

THE DAF HAKASHRUS



A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FOR THE OU RABBINIC FIELD REPRESENTATIVE

DAF NOTES: *The following article describes a behind-the-scenes look at the kosherization process involved in preparation for the production of the first exclusively © Cholov Yisroel product. In an accompanying article, Rabbi Eli Gersten discusses a halachic issue pertaining to the kashering of this cheese company.*

CHOLOV YISROEL RICOTTA PRODUCTION

BY RABBI AVROHOM GORDIMER
RC Dairy

On Sunday evening, November 25th, I joined Dr. Simcha Katz, Chairman of the OU's Joint Kashrus Commission,

Rabbi Avrohom Juravel, head of OU Kashrus Technical Services, and a group of senior OU Kashrus staff for a special kashering and production at a well-established ricotta cheese company. The evening's protocol was to kasher the cheese facility's cholov stam equipment and to supervise an overnight production of cholov Yisroel ricotta for an ©-certified 'heimishe' manufacturer of upscale Italian specialty products.

Despite weeks of detailed pre-planning and discussion with all parties involved - the challenges of the kashering and the many unexpected events which transpired made the event unforgettable.

The program was to proceed as follows: A tanker truck of cholov Yisroel milk under a very reliable and widely-accepted hashgocho was to arrive at 10-10:30 PM at the ricotta plant. The OU mashgiach would personally remove the seals at the tanker's top and back hatches (which are opened at the cholov Yisroel farm when the milk is pumped into the

tanker and must remain closed until arrival at the cheese company) and verify that the seals' numbers match the bill of lading (shipping document), to be provided by the tanker's driver. Normally, a bill of lading for a cholov Yisroel tanker is signed and dated in Hebrew by the farm's mashgiach, or the tanker's seals bear the farm mashgiach's insignia (and possibly a specific dated code); it is critical for the mashgiach at the receiving facility to see the farm mashgiach's signature and assure that it corresponds with the seals, or to verify that the seals bear the farm mashgiach's insignia. Otherwise, there is no guarantee of cholov Yisroel status. The first production-related task for our mashgiach was to obtain such verification.

The milk would then be pumped into a silo (massive holding vessel) at the cheese facility, from whence it would travel to heated ricotta vats, where vinegar and salt are dosed into the milk, resulting in its coagulation into ricotta cheese. The cheese would then be removed from the vats via strainers, while whey (excess residual liquid) would flow out. The workers would then pass the (very hot) cheese, held by hand in strainers, to large perforated plastic buckets on a portable metal table, which would be wheeled over to mixing tanks, where the cheese would be blended to attain uniform texture.

The ricotta would then be cut so as to allow excess whey to drain out and would be immediately pumped out and packaged into 30-pound sealed plastic bags (while still hot - 180 degrees F!) and then placed into boxes for immediate chilling.

To accommodate the kashering and production, the OU team's planned protocol consisted of the following steps:

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KASHERING FROM A DAVAR GUSH PART TWO

RABBI ELI GERSTEN
RC Recorder of OU Psak and Policy

I was recently present for the kashering of a cheese plant. The cheese is first heated in a large vat (*kli rishon*) and then transported via strainers into an unjacketed mixer vat. Since this second vat has no independent source of heat, the product that is poured into the vat is considered to be an *irui kli rishon* of *cham litch tzonon*. However, since the consistency of the cheese at this stage is that of a semi solid, it is likely that we should view this cheese as a *davar gush*. How do we kasher the mixer that had an *irui* of a hot *davar gush*, and the pipes that continue on from there?

As we have written in the last issue, the *Mishnah Berura* 451:114 brings the *Mahari Viel* 193 who says that kashering from a *davar gush* requires the use of an *even miluban* (a super heated stone). Unfortunately, I had left my *even miluban* at home, and we were faced with the real world issue, of what should a Mashgiach do to accomplish the level of kashering of an *even miluban*.

The way we dealt with the issue was to pump the boiling water from the heated vat into the mixer and insert a steam hose into the mixer. This accomplished that the hot water came back to a boil in the mixer. Our steam hose has taken the place of the *even miluban*.

The *Pri Migadim* (O.C. 253:32) and the *Pischei Teshuva* (Y.D. 94:7) say that a *davar gush* that is immersed in a liquid in a *kli*

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1. Drain the boiler and refill it with fresh water. Chazal ruled that *ta'am* (flavor) of a substance may penetrate the walls of a *keli* (vessel) and pass through to the *keli's* inner or outer contents (*Yoreh Deah* 92:5). In this case, the boiler's steam heated previous vats of cholov stam ricotta (in which the steam was contained in pipes lining the vats - called "jackets" - and passed heat through the jackets to the cheese), and the steam, which may have absorbed *ta'am* of cholov stam ricotta through the vats' walls, then traveled back to the boiler for future use. Since this steam has possible *b'lios* (absorbed taste) of cholov stam, it could not be used and new steam was needed.
2. Receive the tanker of cholov Yisroel milk and verify its status. This includes checking that all seals applied under hashgocho at the cholov Yisroel farm are unbroken and only opened by the cheese plant mashgiach, and corroborating the seals' numbers against the farm mashgiach's *simonim* (signs of certification, such as a signed bill of lading matching the seal numbers, or the presence of the farm mashgiach's name on the seals, as detailed above). It was also necessary for the mashgiach to assure that the amount of milk pumped into the ricotta system for our production matched the amount of milk in the cholov Yisroel tanker.
3. Make sure that the silo into which the cholov Yisroel milk is to be unloaded is totally clean. A visual inspection with a flashlight suffices.
4. Kasher the cheese vats. These vats are the equipment in which the milk is converted into cheese at temperatures above 180° F, and they are heated with steam jackets, as above. They therefore require *hag'alah* – a boiling water purge. Similarly, the stirring utensils, used directly in the heated vats, need *hag'alah*.
5. Kasher the portable table, mixing tanks, cutting machine and pump. Since these *kelim* do not have their own heating sources and are thus classified as having the status of a *k'li sheini, iruy* (kashering by pouring or hosing boiling water) suffices.
6. Unseal the cheese strainers dedicated by the previous kashrus agency for cholov Yisroel production and verify their status. We were told that the kashrus agency which previously supervised this facility had sealed cholov strainers dedicated exclusively to cholov Yisroel use, which was a real plus, as these strainers would not require kashering or special cleaning for the evening's production. However, verifying the cholov Yisroel status of these strainers proved to be a real challenge! (Please keep reading...)

Aside from the significant amount of kashering and related verification, as well as witnessing the entire production, the mash-

giach was to take an active role in two of the manufacturing processes.

Firstly, many poskim rule that even rennetless cheese such as ricotta is encumbered by the requirement of *Gevinas Yisroel* (see *Chochmas Adam* (53:38) and *Aruch Ha-Shulchan* (YD 115:16)), and - according to many opinions - the requirement of *Gevinas Yisroel* necessitates that a Yisroel actually making the cheese by adding the coagulant. (See *Shach* (*Yoreh Deah* 115:20) and *Gro* *ibid.* s.k. 14.) In order to accommodate these positions, our mashgiach was to personally dose each vat with the vinegar/salt blend, as vinegar serves as the active ingredient which turns milk into ricotta.

Secondly, special-production items always need a significant kashrus security seal. In this case, OU Headquarters prepared uniquely-coded tamper-proof adhesive strips with the mashgiach's initials and the ricotta plant's USDA code and name. The mashgiach would retain these adhesive strips in his sole control and issue the amount needed - to be applied in his presence - to the outer boxes of ricotta, thereby assuring full security of the contents. Simultaneously, I issued a hashgocho certificate (required on an industrial level as proof of kashrus) stating that the ricotta was only certified when bearing the specific adhesive strips and other specific identifiers, thereby limiting certification to the exclusion of any ricotta not bearing the coded strips and identifiers.

As we finally commenced our work at the plant, it became clear that we were in for many surprises.

The seals of the cholov Yisroel tanker truck did not have a mashgiach's name or other readily-apparent *simon* on them, nor was the bill of lading signed by the farm mashgiach. After an hour of investigation (contacting the trucking company's dispatcher, attempting to get through by phone to the farm mashgiach, speaking with the various powers that be at the cheese plant), I decided to take another look at the tanker's seal in the dark night. I could not see anything except for the seal numbers, but I felt all sides of the seal for any clues of kashrus information, when I suddenly detected that the backs of the seals all bore a colorless above-surface engraving of the kashrus agency's symbol! Whew...we were all relieved, and we again then checked each seal against the bill of lading and were confident that all was fine. (The next day, I related this to the kashrus agency, which took immediate steps to address this issue for future shipments.)

The ricotta strainers also posed very serious concerns. In preparation for the kashering, I was told by the ricotta company that all cholov Yisroel strainers were sealed and signed by the mashgiach from previous (non-OU) productions, as noted above. Well...not exactly. What we encountered was that the large plastic straining buckets were indeed sealed in tight plastic wrapping - absent the signature of any *simonim* from the previous mashgiach! After in-

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sheini will also attain the status of a *kli sheini*. Even if it is subsequently removed from the liquid, it will still retain the status of a *kli sheini*.

In our case, as the cheese gets poured from the strainers into the mixer, initially we have *irui davar gush*. However, as the mixer fills with cheese, more and more liquid accumulates. Eventually, the *davar gush* (cheese) is floating in a pool of liquid. At that point the contents of the mixer are considered to have the status of a *kli sheini*, and any subsequent pumping of this cheese will

only be considered an *irui kli sheini*. We can therefore kasher the rest of the pipes by simply draining the hot water through the pipes.

In summary to kasher from a *davar gush*

1. A steam hose can be used instead of a heated stone.
2. Once a *davar gush* is immersed in a liquid it attains the status of a *kli sheini*.

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tial indications that the ink with which the mashgiach signed his name on the plastic wrapping was accidentally smeared off, a bit of investigation led to confirmation that the plant's workers had actually broken the mashgiach's sealed and signed wrapping and later re-wrapped the buckets on their own, without any kashrus supervision. Rabbi Juravel directed that new, unused buckets were therefore needed, as the 'cholov Yisroel' buckets lacked halachic identifiers; the plant workers immediately took out a large drill to bore holes in the new buckets.

It also turned out that the metal ricotta strainers were not sealed and that the previous kashrus agency had actually kashered these strainers upon each cholov Yisroel production. Rabbi Juravel examined the strainers and noticed that each one had a highly-curved rim, which one cannot properly kasher via *hag'alah* due to the likelihood of food residue embedded in the rim. Rabbi Juravel immediately obtained an acetylene torch and spent 10 minutes carefully kashering the rim area of each strainer (and also running the torch's intense flame over the strainers' holes). As we all watched, behold the fire generated sparks and thin smoke as it sizzled and spread beneath the rims of the strainers, for the fire was consuming food residue which was in the rims' curvatures. This was live proof that the *libbun chamur* - heavy torching - was truly called for.

The ricotta vats had metal piping which descended into them, thereby becoming submerged in the heated milk as it becomes cheese. How could this piping, which has actual *cholov stam* food contact, be kashered? After all, the piping was suspended above the vats, with only the lower part of the piping entering the vats and thereby having exposure to *hag'alah*; the top sections of the piping were in the air, well above the vats. Rabbi Juravel again reached for the torch and showed the mashgiach how to perform *libbun kal* - light torching - to the piping. Since the piping was only used for liquid and had no residue, and really required *hag'alah*, *libbun kal* could be done, as it is an effective form of kashering wherever *hag'alah* is needed.

There was one more area of slight concern. The mixing tanks did not have their own heat source and were to be kashered via *iruy*, pouring or hosing boiling water into them. Rabbi Eli Gersten, one of the OU's halachic specialists, suggested that the kashering

should accommodate the position of the *Maharshal* (see *Yoreh Deah - Shach* 94:30) that a *davar gush* - a thick, hot solid which is no longer in a *k'li rishon* - has the same rule as food in a *keli rishon*, therefore requiring a *keli sheni* which contacted it to undergo *hag'alah*. In our case, if we were to assume that the 180-degree masses of ricotta curd, following drainage of whey, had the status of a *davar gush*, then *hag'alah* would be mandatory according to the *Maharshal*, reasoned Rabbi Gersten. In order to satisfy this possibility, it was directed that a steam hose would be inserted into the mixing tanks once they were filled with hot water exiting the vats, so that the steam would heat the water in the mixing tanks and achieve a real *hag'alah* there.

We were now finally ready to kasher. We had verified the status of the milk, its silo was totally clean, and the equipment was prepared.

The vats were filled with hot water and set to a boil, steaming with mist. However, our thermometer indicated that the water temperature was still quite low, irrespective of the appearance of intense heat. Once the water was visibly boiling and its temperature was verified as such, the metal strainers and stirring equipment were submerged for *hag'alah* as well.

The boiling water from the vats was piped to the mixing tanks, where the steam hose was inserted, creating a boil in the tanks and filling the room with thick mist. The water from the mixing tanks was directed through the equipment attached thereto (cutter, pump and filler), flushing through the whole apparatus. Rabbi Gersten instructed that boiling water from the vats be splashed on the portable tables as well.

Throughout the night, the mashgiach was present to supervise the entire production and to personally dose the vinegar and salt blend into every single vat of cheese. Upon completion of the production, he distributed the coded OU adhesive strips to the packaging crew and observed the packaging and labeling process, taking with him the unused adhesive strips for future occasions. (Rabbi Juravel directed that these strips also be used to mark each piece of equipment after it was kashered.)

The entire kashering session was utterly impressive, attesting to the complexity of industrial kashrus and the expertise which it requires and which the *tzibbur* has the right to expect.



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NON DAIRY CREAMER produced by Gordon Food Service – Grand Rapids, MI contains dairy ingredients as listed on the ingredient panel but the ©^d designation has been inadvertently omitted. Consumers should be aware that “Non Dairy Creamers” may, and often do, contain dairy ingredients.

BASKIN ROBBINS SUGAR FREE SMOOTH & CREAMY HARD CANDY PRALINES 'N CREAM (UPC #070312470242) produced by BestSweet – Mooresville, NC contains dairy ingredients as listed on the ingredient panel. A limited amount of this product was distributed while bearing the © symbol without a dairy designation. Future packaging will be revised.

A limited number of **SHOPRITE FAT FREE NON FAT/LIGHT FAT FREE YOGURTS** produced by Wakefern Food Corp. – Elizabeth, NJ have been erroneously distributed with foil lids that bear an unauthorized ©^d symbol. Affected flavors include: Blueberry – UPC #04119045736, Cherry – UPC #04119045733, Lemon Chiffon – UPC #0411904572, Peach – UPC #04119045734, Raspberry – UPC #04119045735, Strawberry – UPC #04119045738, Vanilla – UPC #04119045771. These products are being withdrawn from sale.

RABBIS ON THE ROAD

Kashrut Experts Visit Small Communities

OU Kosher today announced an exciting and much-needed new initiative to respond to the kashrut needs and questions of Jewish communities throughout North America, particularly of smaller ones distant from major Jewish metropolitan areas.

The focus of the new service includes strengthening of local vaadim (kosher councils) and their standards through on-site visits to the communities and their supervised establishments; working with and reinforcing the local rabbinate, kashrut personnel and lay leadership; offering seminars and educational programs both to the local kashrut professionals as well as to the vaadim; and evaluating and enhancing standards and policies as needed.

The program, the latest educational venture of the Orthodox Union's Kashrut Division, the world's largest and most respected kosher certification agency, was described by Rabbi Menachem Genack, CEO of OU Kosher, as “a natural outgrowth of the ‘OU Kosher Coming’ programs initiated during the past 18 months to reach out with OU Kosher education to yeshivot, day schools, Bais Yaakovs and seminaries throughout North America.”

“Just as we seek to educate the younger generation in the basics of kosher law, we simultaneously want to extend a helping hand to communities throughout North America to assure that their kashrut needs are consistently met,” Rabbi Genack said.

Rabbi Eliyahu Safran, OU Kosher V.P. of Communications and Marketing has been appointed to spearhead this new kashrut outreach to Jewish communities. Rabbi Eliyahu Ferrell, OU Kosher rabbinic coordinator who has been working with Rabbi Safran to coordinate many of the OU Kosher educational projects, will also assist in responding to the needs of the communities.

The program is already in its beginning stages as Rabbi Yaakov Luban, Executive Rabbinic Coordinator of OU Kosher, has performed reviews of several local vaad supervisions around the country in response to the communities' requests for OU Kosher to evaluate their kashrut standards and policies.

In addition to visiting individual communities, Rabbis Safran and Ferrell will encourage the communities' rabbis and lay leadership to forward all kashrut-related issues, concerns and questions (known as *sha'alot*) to the OU's rabbinic leadership and poskim as well as to OU Kosher rabbinic coordinators with specific industry expertise. Rabbi Safran emphasized, “We are committed to responding in a timely fashion, and when necessary to have our experts establish personal contact with the rabbis and their designated kashrut personnel.” He made it clear that the purpose of the program is “to reinforce the local rabbinate and the local vaad – to enhance and educate, but not to take over from them.”

Commenting on this innovative new venture on OU Kosher's educational menu, which includes the highly successful ASK OU programs and seminars directed by Rabbi Yosef Grossman, OU President Stephen J. Savitsky emphasized, “Reaching out educationally to our communities with intensive and hands-on kashrut education is very much part of the Orthodox Union's mission and ongoing agenda through NCSY (the OU's youth program), the Pepa and Rabbi Joseph Karasick Department of Synagogue Services, and the Department of Community Services. I am confident that OU Kosher's leadership, implementing Rabbi Safran's creative programming, will enhance our many successful Torah ventures throughout North America.”

MAZAL TOV TO ...

our devoted RFR in Tulsa, OK **RABBI YEHUDA WEG AND HIS WIFE** on the recent marriage of their son Menachem Mendel to Itty Kalmenson of Brooklyn, NY.

our devoted RFR in Raleigh, NC **RABBI PINCHAS HERMAN AND HIS WIFE** on the Bar Mitzvah of their son Sholom Levi Yitzchak on Parshas Tetzaveh.

our devoted Rabbinic Coordinator **RABBI YOSEF GOLDBERG AND HIS WIFE** on the engagement of their daughter Malkie to Eli Langer of Staten Island, NY.

our dedicated RFR in Atlanta, GA **RABBI NORMAN SCHLOSS AND HIS WIFE** on the marriage of their son Zev Yitzchok to Avigayil Soroh Brill of Atlanta, GA.

our dedicated RC for Trademark Compliance **RABBI BARUCH CYWIAK AND HIS WIFE** on the birth of their daughter Miriam.

our dedicated RFR in the Netherlands **RABBI ARYEH LEIB HEINTZ AND HIS WIFE** on the engagement of their son Sholom Dov-Ber to Rivky Shuchat of Brooklyn, NY.

our devoted RFR in Chicago, IL **RABBI SHLOMO NEWMARK AND HIS WIFE** on the birth of their grandson Yosef Chaim to their daughter Mrs. Chani Pearlstein of Lakewood, NJ.