleansing procedures for that coffee to be preserved, to be of high quality and to be designated OU Kosher.

All these certifications provide us with a solid basis to guarantee that more than 90 brands and 60 countries may work and enjoy nothing but 100 percent Colombian Freeze Dried Coffee.

To find out more about how we can help you to complement your portfolio with the best Freeze Dried Coffee, please e-mail us at sales@buendiacoffee.com or call us at 212-271-8807; mailing address: Buendia Coffee LLC, 140 East 57th Street, New York, NY 10022.

Rabbi Yosef Grossman serves as Orthodox Union rabbinic coordinator for Buencafe.

Who else at your company (in management, marketing, production) who should be receiving a copy of Behind the Union Symbol?

Do let us know at safrane@ou.org. We will gladly add them to our mailing list.
Comexa Foods is the producer of the world-renowned Amazon Peppers brand of sauces, located in the old world city of Cartagena de Indias. Bathed in the sun and by the warm clear waters of the Caribbean Sea, the rich Colombian soil produces a wide range of peppers which our group has been cultivating and processing industrially in large quantities for the world market since 1992.

Utilizing Comexa’s years of experience and knowledge of the unique qualities of capsicum, the Amazon Pepper brand was born in early 1994. The product made its successful debut at the Fiery Food Show in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

The distinctive flavor of the Amazon hot sauces came about by accident. In the 1970s, Giorgio Araujo’s family was growing peppers and an unplanned cross-pollination produced the Amazon pepper that has been the foundation of all Comexa’s hot sauces.

The company adapted its sauces to an ever-increasing variety of palates, expanding from its original green and red hot sauces to a large variety of flavors such as the new fruit pepper sauces (Amazon Korozo Sauce, Amazon Palmberry sauce, Amazon Cape Gooseberry Sauce) and many other great products.

“We’ve had a burst of creativity, coming up with a whole new line of products,” says Mr. Araujo, the company’s founder. “We work on the basis that the more products you have the more chances you have to sell them.”

At the 1995 New York Fancy Food show, the Amazon Pepper Line won the “Best of the Aisle” award by Gourmet Retailer. During the 1997 Foodex Show in Tokyo, the Amazon Pepper line received the acclaim of the Japanese TV news media “for an outstanding hot pepper product line,” being featured on prime time Tokyo television on the program called “Televi Champion,” on which the Amazon brand Habanero Sauce, won the “Hottest Pepper of the World Award.”

During the Food Distribution Magazine’s (FDM) First Annual BBQ & Wing Sauce Showdown Hoedown!, held in June 1997, the Amazon Pepper brand won two first prize awards: first place in the “Fruit- Based Hot Category” for its Amazon Hot & Sweet, and first place in the “Wing Sauce Xhot (Yow),” for its Amazon Fiery Red.

Show after show, people continue acclaiming Amazon pepper sauces as an out of competition product. In January 1999, at the Chile Pepper Magazine Hot Sauce contest “Scoville Awards,” the Hot n’ Sweet Amazon Sauce was awarded first prize and the Green Amazon Sauce third prize.

The Amazon Pepper Line is currently being sold in the United States, the Middle East, Japan, Chile, Canada, Belgium, Finland, France, Spain, El Salvador, and of course, in Colombia where Amazon is the leading brand.

In October 2000, the company received its highest honor with the “National Exporters President’s Award.” During 2002 the plant was certified HACCP and ISO 9002 complying with all international quality standards and at the moment is working towards BRC certification.

Our products have been certified kosher by the Orthodox Union since 1999. This accreditation has played a very important role in increasing the sales of our Amazon pepper sauces; it has enhanced our ability to market our products as the OU Kosher symbol has become an increasingly important marketing device which has opened many doors for the Amazon Pepper Line in supermarket chains and gourmet stores.

We have come to realize that our OU certification has been as important for us as the HACCP and ISO 9002. The OU Kosher certificate has generated additional revenues by expanding the size of the market. Now after 10 years of being OU certified, we are one hundred percent positive that supermarkets favor brands with OU certification because it gives the product a competitive edge that makes it sell quickly; we have taken full advantage of such an important certification.

Currently in line with Colombian exports in general, the company sells sixty percent of its total exports to the United States. The business plan has been to market the product to Hispanics in the United States, but also to non-Hispanics as a gourmet product. While the gourmet route may be necessary in order to push the brand forward and to start word of mouth, the downside is that it often results in lower sales.

Now, after almost 20 years in which the company trudged through American, Middle East and European food shows and sold its sauces in gourmet stores, food distributors are picking the product up and the brand is expanding throughout the world.

“We hope to be in every country with our delicious kosher Amazon pepper sauces,” Mr. Araujo says. Given the company’s limited resources, Mr. Araujo has concentrated on pushing his product forward, emphasizing international food shows as well as the Internet. His message is: “Flavor your mood from mild to wild!”

Rabbi David Gorelik serves as Orthodox Union rabbinic coordinator for Comexa Foods.
An OU RFR Travels the Highways and Byways of the Old Confederacy and Meets Products and People that Leave a Lasting Impression

Go South, Young
It was said about Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch that when he was well into his 70’s he decided to travel from Germany to Switzerland for a vacation. This was in the late 1800’s when cars and airplanes were unheard of. The trip was an arduous trek by train and coach. He was asked, ‘Rabbi, you’re an old man. Why are you taking such a trip?’ Replied Rabbi Hirsch, “After 120 years, I’ll meet my maker and he will ask me, ‘Raphael, did you ever see my Alps?’”

The world is truly a magnificent creation filled with all of God’s beauty. One of the benefits that I have in being a mashgiach (kosher supervisor) for the OU is that I have an opportunity to travel and see much of this beauty. My territory encompasses most of the Southeastern part of the United States, namely, Eastern Tennessee, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi and Northern Florida. This area, known as the “Bible or Sun Belt,” offers much diversity as to scenery as well as to history. This is the South of Gone With the Wind fame. Let’s take a look at some of the highlights of my territory.
Starting in Charleston SC, we come to the flower of the South. This city, with Fort Sumter in its harbor, was involved in the incident that began the Civil War. One can travel through the area and still see antebellum houses. Not far up the road in Summerville is an OU company, JW Aluminum. Taking the highway as well as side roads (watch out for logging trucks) we come to Augusta, GA, home of the Masters Golf Tournament. While there, we can stop by Kellogg’s Snack foods for some Famous Amos Cookies or go to Nutrasweet, makers of Aspartame sweeteners. The Science Museum in Augusta is a hands-on/must see for families with children. Traveling south through back roads we come to Savannah.

Savannah is a beautiful city with old-time charm. The downtown area is arranged with small park squares that you have to drive and weave around. Tybee Island is just due east for a nice relaxing vacation spot. While in Savannah, we can visit a number of OU plants, among them Dixie Crystal and Fuji Oil.

We then travel south on I-95 to Jacksonville, FL where we can go to Heinz/Portion Pak and Whitewave Foods. As one travels through Jacksonville one cannot help but go over the various bridges that span the local waterways. We then can take a trip up to Blackshear and Alma in Georgia. These small towns have OU plants like American Egg, Southland’s Best, and Richmond Baking. Then it’s on to Fitzgerald, GA to American Blanching and Deep South Products. Deep South bottles product for Arizona Tea as well as Winn Dixie sodas.

We are now in the heart of the South. As we drive through, we pass pecan orchards all around us. This is also peanut country. A side trip up I-75 takes us to Andersonville, GA—the site of the notorious Civil War prison and its cemetery.

I once was at the Holiday Inn in Fitzgerald and was talking to the hotel manager. He told me that it was a good thing that I came that week and not the week after. I asked him why. “Well,” he replied, “next week is your Jewish New Year and all of the old families come here from all over the South for High Holiday services and I wouldn’t have a room for

OU RFR Profile | Meet the Peripatetic Rabbi Norman Schloss

Rabbi Norman Schloss was born in New York. After graduating from Yeshiva University High School, Rabbi Schloss spend a year in Israel furthering his Judaic Studies at the Bet Midrash L’Torah. Upon his return to New York, he attended Bernard Baruch College of the City University of New York, receiving his B.A. in Sales and Marketing.

While in school, Rabbi Schloss was active in extra-curricular activities. He served as an Advisor with the renowned Orthodox Union national youth group, NCSY, as well as National Vice President of Yavneh (a national organization working with college students). Working full time, Rabbi Schloss continued his Judaic studies with Rabbi Shmuel Sheinberg.

Rabbi Schloss and his wife Lydia moved to Atlanta in 1977 where he specialized in sales. In 1979, he opened Norm’s Place, a strictly kosher restaurant in Atlanta, which he maintained until 1982, when he returned to sales. It was at this juncture that Rabbi Schloss started working part time for the OU. In 1997, he returned to Israel and received rabbinic ordination from Rabbi Sheinberg.

Rabbi Schloss has worked for OU Kosher for over 25 years. He is usually on the road two to three nights a week, often driving 500-800 miles in that time. Besides covering the South, Rabbi Schloss travels extensively overseas for the OU as well. Rabbi Norm, as he likes to be called, is known for his upbeat positive attitude, friendly disposition and sense of humor. Beyond Rabbi Schloss’s busy OU schedule, he finds the time and commitment to be much involved in his Atlanta community, having served on the boards of Torah Day School of Atlanta and Yeshiva Atlanta, as well as at Atlanta’s major Orthodox synagogue, Congregation Beth Jacob. Rabbi Schloss also gives weekly classes that have been ongoing for over 30 years.

Besides his extensive OU travels and his dedication to his classes, Rabbi Norm does find time to relax. He enjoys novels and mysteries and does crossword puzzles in pen while listening to Hebrew or classical music. Rabbi Norm also enjoys cooking and has interesting recipes like Salmon ala Black and Decker and is famous for his broccoli soufflé.

Most of all he enjoys being with family and friends. He and his wife have four children and two grandchildren and he will gladly show you their pictures.
you.” It seems that all of these small Southern towns had at one time been vibrant Jewish communities.

From Fitzgerald we continue to visit OU plants in Tifton, Ashburn, and Sylvester before coming to Albany, GA. I tell people that I go to most of the ‘nut’ houses in Georgia. This area is responsible for the vast majority of peanut production. It gets hot here in the summertime so a refreshing stop in Albany is the Miller’s Coors Brewing Co. Not far away we also can stop at Tara Foods. (Tara? Wasn’t that a plantation in a certain novel?) Just be careful in booking flights, cars or hotels. Many a time I have had the reservations made for Albany (all bany), NY rather than Albany (al beny), GA. Around an hours’ drive north of Albany, one can go to Warm Springs. There you can visit the Little White House — the summer home of President Franklin D Roosevelt, the place where he died.

Continuing west we cross into Alabama going through Abbeville, home of Golden Egg, and proceed to Dothan. Golden Oval, formerly known as Cutler Egg, processes eggs in both liquid and dried forms. Dothan touts itself as the Peanut Capitol of the world so naturally we go to Flavorhouse to see their operation. We then travel north towards Montgomery. There we visit Flowers Foods.

Traveling west we proceed through rolling hills of beautiful countryside to Selma. Montgomery as well as Selma were key cities during the Civil Rights movement of the 1950’s, 60’s and ‘70’s.

We continue traveling west going to plants in Marion, AL heading towards Mississippi. With OU plants in Hattiesburg, Jackson and Columbus, we literally travel around the whole state. While in Jackson, between visits to DeBeukelaer, Clorox and Reckitt-Benckiser, one can drop in at The Museum of Southern Jewish Life.

Another part of my territory is Tennessee. We will start in Crossville to see Mizkan Vinegar and another Flowers Baking facility, then proceed on I-40 across the Middle Tennessee Valley to Knoxville and Newport. This stretch of Interstate is simply gorgeous. Whether in the fall when all the leaves are changing colors; in winter when the trees are bare and sometimes white; or in spring and summer when they are in full bloom, this is a truly beautiful drive. Green Mountain Coffee, Bush Beans, and Rich products, among others, are situated in the foothills of the Smokey Mountains.

We travel down through the mountains to Cleveland and Chattanooga. With all of the abundant fresh water springs that come from the mountains, it is no surprise that many of the OU bottled water plants are in this area. Among them are Green Mountain, Crystal Springs and Nature’s Purest. While in Chattanooga, you also don’t want to miss The Tennessee Aquarium. From Lookout Mountain and Rock City you can visit seven states before heading back to Atlanta.

Atlanta is the home of Coca-Cola so a must see is the Coke Museum, downtown. No visit to Atlanta would be complete without a visit to Stone Mountain. This large granite mountain depicts a carving of heroes of the Civil War as well as a plantation and museum about the War Between the States. Lastly, one can visit the Martin Luther King Memorial.

As one can see, traveling such a vast area inspecting over 100 companies is very demanding and time consuming. Yet, I have a chance to meet people from all walks of life. We talk about varied subjects from news to sports and I can truly say that I never have a dull day. The breadth of my work for the OU takes me to a vast diversity of products. I see facilities producing everything from baked goods to chemical companies making cleaning products. I recently went to a company that was making adhesives. At the plant, they were vastly impressed that the OU took the issue of kashrut so seriously that we would even check their product which is used to adhere foil to the cardboard core.

Let me end with one last story. I was at a plant on a day where everything was going wrong. I apologized to the plant personnel for coming on such a day, but I needed to do my inspection. “Rabbi Norm,” the official said, “I’m always glad to see you. Sometimes I’m glad to see you come and sometimes I’m glad to see you go. But I’m always glad to see you.” Talk about Southern Hospitality!
NEW YORK, May 2009 — Bazooka Candy Brands, a division of Topps Inc., announced today that Ring Pop, its best-selling candy, has been kosher certified by the Orthodox Union. Production of the newly kosher Ring Pop, with brand new packaging bearing the “OU” symbol, begins this month with the candy shipping to retailers nationwide in August.

Ari Weinstock, Director of Marketing, Bazooka Candy Brands, said, “Working with the Orthodox Union, the top organization for kosher certification in the world, we can now bring Ring Pop to an entirely new, and discerning, consumer base that has never before been able to enjoy our products.”

Rabbi Eliyahu Safran, OU Kosher’s Vice President of Communications and Marketing, expressed “great satisfaction in having Bazooka Candy Brands join with leading confectionery producers who have attained OU certification in recent years. It was gratifying for OU Kosher’s team, headed by Rabbi Mordechai Merzel, to corroborate with Bazooka Candy Brands’ team and bring the much sought after Ring Pop products to an ever-growing kosher market place.”

The Orthodox Union engages in rigorous monitoring of all aspects of production. It supervises the process by which the food is prepared, examines the ingredients used to make the food, and regularly inspects the processing facilities to make sure that its standards are met.

“The solicitousness associated with the OU certification process is what makes kosher products appealing to both Jewish and non-Jewish consumers. We believe that parents purchasing Ring Pop for their children will feel reassured that the production of this candy is closely supervised,” added Weinstock.

Ring Pop was first introduced in 1977 and has consistently ranked among the top-selling non-chocolate candies. Available in over ten different flavors, including strawberry, blue raspberry, watermelon, twisted berry blast and strawberry-banana smoothie, Ring Pop is Bazooka Candy Brand’s most popular confection. Referred to as “edible bling,” Ring Pop candy has been spotted by the paparazzi on the hands of many celebrities over the years, with photos running in magazines such as Interview, People, and US Weekly.

The Orthodox Union, which is supervising the production of Ring Pop, has maintained the highest standard of kosher certification for over 80 years. Today the OU supervises more than 400,000 products produced in 6,000 plants in 80 countries, making it the world’s largest and most respected kosher certification agency and symbol.

The kosher certified Ring Pop is part of the recently rebranded Bazooka Candy Brands line of candy, which also includes Baby Bottle Pop, Push Pop, and Bazooka gum. For more information about Ring Pop, visit www.topps.com.

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According to Jewish law, eating a bug is much worse than eating ham. And so it is most important for the kosher homemaker serving vegetables to make certain that those lush greens, so crunchy and healthful, are insect-free. But given the tiny size of the critters, this is no easy task.

Relax! Help is now on the way, with the release of the OU Kosher DVD, Insect-Free: A Guide to Home Vegetable Inspection. This video, running almost an hour-and-a-half in length, features Rabbi Yosef Eisen, the Rabbinic Administrator of the Vaad Hakashrus of the Five Towns & Rockaway and an OU Kosher Rabbinic Coordinator from 1990-1999. Rabbi Eisen shares his vast expertise in a clear and engaging way so that the steps in inspection are simple to follow. His purpose, he said, in preparing the DVD, is “to empower each and every person so that they can partake fully of God’s bounty.”

A wide variety of that bounty is featured: leafy vegetables (e.g. lettuce and cabbage); herbs (dill, parsley); miscellaneous produce (scallions, cauliflower); and berries, such as strawberries. The DVD comes with a handy menu-function, so that the viewer can click right to what he or she wants to see, and is geared to a variety of audiences – those at home and those in school.

Rabbi Menachem Genack, CEO of OU Kosher, declared, “Because since the days of Rachel Carson the Federal government quite correctly has limited the use of insecticides on food, there has been an increase in insects found in vegetables. Therefore, knowing how to check for these insects has become increasingly important. The prohibition in Jewish law of eating insects is particularly severe and this DVD is a hands-on way of checking vegetables to make sure they are acceptable.”

David Lenik, the producer, has his own take on the DVD. “This project taught me to think about vegetable inspection as an act of serving God and not just as one more arduous task. Also, having seen the bugs, up-close-and-too-personal, coming out of what looks like a perfectly healthy vegetable, I now see that proper cleaning provides a tangible benefit.”

Insect-Free: A Guide to Home Vegetable Inspection is one of several projects of OU Kosher’s expanded educational outreach. OU Kosher’s educational programs include the nationally-renowned “OU Kosher Coming” program, which sends OU’s expert rabbis to schools, synagogues and college campuses to share their knowledge of halacha and technology; as well as the ever-growing “Kosher Tidbits” series of short seminars on innumerable aspects of kashrut and certification, available at ouradio.org.

The Orthodox Union has produced four other DVD’s devoted to kashrut education: Kosher Kidz, focusing on ice cream, which explains the basics of kosher certification to a youthful audience; The Kosher Fish Primer, which explains the basics of identifying kosher fish and purchasing them; Kosher Meat: Unexplored Frontiers, with Rabbi Yisroel Belsky, which explores the process of post-slaughter meat preparation; and Kosher Birds: Who Are They? which discusses the signs of avian kashrut. These DVD’s have been purchased in Jewish communities around the world.

So now comes the fifth video in the series, prepared specifically to avoid the shriek coming from the kitchen, “Not salad! Anything but SALAD!!!” According to Rabbi Dr. Eliyahu Safran, Senior Rabbinic Coordinator and Vice President of Marketing and Communications of OU Kosher, “A group of women who have previewed the DVD have commented that they ‘have long waited for a clear, precise, hands-on presentation of how to really be sure that our vegetables are free of any Torah prohibited bug infestation. We now have it.’

Rabbi Safran points out that the DVD is user-friendly, “including the menu option, the clarity of Rabbi Eisen’s presentation, the summaries, and the popular veggies it features. Most importantly,” he emphasized, “this DVD is geared to meet the needs of the Jewish homemaker, of everyone involved with kosher food preparation in the home kitchen, as well as for educators and students focusing on all it takes to maintain a kosher kitchen.”

The new DVD is $10 a copy; to order all five is $35. For further information on bringing OU Kosher to your school or community, or to order the previous DVD’s, contact Rabbi Safran at SafranE@ou.org.
A recent FDA decision on ingredients labels may prompt some manufacturers to rethink their formulations.

For decades, food and drink manufacturers have not been required to list specific colorants on ingredients labels. “Color added,” “artificial color” or similar language has been adequate, according to the FDA, to signal the presence of added color. Earlier this year, however, the FDA ruled that cochineal extract and carmine, red colorants derived from a non-kosher insect, must be specifically declared on future ingredients labels. The ruling was a response to mounting evidence that cochineal extract and carmine trigger allergic reactions among some Americans.

For many food manufacturers that use cochineal extract or carmine in foods or beverages, the

Why the Regulation Changed

The fact that cochineal and carmine can cause harm was news to the FDA. In the early 1960’s, when the FDA first began drafting a list of safe colorants for use in foods, the agency concluded that carmine was so safe that “if a person’s total diet were colored with carmine...the total figures would be well within the margin of safety” that its technical research had established.

Since 1994, however, the FDA received 11 voluntarily submitted reports of allergic reactions. The first was from a 27-year-old woman who experienced anaphylaxis (a severe, potentially life-threatening allergic reaction) within three hours of eating a popsicle dyed with carmine. Subsequent reports of allergic reactions to banana-strawberry yogurt, ruby red grapefruit juice, artificial crabmeat, juices, and other foods and drinks suggested that the carmine was not entirely benign — at least not for all people.

Medical literature has reported other incidents of allergic and anaphylactic response. The developing catalogue of reports, coupled with a 1998 petition from the Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI), awakened the FDA to reopen discussion about the safety of cochineal extract.

Allergic reactions are not so extensive that the FDA considered banning the colorants outright. There is no mandate to indicate that cochineal is an allergen (it is not counted among the major allergens). Although the ruling acknowledges some deliberation about whether a label should state that cochineal and carmine originate from an insect, the conclusion was that such information was easily accessible and not necessary to make explicit.

The FDA targeted January 5, 2011 to provide time to companies to use existing inventory of labels.
new mandate simply means printing new labels. But because consumers find an association with insects disquieting, some food manufacturers will revisit their choice of color. Some compelling kosher alternatives are available.

The viability of these innovative colors, food technologists report, depends on the needs food and drink manufacturers aim to meet.

For example, drinks bottled in transparent packaging require colors that can hold up to long-term exposure to light. Some colors will fade unless protected from light. Some colors thrive in acidic environments but are useless in neutral environments. Will the food be cooked? What is the expected shelf-life of the product? These are some of the preliminary questions a color technologist will ask a customer.

“Fruit and vegetable powders can sometimes be as good, or even better, than carmine,” says Harvey Krohn, beverage consultant at Allen Flavors. “We have pink colors and we have red colors, we have in-between and we have natural yellows, which can be used to offset the reds. There’s so many things that you can do to get close to what you want.”

The craft is capitalizing on the virtues of a colorant. “Sometimes a supplier sends a product to a customer, and the customer tries it out and says it doesn’t work right. But it could be the customer simply doesn’t understand how to use it correctly. It all depends on how he is working on the bench.”

Jason Armao, director of colors and specialty ingredients, Wild Flavors, Erlanger, KY, noted there are several compelling pink-to-red colorants. “Purple sweet potato juice, red cabbage juice, and purple carrot juice,” he said, “in many applications achieve the stability we get with carmine or cochineal” while still making a kosher claim. Their effectiveness, however, is limited to beverages or other applications, which are aqueous and acidic.

Food, however, is a bigger challenge. “If we wanted to color cereal, or a frosting that more or less had very little water activity or a neutral pH, it would be difficult.” Beet juice is the only approved US colorant in the pink to red range and its stability in most applications, he commented, is poor. Carmine, by contrast, is both deep red and long lasting. (Carmine is also used as a red dye in oriental carpets.)

Lycored, an OU company based in Israel with offices in Orange, NJ, has an entire product line, Tomat-O-red, that exploits the red of lycopene, the red colorant in tomatoes. It is also a nutrient and an antioxidant.

A colorant which is also an antioxidant is a distinctive, and eminently marketable, combination. However, antioxidants tend to be sensitive to oxygen and light. Many food systems, of course, are exposed to both. The scientists at Lycored have developed strategies to protect lycopene from these otherwise hostile phenomena, like coating lycopene crystals in a stabilized dispersion of glycerol. Bill Redwood, Vice President of East Coast Sales, noted that Tomat-O-Red can be remarkably effective, but it depends on the application. “We take everything application by application,” he said.

Rabbi Gavriel Price services the transportation, ingredients and flavors industries at the Orthodox Union. A frequent contributor to BTUS, his “When Kosher and Allergen Issues Do Not Converge” appeared in the Winter 2009 issue.
HERE IN 20 MINUTES is everything you need to know about the procedures and requirements necessary to produce an OU Kosher product, and how to design an effective system at your company. Recommended for personnel in management, production and quality control and for in-house training.

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