

summer 2005

behind the **U**nion *symbol*

A publication for @ certified companies



The Health Benefits of Fish: **Without the fish**



*Now Kosher, MEG-3™ Brand
Omega-3 Powder and Fish Oil
Offer Food and Supplement Companies
an Explosive Opportunity*

By Susan Michel, MBA

OCEAN NUTRITION CANADA LTD. (ONC) isn't just riding the Omega-3 ingredient wave; it is leading the way. Most people are not getting enough Omega-3 in their diets – 130mg per day on average compared to the American Heart Association's recommendation of 500mg per day, and one gram for those with coronary heart disease (CHD). Now, with Ocean Nutrition Canada's breakthrough microencapsulation technology and Orthodox Union kosher certification, all food manufacturers can add Omega-3 from fish to their products without altering the taste or smell.

Since its founding in 1997, ONC has grown into a leading researcher, innovator, and manufacturer of marine-based natural ingredients for the global healthy food and dietary supplement markets. Over the years, ONC, under the leadership of President Robert Orr, has developed a culture of excellence in all of its business practices, including research and development of new ingredients, manufacturing, regulatory affairs, quality assurance and control, marketing, and customer service.

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continued from cover

Ocean Nutrition Canada is a leader in long chain Omega-3 EPA/DHA ingredients, with the world's largest manufacturing capacity for fish oil concentrates. Only the finest sardine, anchovy, and mackerel fished in the deep waters off the coast of Peru are used in the manufacture of ONC's MEG-3™ brand premium quality Omega-3 fish oil ingredients. ONC's commitment to quality is evident by the fact that MEG-3™ fish oils are the first and, to date, only fish oil ingredients to achieve United States Pharmacopeia (USP) ingredient verification. To further build its reputation for excellence, ONC considered kosher certification for its MEG-3™ brand Omega-3 ingredients.

In 2002, Ocean Nutrition Canada made the strategic decision to pursue kosher certification. The purpose of this initiative was multifold: It would enable ONC's Omega-3 ingredient to be available to the largest number of consumers; open up the kosher food market to MEG-3™ brand Omega-3 food ingredients; enable use of MEG-3™ ingredients in strictly kosher food manufacturing facilities; and provide added value to our customers.

Once the decision was made, ONC sought to achieve kosher certification in a manner consistent with its well-established tradition of excel-



lence. Following extensive research into kosher certification options, including consultation with other industry-leading manufacturers, ONC made the decision to partner with the Orthodox Union, the most widely recognized and trusted kosher organization in the world. That decision proved to be very beneficial, according to Janet Shay, Vice President of Quality and Regulatory Affairs at ONC, who declared, "We are extremely pleased with the relationship we have built with the OU. Not only have they lived up to their exceptional reputation, they have exceeded our expectations and have been highly responsive and supportive throughout the entire process."

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Spring 2005 Kashrut Conference

Connecticut Grand Hotel & Conference Center, Waterbury, CT, May 15-16



1. Greeting all the Rabbinic Coordinators and many Rabbinic Field Representatives from around the country is: **Rabbi Menachem Genack**, Rabbinic Administrator & CEO.

2. Making his point is: Chicago RFR **Rabbi Shraga Kaufman** (r) to RC **Rabbi Yermia Indich**

3. An update from Atlanta: RFR **Rabbi Yehuda Boroosan** (l) to Business Manager **Rabbi Howard Katzenstein**

4. It's all in the palm pilot: **Rabbi Avrohom Stone** (r) with Cincinnati RFR **Rabbi Raffie Zuroff**

5. Sharing insights into new areas of Kashrut technology are: From left – Chairman **Rabbi Nochum Rabinowitz**, **Rabbi Yosef Goldberg** & **Rabbi Avraham Stone**

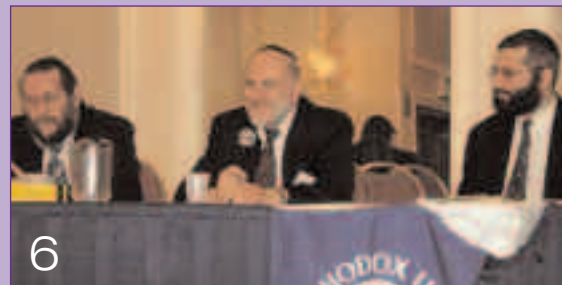
6. Updating on required standards and new possibilities of OU certified gelatin are: From left – **Rabbi Abraham Juravel**, **Rabbi Seth Mandel**, and Chairman **Rabbi Chananel Herbsman**

7. Discussing inspection and ingredient issues are: From left – **Rabbi Raymond Morrison**, **Rabbi Abraham Juravel** of the IAR and **Rabbi Moshe Elefant**, Executive Rabbinic Coordinator & COO

8. Addressing a session on "Safety in the Workplace" is: **Ms. Tina Feist** – Quality Assurance Superintendent of ADM Southport

9. **Rabbi David Gorelik** chaired the session "Safety in the Workplace"

10. An update from Upstate New York: RFR **Rabbi Shmuel Rashkin** (l) to New Companies RC **Rabbi Yitzchak Mincer**



The Orthodox Union rose to ONC's challenge, which included not only certifying the fish oil plant in Mulgrave, Nova Scotia (N.S.) and the Omega-3 powder plant in Dartmouth, N.S., but also certifying the catch and extraction of oil from the fish in Peru. Rabbi Blugrond, Senior Field Supervisor, and the local rabbinic representative, were instrumental in the kosherization of the fish in Peru, which included supervising the fishing and sorting of the catch to ensure only sardine, anchovy, and mackerel (kosher species) were allowed into kosher vessels for the oil extraction process. The fish oil was then sealed by the rabbi and shipped to Nova Scotia for processing.

To meet the OU standard, some process changes and technological modifications were required in the manufacturing of the fish oil and powder. The Orthodox Union worked very closely with Ocean Nutrition Canada to ensure that these requirements were met. Rabbi Blugrond; Rabbi Goldberg, Rabbinic Coordinator; Rabbi Safran,

Senior Rabbinic Coordinator; and Rabbi Rosen, Rabbinic Representative, worked diligently in partnership with ONC plant managers, regulatory and quality assurance managers, and staff to ensure that both manufacturing facilities in Nova Scotia, which also manufacture fish oil ingredients that are not kosher, met the strict OU kosher standard.

New Master Production Records (MPR) were developed to ensure compliance with OU requirements, the plants underwent a four month set-up period in preparation for running both kosher and non-kosher production lines simultaneously, and finally the kosher certification was completed. Behind the scenes, ONC's regulatory affairs and quality assurance managers and staff worked tirelessly to coordinate with Rabbi Safran and Rabbi Goldberg to guarantee that ONC followed OU procedures and standards throughout the entire certification process.

Ocean Nutrition Canada looks forward to continuing to build upon the solid foundation it has established with the Orthodox Union and to taking the partnership to even greater heights as the Omega-3 market continues to grow exponentially. Several factors provide the basis for ONC's enthusiasm about the future of Omega-3 market opportunities. These include: the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) qualified health claim issued in 2004 for reduced risk of coronary heart disease (CHD) for foods containing Omega-3 EPA/DHA; FDA issued a similar qualified health claim in 2000 for supplements containing Omega-3 EPA/DHA; and the American Heart Association (AHA) recognizes the health benefits of Omega-3 and recommends eating two fatty fish meals per week and, for those with CHD, consuming one gram of Omega-3 per day. All of these, in combination with extensive media exposure, are leading to increased consumer awareness of the health benefits of Omega-3 EPA/DHA.

ONC's MEG-3™ brand Omega-3 powder is now in development with kosher food companies across a range of categories. The future of kosher MEG-3™ brand Omega-3 powder and fish oil ingredients is very bright and ONC welcomes the opportunity to continue to serve the healthy food and dietary supplement markets with premium quality Omega-3 ingredients. "This is an explosive opportunity for food manufacturers to provide a much-needed boost to consumers' heart health," said Michael Hodgett, Vice President of Business Development at ONC. "Now kosher food companies can deliver these health benefits too!"

Susan Michel, MBA

is Associate Product Manager, Dietary Supplements, of Ocean Nutrition Canada Ltd.

Rabbi Cham Goldberg

serves as the Orthodox Union's rabbinic coordinator for Ocean Nutrition Canada Ltd.



Nothing Fishy Here:

Beyond the Four-Year Process at Ocean Nutrition to Make Fish Oil Kosher



The task of kosher certification for such an endeavor was not for **the faint of heart**

By Rabbi Chaim Goldberg

Those of us working in the field of kosher certification at the Orthodox Union have the distinct opportunity (and obligation) to be on top of new technologies, and new developments in food production.

Long before Omega-3s were front-page news in the major media, the Orthodox Union received numerous inquiries into sources for kosher fish oil. The demand for kosher fish oil that could meet all standards made the opportunity for such a supplier obvious.

We were not the only ones who noticed the potential for high-quality kosher fish oil. The folks at Ocean Nutrition, in Nova Scotia, Canada, who were already committed to producing some of the highest quality fish oil on planet Earth, decided that they could be the ones to take advantage of this opportunity.

The task of kosher certification for such an endeavor was not for the faint of heart. Unlike most commercial productions, extensive preparations and planning were required before the Orthodox Union could even begin to discuss certifying an extracted fish oil product. Indeed, the Orthodox Union assigned one of its top Rabbinic Field Representatives to assist in the preliminary fieldwork required.

Rabbi Yaakov Blugrond, a 15-year veteran of the OU's kosher certification division, is a world-renowned expert in the field of equipment kosherizations. Rabbi Blugrond saw the vast importance of this assignment, and turned it into a true labor of love. But even for the immensely capable rabbi, being a partner in the development of Ocean Nutrition's fledgling kosher program was quite an assignment indeed, although as Rabbi Blugrond pointed out, "Having a company as cooperative as Ocean Nutrition made the task a full 50 percent easier".

Acting as the OU's eyes and ears in the field, Rabbi Blugrond constantly relayed information about the practical workings of each Ocean Nutrition production phase to the office. This allowed our staff of Rabbinic Coordinators and Kashrus Law Consultants to construct the kosher program.

From the initial application until the OU issued a Letter of Certification for the finished product was a four-year period of perseverance and dedication. Under similar circumstances, one could imagine a company rethinking the value of continuing with the stringent requirements of kosher certification. For the folks at Ocean Nutrition, no obstacle is too great, and focus on the goal kept the process moving.

Rabbi Amatzia Argentar, a Rabbinic Field Representative who assisted in production, commented, “Ocean Nutrition feels strongly that they are onto something very positive with OU kosher certification.”

Kosher oil production starts at an extraction facility in the various areas where menhaden, herrings and tunas are harvested. The OU requires that the extraction happen under on-site rabbinic supervision, confirming that the level of by-catch entering the extraction process is “absolute zero.” In addition, all oil made on this equipment prior to the rabbi’s arrival is regarded by the OU as non-kosher and requires a complete kosherization of the affected equipment. Prior to kosherization, the equipment must be perfectly clean, not a small order in an extraction facility whose most stringent CIP “is not good enough” for the rabbi.

Ocean Nutrition made it clear to every facility involved in the OU kosher production that the rabbi’s requirements must be fulfilled without a single compromise. Imagine the scene: every piece of production equipment, holding tank, pipe and belt... sparkling!

Next was the issue of identifying the kosher loads from the non-OU certified productions. For the on-site supervisor, a system of sealing containers (and kosherized equipment) was arranged. For the producer, every line manager and shift director had to understand the changes to standard production that the OU requires. Every worker involved then had to be instructed in new production protocols in order to comply with the OU kosher program. Word quickly spread around the company, “Remember that no QC testing can take place unless the Rabbi opens the seals and reseals it afterwards!!”

Kosherized equipment has to remain sealed to guarantee that no non-kosher product is run on the equipment before the next kosher production; even changes in steam system piping cannot take place unless the rabbi approves it.

The raw extracted oil then travels through a semi-refining process, a refining process, and finally a spray-drying process. Each plant had another set of OU kosher protocols to be instituted,



Ocean Nutrition made it clear to every facility involved in the OU kosher production that the rabbi’s requirements must be fulfilled without a single compromise.

new production equipment which needed different forms of kosherization, a new set of workers who must be prepared for the needs of the new kosher regulations, and various other kosher challenges to rise up and meet. Throughout the process, all levels of Ocean Nutrition’s staff were single-minded in their commitment to the very strictest level of kosher supervision.

Ocean Nutrition invested considerable resources in meeting the OU’s requirements. Complete new systems had to be installed, including separate steam systems and dedicated reactors, and all of it had to be done in such

a way as to guarantee that no cross-over between kosher and non-kosher would occur.

In some cases, the OU requirements extended past the usual kosher program. In order to keep Rabbinic Field Representatives on-site for extended periods of time, the OU needed to have separate quarters set up for the rabbis, including a *Succah* (a type of ritual booth) during the duration of the September holiday and changes in production times to allow the rabbi to rest on the Sabbath.

In total, it took more than seven Rabbinic Field Representatives, in addition to Rabbi Blugrond’s field oversight, three Rabbinic Coordinators, and countless meetings between senior management and our in-house Kashrut Law Consultants to give the best kosher supervision to Ocean Nutrition’s products imaginable. As Rabbi Argentar put it, “Ocean Nutrition was very obliging in making sure the job was done well, to the mutual benefit of Ocean Nutrition and the kosher consumer.”

The word has spread, and manufacturers around the globe know the address for the highest quality kosher Omega 3 fish oil is Ocean Nutrition, under the proud and exacting kosher supervision of the Orthodox Union.



Rabbi Chaim Goldberg

serves as the Orthodox Union’s rabbinic coordinator for Ocean Nutrition and many other fish companies, as well as potato and oil companies.

MARKETING TIPS

If You’ve Got It—Flaunt It.

- ✓ **Letting your customers know that you are OU certified should be as much a part of your marketing strategy as any other significant benefit your product offers.**
- ✓ **Be sure the OU logo is clearly visible in your advertising—either on the product label or elsewhere in the ad.**
- ✓ **Feature OU certification on your website.**
- ✓ **Ask our marketing department how best to reach the kosher consumer—thousands of them contact us every day about food products they can buy, places they can shop and eat, and information about kosher in general.**
- ✓ **Plan special promotions around Jewish holidays: Passover (March/April), Rosh Hashanah (September) and Chanukah (December) are the most widely observed.**

Culture for the Masses: The Complexities of Yogurt Certification

By Rabbi Andrew Gordimer

YOGURT WAS FIRST PRODUCED thousands of years ago. Dairy history and legend indicate that yogurt originated in Iran or Turkey. One story has it that an ancient Turk was carrying milk in his goatskin for some time, whereupon he noticed that the substance had developed into a thick, creamy mass (precipitated by the bacteria in the goatskin and the warm temperature). This new product was referred to as yogurt.

In 1900, a Russian biologist named Dr. Ilya Metchnikoff, of the Pasteur Institute in Paris, was able to isolate bacillus cultures for yogurt production, marking the beginning of modern yogurt manufacture. Dr. Metchnikoff demonstrated that yogurt's bacteria fought dangerous germ bodies in the colons of mammals, and he theorized the positive effects of yogurt bacteria cultures on humans. Shortly thereafter, yogurt became a staple in the American diet, and the OU been has privileged to certify many brands for millions of kosher consumers in the United States and abroad.

Why is yogurt so popular that the general market and kosher consumer base have made yogurt one of the fastest growing dairy products throughout the world? There are two answers to this question: A) taste, and B) health benefits.

Yogurt is an ultra-pliable food which can be manipulated, filled, thickened and flavored in countless ways. Unlike most dairy products, yogurt has virtually

Why is yogurt so popular that the general market and kosher consumer base have made yogurt one of the fastest growing dairy products throughout the world?



no bounds. When one considers the multitude of flavors, fruit and confectionery fillings, thickeners and sweeteners used in the many varieties of yogurt available to us, it is clear that there are thousands of possibilities. (Ever heard of cheese with fruit filling, banana-flavored butter, sour cream with chocolate chips...? You get the picture.)

The health benefits of yogurt are quite unique. Its bacteria cultures (to be noted later in this article) assist in the digestive and gastrointestinal tracts, and they enhance overall immunity by attacking disease-promoting bodies throughout the body's food trail. It is even suspected that some infections and pre-tumorous conditions may be killed by yogurt's live bacteria.

Of all dairy products, yogurt is among the most complex in terms of its kosher requirements and proper supervision. To put it more precisely, if you take the kosher considerations of soft cheese and combine them with the kosher issues of ice cream, you come out with a basic framework for kosher yogurt.

BASIC PRODUCTION

All yogurt begins with milk. The milk's fat ratio may be adjusted by adding cream or non-fat dry milk.

Afterwards, sugar or artificial sweetener may be incorporated, and stabilizers — which create the desired consistency — are then fed into the yogurt mix.

The mix is usually then pasteurized, subsequent to which it is dosed with acid-based dairy cultures (most commonly *lactobacillus bulgaricus* and *streptococcus ther-*

Certification of kosher yogurt poses the issues of stabilizers and cultures related to soft cheese, alongside dealing with the many additives and flavors encountered when certifying ice cream.

YOGURT continued from page 7

mophilus), after which the cultured mass is left to incubate for a specific amount of time in closed yogurt vats.

Following incubation, fruit filling, flavors and even colorants may be added. The product is then filled into cups or tubs and is ready to go. (It is important to note that the only hot phase is pasteurization. The rest of the process is cold, ambient or warm.)

This seems pretty straightforward. Why, then, did we make certification of yogurt out to be so complex?

Let's go through some of the above steps again more carefully by category, from the perspective of a kosher certifier.

INGREDIENTS

Milk is milk. No kosher problems here (unless we are dealing with yogurt in lands which consume non-kosher varieties such as camel or pig milk or have inadequate milk regulations...)

Cultures, however, are another story. Most dairy cultures are grown in labs which handle kosher and non-kosher materials beyond the imagination. Some cultures are grown on surfaces which are non-kosher, and some are nourished with non-kosher nutrients. Shared culture equipment is another common issue. Cultures are kosher only when their environments and nourishments are fully kosher. Thus, we are working with pretty sensitive stuff.

Cream and non-fat dry milk, used to adjust yogurt fat ratios, are also kosher-sensitive. Cream can derive from non-kosher whey, called "whey cream," and it often shares equipment used for non-kosher whey cream manufacture. Non-fat dry milk can be dried in spray towers also used for drying non-kosher meats, cheese, etc. Proper kosher supervision is most certainly necessary!

When we get to stabilizers, we approach the most hazardous area of yogurt certification. The recent trend in the yogurt industry has been to increase the thickness of product, creating a "Swiss-style" consistency. The most common stabilizer to achieve this result is gelatin, most of which comes from the bones and hides of non-kosher animals.

It is for this reason that many varieties of yogurt bear no kosher symbol or feature just a generic "K", as the OU cannot certify them due to the presence of non-kosher gelatin. (It is noteworthy that the OU does certify kosher gelatin, manufactured by Norland Industries and Glatech Productions. Kosher marshmallows utilize these gelatin sources, and they are now available for the dairy industry as well.) Other non-kosher stabilizers contain a mix of gelatin and non-animal based substances.

Stabilizers present in OU-certified yogurt are starch or gum based. These stabilizers need proper kosher certification, as they can be processed on non-kosher equipment and can even contain trace amounts of gelatin.

Some fruit fillings, flavors and colorants can be non-kosher. Kosher status must obviously be verified.

KOSHER PRODUCTION:

The first thing that the OU needs to do when we certify a yogurt plant is to clear all ingredients as kosher. The next task is to determine if the plant also makes non-kosher product and — if so — evaluate whether or not the plant can handle an OU program in light of its non-kosher production.

There are four categories of non-kosher issues: (1) pasteurization, (2) post-pasteurization, (3) formulas and (4) kosherization.

(1) **PASTEURIZATION** Every material which is pasteurized is — of course — exposed to hot equipment. Non-kosher ingredients which are run through the pasteurizer can render it non-kosher. Although the OU does not permit the use of kosher and non-kosher identical ingredients in the same plant (such as kosher and non-kosher cream, non-fat dry milk, etc.), we need to see if gelatin or gelatin-based stabilizers are used. If so, they can render the pasteurizer and related equipment non-kosher, requiring kosherization after each non-kosher campaign.

(2) **POST-PASTEURIZATION** Once we have assured that the pasteurization system is kosher for kosher-certified production, we need to see if there are non-kosher ramifications of non-

kosher yogurt later on in the manufacturing process. Gelatin-based yogurt — as well as yogurt with non-kosher fruit fillings, colors or flavors — often shares the same incubation or storage tanks and fillers as kosher yogurt. This equipment must be reliably cleansed before it is used for kosher product, and tanks cannot hold kosher and non-kosher product for 24 hours or more. The OU assures that this is the case.

(3) **FORMULAS** When a plant processes non-kosher yogurt (or any other product, in general), the OU must carefully review formulas to verify that kosher yogurt utilizes only kosher ingredients. The more non-kosher production at a given plant, the more time and work will be required for the rabbinic field representative (RFR) to go through the books or computer records for formula review.

(4) **KOSHERIZATION** As noted above, non-kosher yogurt run-through a pasteurization system can require kosherization after it is processed. In this case, the rabbinic coordinator and RFR work out a system by which the plant's CIP routine meets kosherization specifications. The RFR reviews Taylor charts generated by the CIP to assure that necessary temperatures are reached, and he verifies production and CIP sequencing upon each visit as well.

Certification of kosher yogurt poses the issues of stabilizers and cultures related to soft cheese, alongside dealing with the many additives and flavors encountered when certifying ice cream. Complex...but delicious.



Rabbi Andrew Gordimer

serves as rabbinic coordinator for many Orthodox Union certified yogurt companies including, Ahava Food Corporation, Cabot Creamery, Hilltop Valley Dairy, Johanna Foods, Skotidakis Goat Farm and Wildwood Harvest Foods.

Leaving No Stone Unturned at...

Stonyfield Farm

By Chris Halvorson

WHEN A certifying rabbi first paid a visit to Stonyfield Farm, he tramped through the mud of rural New Hampshire to do it. He also got somewhat lost. That was back in 1984 when the yogurt company consisted of “seven cows and a good yogurt recipe.” Stonyfield Farm was located in rural Wilton, New Hampshire then, up a road so steep that milk trucks often had trouble scaling it in the winter.

Today, Stonyfield Farm is the largest producer of organic yogurt in the world and the Number Three yogurt company in the country, with net sales of \$174 million in 2004. Some 272 people are employed at its Londonderry, NH production facility. All of its products are certified kosher by the Orthodox Union. Not only does Stonyfield sell organic yogurt, but its relatively new Smoothies are soaring off the shelves; its YoBaby line for infants and toddlers is among the best-selling product for the company; its cultured soy offers an option for those who don't want to eat dairy; its frozen yogurts and ice creams are award-winners; and it recently entered the market for milk — the kind you just pour into a glass and drink.

From the beginning, back when CEO Gary Hirshberg, his business partner Samuel Kaymen, and their families were milking the seven cows, Mr. Hirshberg knew it was important to make a product that was healthy, delicious, organic, and of the highest quality. “OU certified kosher products are identified with quality, which makes it a good fit for us,” Mr. Hirshberg said. “We always wanted to be able to offer

the kosher market the best-tasting yogurt possible. We sell very well in New York and the Northeast, and we see the OU label as another tool to help us continue to expand our business. Just as the organic niche has grown, we expect the kosher niche to grow.”

In one sense, Stonyfield Farm products are “value-added” for the kosher consumer by supporting a healthy environment. The company was the nation's first dairy processor to pay farmers not to treat cows with the synthetic bovine growth hormone rBGH. Stonyfield also donates ten percent of its profits to environmental causes and it offsets 100 percent of its CO2 emissions from its facility, in an effort to reduce global warming.

Carol McLaughlin, Stonyfield's go-to person on kosher compliance, says that working with the OU for so many years means that certifications go smoothly. She is in constant communication with Rabbi Michael Morris in New York and Rabbi Gershon Segal in the Boston OU office. Both have been helpful when any supply issues have arisen. For example, Ms. McLaughlin said that the Boston office became involved when Stonyfield had an issue with a grape product provided by one supplier. It wasn't going to work and Stonyfield was in a rush. “The OU was able to help us find a new, OU-certified supplier on short notice. They were great,” Ms. McLaughlin said.

Recently Rabbi Avrohom Stone, field representative in New Jersey, did an educational presentation on kosher certification for Stonyfield's employees in Londonderry.



Greg Fonte, of Stonyfield's New York sales team, sees the OU certification as extremely important. “It opens opportunities for our customers, who recognize that products with the OU certification are made with premium ingredients. And in a practical sense, it means we can sell to everybody,” he said.

Chris Halvorson

is Web Writer/Editor at Stonyfield Farm

Rabbi Michael Morris

serves as the Orthodox Union rabbinic coordinator for Stonyfield Farm.

Stonyfield Farms: An OU Rabbi's Dream Company

By Rabbi Gershon Segal

In my periodic visits to Stonyfield Farms over the years, I cannot help noticing the remarkable growth of the manufacturing facility and the impressive expansion of the product line with creative new yogurt products. Fortunately, while the company grew, it also maintained the wholesome nature of its products and continued to develop and produce yogurt products with a high level of quality control.

Since the Orthodox Union Kosher Certification Program at Stonyfield has been seamlessly integrated into the quality control system of the company, all new products and ingredients were submitted in advance to the OU for approval, thereby, maintaining a current Schedule A and Schedule B.

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Organic Valley Dairy Cooperative:

Independent and Farmer-Owned

By Jim Pierce

ORGANIC VALLEY is one of America's leading national organic brands and is the nation's largest independent and farmer-owned organic dairy cooperative. Organized in 1988, Organic Valley boasts 689 certified organic farmer/owners in 20 states. It owes its success to two pivotal guiding principles. The first is staying independent and true to its mission: keeping small and mid-sized farmers farming. Of equal importance is its commitment to forming long-term partnerships with the 53 quality manufacturing facilities that co-pack its products.

In the last year alone, the cooperative achieved record success both in sales (up from \$156 million in 2003 to \$204 million) and in farmer recruitment (133 new farmers). We increased number of acres and cows brought into the organic system (up to more than 113,000 acres and 26,000 cows). The Organic Valley brand is the top-selling organic milk in both mainstream supermarkets and natural foods outlets along the entire Eastern seaboard.

In 2001 when our goal was established to consolidate kosher oversight among our plants and packaging, we sought out another quality partner capable of meeting the unique needs of our dynamic cooperative. The Orthodox Union swiftly satisfied that need and has proved to be a solid partner making us proud to display the OU logo on our products ever since. Our Rabbinic Coordinator is Rabbi Andrew Gordimer. His level of expertise, service, understand-

ing and (occasionally) forgiveness is truly impressive.

ORGANIC AND KOSHER: A SOUND, WORKING PARTNERSHIP

In August of 2000, while in Long Island on a plant visit, I took the opportunity to visit the Orthodox Union headquarters in Manhattan. The visit that followed with Rabbis Safran, Elefant and their staff remains unsurpassed to this day for its education and hospitality! The rabbis and I had a long, fruitful discussion, educating each other about the challenges and similarities between organic and kosher compliance. Just as the Orthodox Union logo is the gold standard of kosher oversight, the USDA Organic Seal has quickly gained consumer confidence as the internationally recognized symbol of compliance to organic standards.

Organic standards are production guidelines which mandate such things as humane treatment of livestock along with water and soil conservation, while strictly prohibiting others such as the use of synthetic chemical fertilizers and pesticides, genetically engineered technology, and irradiation of food for sterilization. As with kosher compliance, organic certification for farmers and processors involves scheduled and surprise inspections and audits to verify compliance.

In the end, we concurred that the two compliment each other well in terms of assuring customers that their



Organic Valley brand is the **top-selling organic milk** in both mainstream supermarkets and natural foods outlets along the entire Eastern seaboard

food meets strict, inspection-verified quality standards — a “*shidduch*” in the words of Rabbi Safran.

The organic food industry is growing at 20 percent per year as more and more consumers recognize the nutritional and social benefits of organic farming practices. Many of these consumers are the same careful shoppers that seek out kosher certification. For Organic Valley the decision to boast of kosher compliance on our certified organic labels has proved to be advantageous not only to our sales staff but more importantly to our loyal base of customers.

As stewards of the earth who use nature as their teacher, Organic Valley farmers produce more than 130 delicious organic products. Look for the Orthodox Union logo on Organic Valley milk, cream, half and half, soy drinks, butter, cream cheese, cottage cheese, sour cream, and juice. Organic Valley products are sold in food cooperatives, natural foods stores and supermarkets throughout the country. *For further information, contact Organic Valley at 1.888.444.MILK or visit www.organicvalley.coop.*

Jim Pierce

is Certification Coordinator, Organic Valley Family of Farms.



An Axelrod to Grind at the OU

By Jerry Gaube

WOLF AXELROD began the Axelrod Company in 1896 by establishing a retail store and wholesale distribution business on Madison Street on Manhattan's Lower East Side. As the business expanded, Axelrod began to manufacture more dairy products in small "cheese factories" in upstate New York, along the Canadian side of the St. Lawrence River. Each factory produced a few hundred pounds of cheese per day and packed it in steel drums that were iced and then shipped to New York City by train.

In 1920, Wolf Axelrod retired and left the business to his son, Abraham, to manage. Under Abraham's direction the company flourished, concentrating its efforts on "soft" cultured cheeses and sour cream. Headquarters were moved to Brooklyn, with another branch in Freeport, NY.

After more than 15 years of various mergers and partnerships, Abraham had transformed the business into a full dairy products company, in the process setting strict quality standards for his suppliers, thereby making the Axelrod Company renowned for its wonderful products and reliability.

In 1949, a pint size container of plain Axelrod yogurt first appeared in many local New York City grocery

stores, quickly followed by Axelrod labeled cottage cheese and sour cream.

In 1961, Abraham sold the company to Crowley Foods, with his son Herbert succeeding him as President and CEO. Under Herbert's leadership, the Axelrod Company expanded from Massachusetts to Florida. Today, Axelrod

products are a staple and tradition for many families in the Metropolitan New York area, New Jersey, New England and Florida. The OU symbol is proudly displayed on our yogurt as well as on all Axelrod cultured products.

At Axelrod, we firmly believe that our yogurt sets the quality standard, despite the fact that we still are a relatively small regional company. We attribute much of our success to the stringent standards OU certification stands for and the wonderful business relationship we have had over the years with the Orthodox Union, which works so hard to assure compliance with its kosher requirements.

Jerry Gaube

is Director of Marketing, Crowley Foods.

Rabbi Michael Coleman

serves as Orthodox Union's Rabbinic Coordinator for Crowley Foods.



continued from page 9

Another impressive dimension of Stonyfield's response to its kosher certification is the way in which the company itself monitors its raw materials. In addition to welcoming unannounced visits from the OU's rabbinical representatives, Stonyfield conducts a self-audit every two weeks. Quality control personnel developed a checklist based on a Schedule A and inspect the labels on each and every raw material to insure they bear the appropriate kosher marking as indicated on Schedule A. Therefore, it is no wonder that the rabbinical inspections go so smoothly at Stonyfield Farms.

Ingredients range from frozen cultures which are packed in small cans and stored in a deep freeze environment, to large totes of fruit fillings. Since all ingredients and products at Stonyfield are kosher, there is no need to monitor various formulations, and since all the equipment is used exclusively for kosher products, no kosherization is necessary. Kosher consumers can feel comfortable that they are not only receiving the highest quality in yogurt products, but that they are also receiving the highest standards in kosher certification as well.

Rabbi Gershon Segal

serves as the Orthodox Union's Rabbinic Field Representative at Stonyfield Farms and in the New England region.

OU POLICY REVIEW 1

Companies are requested to maintain a list of alternate plant personnel to escort the RFR during inspections. This procedure helps circumvent extended delays, allows the RFR to adhere to his route, and contributes to maintaining the efficiency of a plant's kosher program.

OU POLICY REVIEW 2

Companies are reminded to double-check label proofs, and confirm that the correct OU designation appears. The OU-D symbol is required for products containing dairy, or produced on dairy equipment. OU-P denotes that a product is specially certified for Passover. The standard OU symbol indicates that a product is pareve and does not contain dairy, but is not certified for Passover.

Who could have predicted
a booming business for t

OU KOSHER

Bringing Boom for Business & Con

By Rabbi Dr. Eliyahu Safran and Bayla Sheva Brenner

IF THE 70'S ADAGE, "you are what you eat" still holds true, we're all becoming one big kosher world. Ever since the Biblical commandment to the Jewish nation over three thousand years ago, keeping kosher has remained a vigilant way of life for millions of Jews. But who could have predicted that kosher food production would become a booming business for thousands of food companies across the globe? What is motivating more and more food industry executives to jump on the kosher certification bandwagon? Perhaps the more appropriate question – what's driving an ever-increasing number of consumers to look for the kosher symbol on the products they buy?

"Americans spend close to \$486 billion on food and about \$150 billion of that is kosher-certified, whether they know it or not," reports Menachem Lubinsky, President of Integrated Marketing Communications, a New York company that researches the kosher market. And those consumers who specifically look for kosher products spent \$6.65 billion in 2002, a figure that grows every year. Marketing experts report that obtaining kosher certification has become a surefire way for a company to gain market share for a minimal investment.

CHOOSING THE CADILLAC OF KOSHER

One need only take a walk down the aisles of any supermarket in virtually every city and town across the country to identify the most popular kosher symbol. Designed in 1923, in response to a request from *Heinz* for a logo on its newly certified products, the now familiar letter "U" within a circle appears on more than 400,000 food and food-

related items – over 60 percent of America's kosher-certified products, making it synonymous with the very concept of kosher food.

"OU is the Cadillac of kosher," says Rabbi Yisroel Bendelstein, Rabbinic Coordinator (RC) at the OU. "It represents the largest and most trusted kosher certifying agency. Companies know that products bearing the OU emblem have the greatest market penetration and, in turn, accrue the greatest profits." In over 70 years of kosher-certifying service, the OU has developed into the largest organization of its kind. Close to 300 OU Rabbinic Field Representatives (RFR's) regularly inspect nearly 6,000 certified plants in 82 countries around the globe. A team of Rabbinic Coordinators, supported by an ingredients registry staff and a comprehensive computerized database, provides unmatched depth of expertise in *halacha* (Jewish Law) and food technology.

Companies, previously leery about the cost of certification, soon realize that the benefits of OU supervision dramatically outweigh the very reasonable charges. They come to view it as minimal investment for maximum gain. Aside from the substantial monetary profit of going kosher, these food operations enjoy the advantage of working with the largest rabbinic and research staff, trained in food science, who thoroughly understand the manufacturing process, the raw ingredients, the chemistry of additives, and the details of the procedure each manufacturer employs to convert raw



goods to finished products. The rabbis make themselves available to field questions and provide support 24/6 (in deference to the Sabbath). "Everyone we have worked with at the OU has been both informative and helpful," says Scott Werme, Plant Manager for Agri-Mark, Inc., producer of butter and skim milk powder, located in Springfield, MA. Mr. Werme reports that Agri-Mark, Inc. has witnessed advancement in market penetration and a 25 percent increase in sales.

The rabbis make themselves available to field questions and provide support 24/6 (in deference to the Sabbath). "Everyone at the OU has been informative and helpful," says Scott Werme, Plant Manager for Agri-Mark, Inc., producer of butter and skim milk powder, located in Springfield, MA. He reports that Agri-Mark, Inc. has increased market penetration and witnessed a 25 percent growth in sales.

As kosher consumers develop a more refined palate, many will actually call a company inquiring as to whether a particular item is available in a kosher form. The marketing team records the request and, after considering the idea, chances are good that it will contact the OU for certification. "The advantage to OU certification is its solid infrastructure," says Rabbi Gordimer, RC at the OU. "When a product becomes kosher, the whole kosher base notices it. If a company were to try to target a group of two million people, even on a one-time basis through the regular media, they would pay a hundred times what it would cost them for a full year of OU certification. The value is such a highly marketable tool." Once a company certifies a product, it often calls on the OU again to certify more products. "That's a strong indication that they've profited."

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thousands of food companies across the globe?

Consistent Quality to Consumers

OU is the Cadillac of kosher.

It represents the largest and most trusted kosher certifying agency.

KOSHER CONSCIOUSNESS AT HOME AND ABROAD

Along with the established draw of the Kosher-observant Jewish population, the market is witnessing an upsurge in “kosher-conscious” Jews, non-Jews with religious dietary restrictions, such as Muslims and Seventh-Day Adventists, as well as individuals with dietary health issues (such as lactose intolerance). And then there’s the rest of the population that regards the OU symbol as an assurance of wholesomeness and quality. The OU kosher symbol has come to be as universally recognized and respected as the Good Housekeeping Seal.

This demand has led retailers like Wal-Mart, Albertson’s, Publix, Ralph’s Food 4 Less, Kroger, Safeway, Key Food, Pathmark, Winco Foods, Shop ‘n Save, Shop Rite, Dominick’s, or Trader Joe’s to greatly increase the number of kosher products they stock. In the business world, the bottom line is sales. Food companies and supermarkets that carry kosher certified products find that the tell-tale symbol boosts a product’s selling power.

“Our business has grown rapidly over the past 14 years and being able to



supply OU certified kosher products has definitely aided this growth,” says Dawn Sharkey, Kosher Coordinator at Van Drunen Farms, in CA, a major producer of frozen and dried food ingredients for the food industry. “Our kosher ingredients can be found in numerous markets, cereals, baby food, sauces, and snack foods worldwide. Having the OU symbol instills confidence that our products are made of the highest quality ingredients, under the highest quality conditions.”

Yakov Yarmove, Corporate Ethnic Category Manager, Ethnic Marketing and Specialty Foods for Albertson’s national chain of supermarkets, positions himself between the current kosher boom’s suppliers and its retailers. Albertson’s boasts kosher sections in all of its 1,750 stores. For 18 years, he has overseen the buying of kosher products and retail sales promotions for kosher specialty stores and supermarkets with a designated kosher section. “In the last eight to ten years, the kosher category has exploded and expanded from noodles, borscht, matzo and gefilte fish to all kinds of items,” declares Mr. Yarmove. “When it comes to mainline brands, when it comes to kosher, there’s a definite push to bring that item in. Kosher is on the radar now.”

It was only a matter of time for word of the ‘kosher’ economic advantage to reach beyond American shores. According to The Development

Council, the global marketing arm and service hub for Hong Kong-based manufacturers, traders, and service exporters, Asian producers have been steadily moving into the

kosher business in order to develop specialty foods. “The kosher market has added value for them,” says Rabbi Moshe Elefant, the OU’s Executive Rabbinic Coordinator and newly named Chief Operating Officer.

Add Argentina, India, Spain, Egypt, China and Turkey to that list. Juana Szpigiel of Yanovsky, a major matzah producing company in Argentina, says kosher certification has opened up new markets for her company throughout South America and the United States and reports a 25 percent increase in sales. Mr. Jayaprakash, Export Manager of Agro Dutch Industries Ltd., of Punjab, India, one of the world’s largest companies of fresh mushrooms and processed mushrooms (in jars and cans), says Agro Dutch increased its sales by 15 percent. “OU is our buyers’ requirement,” declares Jayaprakash. Also in India, the Global Green Company reports its sales rising 30 – 50 percent. “Working with the OU has been a very rewarding experience for Global Green,” says Ashutosh Joshi, Deputy General Manager, International Marketing, “and a personal pleasure as well.”

The following incident illustrates the strength of a good reputation. TABA, a Turkish-based organization that seeks to increase the business volume between Turkish and American companies, organized a workshop with Istanbul Exporter Unions. Many Turkish companies attended. They discussed possible strategies to employ in order to increase

Companies know that products bearing the OU emblem have the greatest market penetration and, in turn, **accrue the greatest profits.**

sales to the USA. Mr. Altug Metin, President of OU certified Bella Chocolate, and Chairman of Istanbul Exporter Unions, and primary organizer of the workshop, gave this as his chief recommendation to the participants: “Being an OU certified producer is one of the most important parameters for enabling the sale of products to the USA.”

He should know. Metin’s own company realized a 40 percent increase in sales – primarily in private labels in the U.S. and Canada. Mr. Suat Zeytinoglu of SIBAS Gida San ve Tic A.S., a Turkish company that produces sun-dried tomatoes, capers, and pepperoncini, relates a 30 percent increase in sales in the US and Israel, which he directly attributes to his OU certification.

Businesses that want to remain viable and flourishing know that providing the customer with an excellent product must always remain their primary focus – no matter in which country or language. “Having OU certification gives the customer the satisfaction and assurance that the products they are purchasing have been monitored from inception with all ingredients checked and of the highest standard,” says Anel de Silva, Managing Director/CEO, of Heritage Teas Premium Services Ltd., in Sri Lanka.

THE IMPACT OF THE KOSHER BASE AND THE OU SYMBOL

For the past 40 years, the number of OU certified companies has approximately doubled every decade. Among these are industrial companies that produce ingredients needed by the manufacturing sector. “There is a lot of competition out there and the demand is very clear. The industrial companies need to be kosher to supply the retail market,” says Rabbi Avrohom Gordimer. “There is a clear demand to meet this



When it comes to mainline brands, when it comes to kosher, there’s a definite push to bring that item in.

Kosher is on the radar now

specification, or they will not be able to sell. They are finding that they must be kosher in order to supply the retail market and to maintain their contacts.”

Burt Flickinger, a managing partner with Strategic Resource Group, a retail consulting firm, stated that the retail chains have set out to bring in a profusion of kosher food. “The national chains saw that they were losing kosher customers, not only during the holidays, but every day of the week,” he said. They took action and reaped the rewards of their strategy. Menachem Lubinsky says that the average supermarket carries 65,000 products, of which 25,000 bear the kosher symbol.

The OU attributes much of its growth in recent years to the private label companies that insist on the organization’s certification. One by one, manufacturers are responding to the demand. “The OU satisfied the requirements of our largest private label customers, so that we could maintain and grow joint business opportunities,” says Lois Ford, President of Bellows House Bakery in North Walpole, NH, producer of cookies, brownies, blondies, and other baked goods. “Certification has also enabled us to quote to larger companies with wide distribution that specify kosher certification as a pre-requisite to quotation. We believe certification gives

our company a competitive edge in the marketplace.” Consider the following scenario. A large pastry manufacturer, using hundreds of ingredients, applies for kosher certification. Ten of its regular suppliers lack adequate kosher supervision. The pastry company informs them that they either go kosher or it can no longer use their services. Each time another manufacturer attains kosher status, this domino effect accelerates and the kosher food market rapidly expands further.

Once, the OU had to inform an ice cream manufacturer that due to a lack of cooperation, supervision would be discontinued. The OU distributed notices to that effect. The owner of the company wasted no time phoning the OU’s main office (in an obvious state of panic). “Rabbi, I just purchased this company for \$30 million,” he said. “Without the OU, it won’t be worth two cents. Almost all our business is private label supermarket brands, and if we lose your symbol, we will lose most of these accounts.”

Kosher certification’s powerful influence on the consumer continues to impact every area of food production, distribution, and sales. “OU certification adds an element of panache to our accreditation in the food ingredients industry,” says Patricia Penter, Kosher Administrator for Wild Flavors, Inc., in Erlanger, KY. “Customers, familiar with the OU, know that we are holding ourselves to a higher standard, too. The OU’s quality standards are in many ways similar to the business and ethical standards of our company.”

Companies on the production end agree with Penter’s assessment of the OU’s positive affect on their overall operation. “We had to improve our control of ingredient purchasing and receiving,” says Sam Shannon, Plant Manager of Weis Markets Ice Cream, in



Sunbury, PA. “This resulted in better record keeping and eliminated mistakes. I really enjoy the challenge of living up to the commitment.”

KEEPING AN EYE ON QUALITY – AND PROFIT

Contrary to popular belief, obtaining kosher certification isn’t achieved through a rabbi reciting a blessing over food products, or, for that matter, an entire plant. Kosherizing a food production or industrial facility requires an involved, meticulous process. With the OU’s state-of-the-art technical capabilities, new companies interested in becoming kosher may undergo a process of equipment sterilization. From the initial application through the possible kosherizing of the plant takes an average of four to six weeks for a new company to become certified; for new products of already certified companies, the process

New Survey Reveals: 21% of Americans Eat Kosher

(CHICAGO) Americans of all backgrounds are buying kosher products with the full knowledge that they are buying kosher, is a conclusion of a new study by the Mintel Organization, a global supplier of consumer, media and market research. The report, which is due to be released later next month, will be the second study of the major research organization in the last two years. Based on a survey of 2,042 carefully chosen sub-

jects, the Mintel study sheds new light on the strength of the ever-growing kosher industry. 15% of the surveyed said they buy kosher “all the time” while 58% responded that they “occasionally” buy kosher. 55% gave health and safety as a reason for their kosher purchases with 38% saying they were vegetarians. Mintel researchers note a significant increase in kosher consumption by Halal customers. 16% of those who buy kosher said that they observe Halal. The new Mintel study will also feature a detailed demographic profile of who is buying kosher as well as important comparisons to the 2003 study on five major food categories.

(Reprinted from Kosher Today Online.)



by Rabbi Avrohom Stone

The Case of the **Baffling Bialy**

The question had haunted him for years. If there was one sore point in an otherwise legendary career, it was Mac's inability to find a problem with the OU.

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AZING AT HIS REFLECTION in the gritty office window, Milton "Mac" Donald, Kosher Private I, was impressed at the new dimension seven days without shaving gave his appearance. "Not bad," he mused to himself. "At least I look the part." A wisp of confectionary sugar escaped from the bubble gum cigarette dangling from the corner of his mouth as Mac leaned back in his creaking, rusty chair and pondered yet again his 30 years of solving kosher mysteries. Absorbed in his thoughts, his gaze fell upon a dog-eared copy of the latest Behind the Union Symbol that lay open on his desk. "Sure, sure, sure, yada, yada, yada, same old, same old," he muttered under his breath. "660,000 certified products, 5,100 facilities, 81 countries and growing. Those OU rabbis are just too good at what they do. How come OU always seems to get it right?"

The question had haunted him for years. If there was one sore point in an otherwise legendary career, it was Mac's inability to find a problem with the OU. Sure, there had been stellar moments. Like the time he uncovered the Low Carb K symbol accidentally placed on sugar coated pasta fried in lard. Or when his determined investigation found that the Fishy K allowed a company to produce "certified" octopus hearts. But, despite a long and glorious career of finding mistakes of kosher producers and certifiers, Mac had never discovered

“You see, Mac, it’s all a question of the way a person looks at things. From my position, the issue is obvious. However, from where you’re sitting, I don’t expect you could ever notice it...”

a reason to fault the OU. “Those rabbis are just too good,” he muttered again to himself. “What I wouldn’t give to catch them making a mistake, at least once.” It was the prize he craved more than anything in life. It had become his obsession.

Mac’s reverie was interrupted by a voice informing him, “You have voice-mail.” “Thanks, Edith” Mac responded mindlessly to his secretary, who stood by his desk pointing at the flashing message light. Picking up the phone, Mac listened to the first words of the message and then sat bolt upright. “Sufferin’ schedule A!” he gasped, as his bubblegum cigarette dropped to the floor, “It’s the kosher mystery of the millennium!” “What is it Mac?” the secretary asked breathlessly. His face ghost white, Mac stopped to compose himself before answering. “The OU on Grandma Bailey’s Butter Bialys is missing!”

Edith’s scream and the sight of her fainting on the floor could not prevent the thought from entering his mind in the excitement of the moment. His face flushed as he stopped short to revel in it. “This might be it!” Mac gloated inwardly. “Thirty years and I finally will get the OU!” Stepping over Edith, he ran toward the door, smashing the candy cigarette on his way out and feeling like a gumshoe for the first time in years.

Mac Donald, Kosher Private I, rushed like a madman to the scene. Grandma Bailey’s Bialys was on the far side of town, deep in the dark recesses of a fading industrial park that had clearly seen better days. Mac flung open the car door and raced into the facility, rushing down the hall to the production area. He had barely gotten his hair and beard covers on when he collided with the plant manager, a heavyset man named Ron DePlant. Hair disheveled, eyes open wider than jumbo bagels boiled in bitter batter, the man responsible for the operations of the facility was clearly a man in crisis.

“Calm yourself,” Mac urged DePlant, sitting him down on a barrel marked “rework” that was full of

recently returned product. “Get a grip, Man! Now, tell me how this happened from the beginning, and don’t you dare leave anything out.”

THE PROBLEM

“Well,” DePlant responded, trying hard to focus, “as I’m sure you’ve heard, Grandma Bailey’s finally received OU approval to begin selling our bialys in packages with the OU symbol. All our cake products have been OU D for years, but the OU never certified our trademark bialys because they contained butter, and OU cannot certify bread if it is dairy. As the kosher market boomed, public outcry for our bialys to become OU was so overwhelming that it couldn’t be ignored. 10,000 people picketed our headquarters. We had to do something. Marketing forced R&D to reformulate the product using an artificial butter flavor, the rabbi kosherized the equipment, and we started getting orders for OU bialys like they were going out of style.”

DePlant pulled an old label from the rework barrel he was sitting on and took a new one from the shelf in front of him. “Just look at the labels yourself and you can see the difference.” Sure enough, Mac observed, the one without the symbol says butter in the ingredients, but the one with the OU says artificial butter flavor. That OU sure makes the label more attractive and appealing to the consumer. Just kind of jumps right off of the label at you. Definitely a brilliant marketing move. Very interesting, Mac thought, but not very helpful.

“Thanks for the history lesson, DePlant, but what’s all that got to do with the price of poppy seeds in Poughkeepsie?” Mac drummed his fingers impatiently.

“But that’s the whole problem!” yelled DePlant, who had begun to lose his composure yet again. “The rabbi arrived here an hour ago and went through his normal

inspection with Ken Yukleenit, one of our maintenance guys. When he finished, he looked around and got this concerned look on his face. He went upstairs to the main offices and then, five minutes later, old Grandma Bailey herself came vaulting down to the plant floor and told them to quarantine the OU film immediately and to keep packing the bialys in the old film. I was on my extended plant manager executive lunch break when the rabbi was here and, by the time I returned, he had rushed off to an emergency. We sat down and analyzed our production from beginning to end. We haven’t changed a thing since we got the OU approval for the bialys. There’s not a reason in the world that our product doesn’t meet OU standards. I tried to ask old Grandma Bailey but she had already left for her pole vaulting practice. That’s when we called you. Only the famous Mac Donald, world’s most renowned kosher Private I, could figure this one out.”

Mac shook off the compliment with his trademark humility. “You’re right about that,” he acknowledged. He paused to gather his thoughts. Years of kosher investigation had taught him to retain his laser focus, but the excitement was pulsating within him. There was no other explanation for the course of events other than a mistake on the part of the OU. His life’s dream was within his grasp. He just had to remember to think clearly.

“We must carefully retrace the rabbi’s steps,” he told the sweating DePlant. “Only then will we know what he might have seen.” The plant manager summoned the maintenance person who had escorted the rabbi through the facility. He appeared seconds later.

“Show us exactly where the rabbi went, what he said and what he did,” Mac barked at the nervous



Ken Yukleenit. “Don’t leave out even one detail, no matter how small!”

The three men walked the route the rabbi had taken, speaking to every employee on the way. Yukleenit stated that the rabbi had first gone to receiving. Mac almost came to blows with Justin Thyme, the warehouse foreman, over Mac’s insinuation that receiving personnel had been using an out-of-date schedule A discovered laying in the receiving office. A violent confrontation was avoided when the current schedule A the department regularly used was found in the hands of a Q.A. person checking raw material inventory.

The same scenario was played out throughout the factory. Bill Melater, head of raw material procurement, had shown the rabbi his file of current letters of certification for all raw materials, his current schedule A and the kosher requirements listed on the purchase orders he issued. The two R&D technicians, Ben Dare and Don Dat, had shown him that all formulae tested in plant line trials had contained only approved ingredients. The company’s chief of engineering, Taylor Weal, had reviewed temperature and CIP charts to the rabbi’s satisfaction. Macon Doe, shift supervisor, described how the rabbi had audited batch records, formulae and had confirmed the complete separation of dairy and pareve production processes, lines and equipment. Erin Caushun confirmed that the rabbi had reviewed the final graphics approval she gave to the new pareve labels.

It took nine hours for the three men to methodically retrace the rabbi’s steps and meticulously analyze every question, comment and observation he had made to the plant staff. There was nothing out of order. Exhausted, they returned to where they had begun their tour. An exhilarated Mac Donald sat down on the rework barrel that was now his throne, as he savored his long-coveted victory. “Gentlemen,” he announced to DePlant and Yukleenit, “we have just reviewed this plant from top to bottom, and there is not a single item amiss in the kosher program. There is only one conclusion; that the vaunted OU rabbi has made a tragically mistaken determination regarding your product.”

“Sorry to disappoint you Mac,” came a confident voice from behind. There stood the OU rabbi, flanked by old Grandma Bailey and her 26 foot vaulting pole. “I know you’ve waited 30 years to catch us slipping up, but you’re just going to have to wait longer.”

“Darn tootin’,” echoed old Grandma Bailey, shaking her pole menacingly at Mac. “This rabbi is 100% on the mark. He knows exactly what he’s doing!”

“Oh, come off of it, rabbi,” Mac sputtered. “We both know that I, the world’s greatest living kosher Private I, after a thorough, comprehensive and

extensive review, didn’t see anything amiss here. Admit it, Rabbi. The OU blew it this time – and you know it!”

The rabbi looked sympathetically at Mac before responding, for what he said next would convince Mac that pursuit of his dream would be forever futile. “You see, Mac, it’s all a question of the way a person looks at things. From my position, the issue is obvious. However, from where you’re sitting, I don’t expect you could ever notice it....”

What was the issue that the OU rabbi found?

FOR THE SOLUTION, TURN TO PAGE 23

OU PROFILE

Rabbi Avrohom Stone



BORN AND RAISED IN ST. LOUIS, Rabbi Avrohom Stone was educated at St. Louis Rabbinical College. He pursued his graduate and post-graduate studies for thirteen years at the famed Rabbi Aaron Kotler Institute of Advanced Studies in Lakewood, N.J. He received rabbinical ordination from one of Israel’s leading scholars, Rabbi Moshe Shmuel Shapiro. Rabbi Stone and his wife, Frada, who recently received her Masters of Social Work degree, reside in West Orange, N.J with their seven children, ages 11 to 21.

Rabbi Stone is actively involved in his local community, since 1996 teaching the daily Daf Yomi (Talmud study) session to a group of 12 professionals. Since 2002 he has served as the founding rabbi of Congregation B’nei Torah in West Orange, and as a member since 1996 and as administrator from 2003 of the Metrowest Kashrut Board.

At the OU’s Kashrut Division, Rabbi Stone serves as Rabbinic Field Representative throughout the state of New Jersey. Rabbi Stone’s multi-faceted talents and outgoing personality have enabled him to share his expertise and experience at in-service training seminars for OU certified companies throughout the country, as well as to deliver kosher-related educational lectures to Jewish communal groups.

Rabbi Stone is actively involved in the professional development of new OU field representatives as well as in the enhancement and upgrading of the new OU kashrut computer system. Rabbi Stone’s great facility with computer programs and technology has enabled both OU companies as well as RFRs to adapt new technologies to streamline and enhance the inspection process. He is a star of the attractive brochure of OU Kosher, which features photos of him taken during a plant visit.

A frequent contributor to *Behind the Union Symbol*, Rabbi Stone’s enlightening and highly entertaining essays have elicited much interest from our readers, including, you will agree, the piece you are reading now.



Shaimos

Shaimos

A Brand Name That Has Withstood Time

By Rabbi Yisroel Bendelstein

“And whatever Adam called each living creature remained its name forever.” In an age confounded by consolidations and mergers, this verse from the second chapter of the Book of Genesis is a goal all companies can only hope to achieve. Of course, OU kosher certification and high quality control are all proven ways of maximizing the marketability of a product, but brand name recognition too is as important a gauge as any in selling a product. It is no secret that consumers tend to flock to the “household” names they are most familiar with. The big question is if any of these names can make it through another merger, let alone last forever.

So far in the history of the world one individual, an institution all by himself, was granted a unique privilege to assign names that would withstand the test of time. This individual was Adam — the first man to inhabit this world. God endowed Adam with this right by bringing before him all creatures on the face of the earth to name. So Adam called a bird-bird, lion-lion, giraffe-giraffe, whale-whale, and so on and so forth. These creatures that were branded by Adam have remarkably retained their original names to this very day.

Roughly a year ago, a company approached the OU for kosher certification of its product. The brand name of this product prides itself in matching Adam’s feat for being around since time immemorial. The product is called “Shaimos.” Over the millennia this product’s name has never changed and remains to this very day.

So what exactly is this “Shaimos” product? Literally, the term in Hebrew means “Names.” More specifically, it refers to anything that contains the sanctity of God’s name. This includes all sacred texts, writings and objects. Jewish tradition prohibits old and worn out sacred texts (including photocopies) to simply be disposed of in the garbage. On the contrary, they must be accorded a dignified burial in a cemetery. A single Jewish household can collect a substantial amount of these holy materials throughout the year, and especially before the Passover holiday when the house is cleaned and scoured thoroughly, the household seeks to properly dispose of them.

As the garbage is not an option, these sacred articles that have now accumulated with considerable weight

have traditionally been hauled to a single truck centrally located in town, which will make the trip to the Jewish cemetery. The lugging out of the house, into the car and onto the truck can be a most exhausting exercise.

Enter Mr. Benny Goldstein, a Jewish scribe quite familiar with this dilemma, to invent his brainchild — the “Shaimos Box.” It is a box made of strong corrugated material measuring 12” x 7” x 15” that can hold up to 20 pounds of the sacred articles, and that can be bought in any Judaica store throughout the United States. When full, the box is mailed to a pre-addressed burial site and handled by OU rabbinic field representatives to ensure a kosher or proper interment.

When pursuing OU certification Mr. Goldstein commented, “The OU is the best for certifying products. I wanted the best. It’s as simple as that.” Rabbi Moshe Elefant, Executive Rabbinic Coordinator, explained the deeper meaning behind the OU acceding to Mr. Goldstein’s request declaring, “The OU is concerned with all aspects of Jewish life.” Clearly the nature of the Shaimos product is wholly different from any of the other 400,000 food and other products the OU certifies. Nevertheless, Rabbi Elefant continued, “We see the Shaimos Box as an opportunity to extend our expertise to assist the community in all of its needs.”

Additionally, the Shaimos product underscores a central motif in Judaism — that as vital as the food we eat are the sacred writings and rituals that nourish our souls. According to Jewish belief, the main purpose of life is to facilitate the spiritual nourishment of the soul so that it may be elevated and reach its highest potential in this world and the next. Therefore, anything that assists the soul in its mission through life in this world must have a dignified burial.

Rabbi Eliyahu Safran, Senior Rabbinic Coordinator, put it this way: “The body serves as the vehicle for the soul’s sojourn in this world, and it is for this reason that we accord it all the dignity and respect that we do in the same way in which we ‘dispose’ of the body, even though we know that ultimately the body simply decomposes. So too, the sacred texts allow for the soul’s development and enhancement; therefore, they too are accorded the same great respect in the manner of their disposal, even if they too ultimately disintegrate.”

Rabbi Yisroel Bendelstein

serves as rabbinic coordinator for many major Orthodox Union certified bakeries.

Rabbi Lenny Steinberg

serves as the Orthodox Union rabbinic coordinator for Shaimos Box.

KOSHER

WORLD'S BEST-KNOWN KOSHER TRADEMARK

KOSHER BOOM continued from page 15

can take as little as a few minutes. “These companies are more than willing to comply with our rigorous kosher program,” says Rabbi Yisroel Bendelstein, “since they know it’s their ticket to acceptance anywhere in the world, maximizing their sales and profits.”

Linking forces with the OU also gains companies a vast resource of information. The OU staff thoroughly understands manufacturing processes, raw ingredients, chemistry of additives and the procedures manufacturers employ in converting raw goods to finished products, implementing all these resources in the kosher certification process. “The fact that we have a large staff allows people to develop an expertise in a certain area or industry,” explains Rabbi David Bistricher, RC at the OU. “Companies often call us for ingredient information or to ask where they can find certain raw materials and I am able to provide them with a list of suppliers. They know they can turn to us.” Valerie Joslin, Kosher Coordinator for O AT KA Milk Products Coop., Inc, producer of assorted canned and bottled dairy and non-dairy specialty beverages, located in Batavia, NY, has worked with the OU for 15 fruitful and instructive years. “The OU has offered an excellent source for networking and obtaining alternate suppliers,” she reports. “Our rabbi understands our production processes and products and assists us with providing our customers with superior kosher products.”

With the quality factor in place, the next crucial step is getting the word out about the product. The OU symbol has time and time again served as a key marketing tool. Valley Research, Inc. in South Bend, IN, an operation that provides enzymes for the food industry, attributes its whopping 75 percent sales increase to OU certification. “OU certification is a market driven requirement for most of our products,” says Theresa

Sears, company Vice President. “New markets were opened for us – juice, wine, cheese and more and *worldwide*. It’s a win-win situation. The kosher program is the best part of my job.”

The OU on the label, and all that it represents, continues to broaden companies’ customer base, opening up countless uncharted markets. “There’s a universal perception of quality when products carry the OU symbol,” says Bill Levine, President of Sarabeth’s Fruit Spreads of the Bronx, NY. “It has allowed us a large private label contract with a company needing kosher certification. New markets, stores carrying only kosher products in New York, Florida, California, Massachusetts and major urban centers, have opened up to us.”

Dick Earle, President of Dakota Brands International, producer of frozen and refrigerated bagels and roll dough, located in Jamestown, ND agrees that having the OU label has been a major contributor to his company’s success within the retail grocery industry. The company also adopted *Pas Israel* status,

OU is the most widely recognized and respected kosher certification by both consumers and prospective customers.



a particular kosher stringency that requires a Jewish person to participate in the baking process – which widened his customer base even further. “OU is the most widely recognized and respected kosher certification by both consumers and prospective customers,” says Earle.

Perhaps the most obvious demonstration of the impact kosher certification was the public’s reaction to the news of Nabisco joining the OU kosher camp. Both the national print and broadcast media featured the stories of America’s beloved Oreo’s kosher coming-of-age, as well as Campbell’s Vegetarian Vegetable soup. Ditto the OU’s endorsement of Triaminic Cough Syrup earlier this year, making it the first mainstream over-the-counter medication the OU has deemed acceptable under the kosher dietary laws. No kosher story in recent memory has received the media attention that OU certified Triaminic did, starting with a feature story in the New York Times’ science section and followed by a major AP story. All eight varieties of the liquid decongestant for children now bear the OU trademark symbol. Efforts to develop an OU-certified kosher Maalox are being completed.

Right next to “bagel” and “shmooze,” “kosher” sits securely at the top of the list of the most popular Jewish expressions in the American vernacular. Although we live in a society where trends come and go, as long as people need to eat, they are going to buy food products that assure quality, integrity, and according to all indications – OU kosher certification.

Rabbi Elyahu Safran

is Senior Rabbinic Coordinator and Editor-in-Chief of this publication.

Bayla Sheva Brenner

is Senior Writer in the OU Department of Communications and Marketing.

*When Dreams
Become Reality:*

The Marvels of OU Special Productions

By Rabbi David Bistricher

It is without question that the primary objective of companies which commit themselves to kosher certification is to broaden their market and increase sales.

However, the nature of the kosher program might also restrict a company from pursuing other markets that could compromise its integrity. For example, for companies that typically manufacture OU-D certified products, pursuing a pareve non-dairy market may be a total impossibility due to a host of difficulties, including compatibility of ingredients and equipment, as well other utility concerns. Moreover, companies that cater to a non-kosher market might consider kosher certification for products that qualify, but cannot do so at the expense of sacrificing the non-kosher line.

To accommodate the needs of OU certified companies and the kosher consumer, the Orthodox Union allows for special productions under the careful watch of an on-site field representative. Although placing demands on the OU RFR and plant personnel, these special runs give companies and plants the flexibility to certify products which would be impossible under ordinary circumstances. With the proper safeguards and controls, what was once perceived as unfeasible can become reality.

KOSHERIZATION

The “kosherization” of a production line is often very involved, and at times is the most complicated aspect of a special run. According to kosher law, equipment assumes the status of the product it manufactures. For example, if a non-kosher item is produced on a line, the status of the line becomes non-kosher. Subsequently, all products manufactured on that line will be rendered non-kosher as well. This is also the case with equipment which manufactures dairy products. The objective of the kosherization is to sanitize equipment in a similar fashion to a plant’s standard CIP or COP procedures, thus bringing the equipment’s status back to neutral.

However, Orthodox Union requirements are often more rigorous than the typical CIP or COP. The machinery and equipment must be thoroughly clean of residue from previous productions before the kosherization can begin. This is not always a simple task. Rabbi Moshe Perlmutter, a New Jersey OU RFR with expertise in the area of kosherizations, acknowledges that “one of the most



Rabbi Moshe Perlmutter at Polaner, a division of B & G Foods Inc. Roseland, NJ checking steam kettle’s level of water to determine if more water needs to be added for kosherization

Michigan Dessert Corporation

Our company is a custom developer and manufacturer of specialty dry mix products for major restaurant chains and food processors in the United States and overseas. Richard Elias and Gary Freeman have owned and managed the company since 1983 and have seen a tremendous growth in customer base and product variety. We are based in a 50,000 foot technical development and manufacturing center in Southeastern Michigan and we design a wide range of custom foods and process them from there. Michigan Dessert handles regular and sugar free puddings, meringues, cakes, bakery items, pie fillings, mousses and glazes.

Our company has seen an increasing demand from food processors that use our dry mixes in their finished retail applications that we offer more and more kosher items. Upon investigating the wide range of koshering agencies available we found that the one most universally accepted was the Orthodox Union. Our choice was simple.

Rabbi David Bistricher

serves as Orthodox Union rabbinic coordinator for Michigan Dessert Corporation.



Rabbi Yitzchok Friedman supervising special production at UNIQEMA, New Castle, DE

The Orthodox Union allows for special productions under the careful watch of an on-site field representative.

challenging aspects of a kosherization is the first step, ensuring that the equipment is properly cleaned from residue of prior non-kosher runs." A kosherization will not commence until an OU field representative assesses the equipment's cleanliness, and confirms that it meets OU standards.

The kosherization method of machinery varies, depending primarily how the equipment is used.

Equipment that manufactures with dry heat, such as an oven, is kosherized by exposing it to dry heat at an intense temperature. Lines used "wet" are kosherized with boiling water. An OU RFR must be meticulous when assessing whether the water actually reaches boiling. As Rabbi Perlmutter points out, "One could mistakenly think that water in a kettle reaches boiling by glancing at a jacket's gauge of a steam-jacketed kettle, which is only a reflection of the jacket's heat not the water. Or, if a company uses direct steam injection during the kosherization of a tank, bubbling water is not an indication of boiling. It is comparable to blowing into chocolate milk with a straw."

Ordinarily, a downtime of twenty-four hours is required before the kosherization may commence for "wet" lines, but may be avoided when caustic is run through the lines along with the boiling water. Downtime is not required for lines that are kosherized with an intense dry heat.

Kosherization is only required when a line's production is hot. Lines used at ambient temperatures do not require kosherization, although they must still be thoroughly cleaned to remove any residue from previous runs. The one exception to this rule involves tanks or totes used to contain wet product mixtures for a minimum period of twenty-four hours. In these rare

instances, kosherization is accomplished with boiling water.

Kosherization can be highly complicated. Accordingly, the Orthodox Union ensures that the on-site supervising rabbi must possess not only an expertise in kosher law, but a clear understanding of equipment and production.

REVIEW OF INGREDIENTS

Raw materials used for special productions are pre-approved by the OU office and attached to the plant's Schedule A. The on-site RFR at the plant reviews the ingredients and matches them to the Schedule. The meticulous review and watch by the RFR is crucial, since the plant may use a compatible non-kosher or dairy version of an ingredient contained in a non-certified product. If an item does not appear on the Schedule A, production cannot begin until the OU office approves that ingredient. Due to the time constraints faced by plant personnel during these special runs, it is critical that all ingredients intended for OU certified labels are submitted to the Orthodox Union office in a timely fashion for approval.

SIGNATURE

It is common practice for the on-site OU field representative to sign the labels of industrial items that are produced under special supervision. In these instances, the "Rabbi's Signature" is listed on the letter of certification as an additional restriction. This requirement informs all plants that use this raw material, and their supervising RFRs, that the product must be manufactured under special production and an on-site RFR was present. If a company or supervising RFR discovers that the signature is absent from an ingredient whose LOC requires it, the matter must be handled with the utmost urgency. A call must be placed immediately to the manufacturer or distributor of this item,



and a lot letter for this product must be obtained from the certifying agency.

The signature can typically take several forms. It might simply be a handwritten signature by the on-site field representative. However, when large volumes of product are manufactured, signing each label by hand can become very labor intensive. Rabbis may also use stamps, or special stickers that cannot be reproduced.

CONTROL OF LABELS

Since special productions can only occur at specifically designated times in the presence of a supervising rabbi, it is critical that excess inventory of OU labels is carefully safeguarded. This is typically done by placing any extra OU labels in a dedicated area, which is locked and sealed by the supervising RFR. Only the supervising rabbi has access to the key of the storage area. When labels are computer generated, the OU has employed in some instances a system where OU labels are restricted and can only be printed by a company's computer for specific code numbers. These procedures guarantee that the Orthodox Union has sole control over the labels and the usage of the OU trademark.

PASSOVER PRODUCTIONS

During the week-long festival of Passover, the kosher community is restricted from consuming many items that are acceptable during the rest of the year. Ingredients that are ordinarily considered kosher might be prohibited during this time. Lately many companies have realized that there is an opportunity to pursue a relatively open market that would further strengthen their base and increase sales. This has resulted in a recent widespread boom of Kosher for Passover certified products.

Due to the sensitive kosher nature of the Passover period, items certified as kosher for Passover are commonly manufactured with the presence of a supervising RFR. This is typical unless production at a plant is considered inherently kosher for Passover all year round. The rigors of a standard production are all the more present for Passover certified labels. However, companies ultimately reap the benefits of greater profits.

OTHER CHALLENGES

Cooperation from company personnel is key to a successful special production. Therefore, it is crucial that plant personnel clearly understand OU requirements and protocol. Rabbi Yitzchak Friedman, a Maryland OU RFR, comments, "I always make sure that plant personnel clearly understand the process, and not assume that they are relying on instructions from a predecessor, or supervisor. When possible, written instructions are even better and give operators something to review and work with."

Moreover, sometimes challenges of manufacturing on a special production basis occur even before the OU RFR sets foot through the plant's door. Gary Pantelis, QA of Michigan Dessert Company, points out another aspect from his experience of producing dry dessert mixes under special supervisions. According to Gary, "We don't have a real problem when it is an issue of segregating lines, equipment, or production schedules. The challenge is working around the logistics of arranging a production and coordinating our receipt of orders, getting a new product approved, and scheduling a production date in an expeditious manner to meet our customers' needs. The OU has been very responsive and helpful in this regard." New products manufactured on a special supervision basis also need to be reviewed and approved by the OU office beforehand. However, the OU commits itself to processing requests as quickly as possible to allow certified customers to meet their orders.

The dynamics of special productions are undoubtedly highly involved. The OU has risen to the occasion, and allows companies that ordinarily manufacture non-kosher or dairy products, the flexibility to pursue kosher or pareve markets. Through meeting many demands and developing an excellent working relationship with the plants, the OU services its certified companies and the kosher consumer by offering an unparalleled level of supervision.



Rabbi David Bistricher

is an Orthodox Union rabbinic coordinator specializing in the fish, baking and vegetable industries.



The Case of the Baffling Bialy

THE SOLUTION FROM PAGE 18

".....because," the rabbi said, pointing directly at Mac, "the problem is right there!"

"Now, hold on a minute Rabbi!" Mac yelled, jumping up and clenching his fists, "there's no reason to get personal. Don't go blaming me for your mistake!"

The rabbi looked stunned. "I'm sorry, Mac," he answered in his professional and courteous manner, "You clearly misunderstood me. I wasn't accusing you. In fact, I wasn't even pointing at you at all. I was pointing at the barrel you're sitting on."

Mac looked down at the rework barrel. Then, as the truth slowly dawned on him, he began to turn red as a tomato in a tumbler.

"That barrel," the rabbi continued, "contains rework from returned products. Companies often use returned product, or product that doesn't meet spec, as ingredients in future batches. They literally "rework" it into new product. As the labels state, the bialys in that barrel were made with butter. That rework was used in today's production, thereby making today's bialys product dairy. Allowing that dairy bread product to bear the OU pareve symbol would betray the trust the public has in both Grandma Bailey's and OU. As soon as old product ceases to come in for rework, we will kosherize again and then Grandma Bailey's Butter Flavored Bialys may be packaged with the OU pareve symbol."

Mac Donald, world's foremost kosher Private Investigator, held a piece of the shiny bialy wrapper in his hands as he slinked toward the door. Leaving the facility, he could be seen staring at the film and muttering over and over, "Curses! Foiled again!"



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