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Is This Any Way to Do Business? In a Word, Yes!

BY RABBI DR. ELIYAHU SAFRAN, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF, BTUS


Certainly many businesses are established with the desire to “do things differently.” But, somewhere along the way, the drive to succeed – to maximize profits – seems to push any idealism out of the way. But in those rare instances when we see a business not only succeed but maintain its commitment to doing business “differently” we should all celebrate because such complete success implicitly and explicitly speaks to our highest values.

The “difference” is obvious in their book as well. Not just another book outlining “how to” create and build a profitable business, this book is a comic book! In format, content and message, Seth and Barry are determined to demonstrate that different can be better.

Seth, a comic book aficionado from his childhood, felt that this would be the perfect way to show that learning about business can be as much fun as making a business successful. After all, who made the rule that said that hard work and fun had to be incompatible?

Seth did not set out to create a successful business. A successful business was, in actuality, small potatoes for Seth. What he really set out to do was to change the world, one drink at a time! The book furthers that mission by sharing the story of Honest Tea’s growth, its ups and downs, its challenges and its resourcefulness. It presents the story in anecdotal form that combines narrative and business advice. In short, the exact book that Seth Goldman and Barry Nalebuff would have liked to have read before they began their company.

While they were both new to the beverage industry, they brought some incredible talent to the task of building their business. Seth was a graduate student at the Yale Business School. Barry Nalebuff was his favorite professor at Yale School of Management. Their teacher-student relationship was defined by its warmth and caring, and it readily bore fruit. Honesty infuses every aspect of their business and their book. They share embarrassing mistakes (buying a bottling plant that seemed to eat money; mismatched labels; moldy tea; and the errant glass shard!) as comfortably as they note their growth from a struggling start-up to a division of Coca-
Cola in just ten years; from $1.1 million in sales in 1999 to $75 million when Coke took control. Sounds successful to me.

But I have interacted with many successful businesses and executives during my years at OU Kosher and it is not the success of Honest Tea that draws me. It is the “different” that speaks to me.

From the outset, I was struck by the “different” in Seth Goldman and his company, Honest Tea. From our very first conversations, his focus was broader than the everyday concerns of running a business. Even when talking about the most humdrum aspect of the business, his conversation inevitably included his many ideals and lofty aspirations for his company.

Seth’s Spring 2008 article published in “Behind the Union Symbol,” has him giving voice to some of those aspirations in this way:

“Justice, justice shall you pursue...”

I know there are many interpretations of why the word justice is repeated, but the one that appeals to me the most is that while justice is clearly something that we should pursue, it’s also a way of being – how we pursue justice counts. So if we were Honest Cigarettes and we sold to RJR Reynolds for a billion dollars and gave all the money to charity, we have pursued righteousness in one sense but betrayed our faith in another because we would be marketing a product that, when used as directed, kills people.

So at Honest Tea it is important that we seek to express our values not with our profits (which are still quite modest) but with every bottle we sell.

First, we make a product that is healthier – with less than half the calories of most beverages on the market. Second, everything we sell is certified organic by the USDA, helping prevent the use of millions of pounds of chemical fertilizers, pesticides and synthetic ingredients. And finally, many of our varieties are Fair Trade certified ensuring that the people picking our tea leaves are able to invest a portion of our sales into their own community projects.

And of course, it’s been personally satisfying to make a product line that is entirely OU certified – not just so all my family members can enjoy it, but because the OU symbol is another way to guarantee that Honest Tea holds its suppliers to the highest standards.’

As he said, “At Honest Tea it is important that we seek to express our values not with our profits (which are still modest) but with every bottle we sell.”

An amazing young man! He models a kind of menschlichkeit we should all aspire to in life and
in business. So, after reading his book, my very first comic book (I think my father would have approved!), I wanted to share how impressed I have been with his values and ideals, values and ideals that should be part of our everyday lives and goals.

Before I did, I wrote to him to find out a bit more. He was gracious and quick to reply to my two main questions, “What was the main point you wanted to communicate in the book?” and then, “You deal with so many important values in the book. How do all of these relate to your maintaining OU Kosher certification for your products?”

In responding, Seth wrote that he sought to speak to the challenges and rewards of a mission-driven business in a profit-driven world. He and Barry wanted to help aspiring entrepreneurs understand that it is possible (though not necessarily easy!) to transform their idea into an actual enterprise. To do so, they need clear beliefs, a strong point of difference, an effective management team and a powerful passion that will enable the team to persist and persevere.

But why a comic book? Not simply because Seth loved comic books but because they knew by doing so, they would reach an entirely new demographic of potential entrepreneurs. For all its fun and creativity, the book is, like Seth and Barry, committed to many important values. It was these values – commitment to quality, traceability, transparency and of course to the ethical mindset that underlies all of requirements – that motivated Honest Tea to seek and gain OU certification – even before gaining USDA Organic or Fair Trade certification!

The values of kashrut standards to the quality of a product and the dignity of the enterprise jibed perfectly with Honest Tea’s mission. And they are on a mission. They chose to title the book Mission in a Bottle because the name highlights their perspective that every time they sell a bottle of tea, they are helping to promote the values they care about.

Of course, not every consumer drinks Honest Tea because of an OU, organic or Fair Trade certification – they may enjoy Honest Tea simply because it tastes great or because they want a drink with fewer calories. Which is fine with Seth and Barry. Even if every consumer doesn’t consciously choose Honest Tea because of its certifications, they are still supporting their ethos with every purchase.

An ethos that OU Kosher is proud to be associated with!

After reading his response, I wrote back and thanked him for his wonderful response. “In all my years at the OU, I have not encountered any company, consistently maintaining such lofty ideas and ideals as they maintain and grow their successful venture. You are truly unique. God bless you.”

Hello Dolly (Madison):
The Cold Facts About Kosher Ice Cream Production

BY RABBI AVROHOM GORDIMER

Ice cream is an age-old dessert favorite. Historical annals and popular anecdotes date the invention of discovery of ice cream (or something like it!) back thousands of years.

It is reported that the Roman emperor, Nero (37–68), consumed ice with fruit toppings (ancient sorbet?), and that the Chinese King Tang (618–697) made ice and milk blends. Rumors have it that ice cream as we know it originated in China, made its way to Europe via Marco Polo (1254–1324), where it was developed for Italian and French royalty as a specialized and sophisticated treat. Later, the French chef of British King Charles I introduced ice cream to England in the early 1600’s.

In America, Philip Lenzi advertised in New York City that he would sell ice cream as part of his confectionary offerings, and Dolley Madison served ice cream in 1813 to guests at the presidential inaugural of her husband, James Madison. (The ice cream brand named after her dropped the “e” in the spelling of Mrs. Madison’s name.) Ice cream has taken off as a beloved sweet on these shores ever since, although it took about a century until it was popularized and mass-produced in an economical fashion, as inventors worked hard to manufacture and improve ice cream processing and freezing equipment.

As this is an OU Kosher publication, let’s digress from the history and examine the manufacture and kosher issues relating to ice cream and frozen desserts in modern times.

What exactly goes into certifying kosher ice cream? How is the OU able to design kosher programs of the highest caliber that are equally flexible to meet the needs of our client companies? Let’s take a look at the basics of ice cream and frozen dessert certification for some insight.

All ice cream and frozen dessert production can be divided into two phases: pre-pasteurization and post-pasteurization.

The pre-pasteurization phase is where the base is manufactured. In the case of ice cream, the base includes cream and very often non-fat milk (to lower fat content), as well as whey, sweetener, stabilizer, and sometimes emulsifiers. Non-dairy frozen dessert base – used for sorbet, water ices and twin-pops – also consists of sweetener and stabilizers and may contain emulsifiers, but the bulk of the base is water rather than cream and dairy additives.

Although many of the above ingredients would seem to be innocuous from a kosher perspective, they are in reality potential hazards. Cream can be sourced from cheese plants, where often non-kosher whey cream (a by-product of cheese-making) may be blended in with outgoing cream shipments. Non-fat dry milk can be spray-dried on equipment shared with all types of
materials, very feasibly rendering otherwise kosher product processed on this equipment as non-kosher. Stabilizers often contain gelatin sourced from pigs or from cows which are not kosher-processed, and emulsifiers can derive from beef tallow production. Thus, all components of ice cream and frozen dessert base clearly need reliable kosher verification.

To the surprise of most kosher consumers, the majority of ice cream and frozen dessert operations which manufacture kosher products are not fully-kosher facilities. This poses many serious challenges for kosher certification, especially at the pre-pasteurization phase of production.

OU policy is that the ice cream and frozen dessert bases produced in these “mixed” kosher/non-kosher plants must always be kosher in order for the plants to merit certification. There are two reasons for this: Firstly, non-kosher ingredients that are pasteurized will compromise the kosher status of the pasteurization equipment, thereby impeding or grossly complicating kosher certification of other products in the plant. Secondly, it is almost impossible and highly impractical to segregate kosher and non-kosher base ingredients, as they are normally totally compatible and interchangeable. Cream is cream, whey is whey, and so forth; these raw materials are basically generic. To authorize the use of kosher and non-kosher sources of these commodity materials is asking for trouble – at least from the standpoint of the OU and responsible kosher certification.

The post-pasteurization phase of manufacture is simpler as regards kosher issues but more complex in terms of production. Subsequent to pasteurization and cooling, the ice cream mix settles, is flavored as it passes through a flavor tank, is partially frozen in a barrel freezer while air is whipped into it, and is finally filled into containers or molded on to sticks, after which it is hardened in an arctic-deep freeze. The best thing about all of this from a kosher perspective is that no heat is used, and equipment is therefore not likely to become non-kosher if non-kosher ingredients come into play at this stage.

The result is that the OU can certify plants which manufacture both kosher and non-kosher rocky road ice cream, for example. Non-kosher rocky road usually contains marshmallow bits derived from non-kosher gelatin sources, while the kosher version typically uses vegetable-based marshmallow ribbon. “Mixed” kosher/non-kosher facilities also sometimes utilize kosher and non-kosher colorants (such as natural red – otherwise known as carmine – derived from beetle extract) as well as kosher and non-kosher flavors and variegates. In all such cases, the OU does its best to enable plant flexibility and the maximization of OU certification, developing advanced kosher systems to deal with all scenarios, in an effort to accommodate clientele as best as possible.

This involves the OU rabbinic field representative (RFR) reviewing formulas, clean-out procedures and production logs in order to carefully track the kosher integrity of certified product, as well as the plants’ profile specifications of each ingredient and product including a kosher designation status.
Non-dairy frozen desserts are usually manufactured in plants and on lines that are primarily dedicated to ice cream (dairy) production. This means that a pasteurization system, which is in dairy mode most of the time, will also process non-dairy dessert base. The problem is that many companies wish for their non-dairy products to be kosher-certified as pareve – meaning non-dairy. This means that the equipment cannot bear a dairy status under kosher specifications. How does the OU certify non-dairy frozen desserts processed on dairy equipment?

The answer is by kosherizing the pasteurization equipment, meaning that this equipment is sanitized in a manner that renders it pareve according to kosher regulations.

Kosherization involves a) allowing the equipment to be down for 24 hours after cleaning, or treatment with caustic solution and b) a scalding fresh water rinse. Because the requisite temperatures for the caustic and fresh water steps are usually somewhat higher than the average CIP, these procedures need to be carefully reviewed and implemented in consultation with the OU’s senior staff to assure a reliable system. This can entail kosherization with an on-site RFR, or – if the plant can accommodate it – kosherization can be accomplished by programming the CIP system to always function at kosherization temperatures, with the RFR reviewing Taylor charts to verify this upon his regular visits.

The OU is proud to be the premier kosher certifier of the finest and most diverse array of ice cream and frozen desserts, from traditional and historic brands such as Dolly Madison, Bresler’s, Schrafft’s and Eskimo Pie; to contemporary favorites such as Dreyer’s Grand/Edy’s, Haagen Dazs, Well's Dairy, Nestle and Safeway; to specialties and novelties such as Tropicana Fruit Bars, Sharon’s Sorbet, FrozFruit and Snapple On Ice.

The OU is privileged to be on the front lines in certifying the world’s finest ice cream and frozen dessert companies, and we are ready to work with our clients to develop systems that assure unquestionable kosher quality while providing the personal and professional service for which we are renowned.

Editor’s note: This instructive article on kosher ice cream production appeared in the Winter 2007 issue of Behind the Union Symbol.
Kosher Certification –
A Hallmark of Fortitech® Premixes by DSM

BY PATRICK MORRIS, COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER, FORTITECH®

With global access to a comprehensive selection of vitamins, minerals, amino acids, nucleotides, nutraceuticals and botanicals; and unparalleled scientific knowledge and unmatched customer service, Fortitech® Premixes by DSM is ready to help your company unlock the power of Strategic Nutrition.

Originally founded as Fortitech, Inc. in 1986, the company was privately held until it was purchased by DSM in November of 2012. Now, as a service through DSM, we have access to the latest advancements in scientific know-how, proprietary ingredients with substantiated claims and a network of innovation centers that enables us to anticipate and overcome formulation challenges. When we put all of this together, we deliver more than just premixes...we deliver Strategic Nutrition!

Fortitech® Premixes is the one-stop source for food, beverage and pharmaceutical manufacturers looking to fortification as a way to differentiate their products from their competition, as well as helping to meet the nutritional needs of consumers around the world. With a worldwide technical team on hand to assist manufacturers in incorporating any nutrient into any application, we are perfectly positioned to meet the growing demand for functional, condition-specific and better-for-you products that are so sought after by today’s consumer.

In any supermarket around the world, you will find top-selling products fortified with Fortitech® Premixes, ranging from infant formulas, cereals, bars and dairy product to sports or nutrition beverages, juices, snacks and confectionery. Our global framework includes 12 state-of-the-art premix facilities spread out through North America, Europe/Africa/Middle East, China, Asia Pacific, as well as five innovation centers and more than 40 sales offices.

Solely dedicated to the development and manufacturing of custom nutrient premixes, all of our products are created under a stringent Allergen Monitoring Program, and meet cGMP, GMO-free, HACCP, organic, kosher and halal standards. And, while the benefits a manufacturer will realize through the use of our premixes encompass savings in ingredient sourcing, labor, testing and the time between concept/development to finished product, our premixes will also never negatively impact the taste, texture, appearance or shelf-life of a finished product. We’re FS
22000 certified globally and each premix, whether powder or liquid, is accompanied with a Certificate of Analysis as well as our Qualify for Life™ seal.

**OU Certification**

As previously noted in the Spring 2011 edition of Behind The Union Symbol, kosher foods, although based on age-old dietary laws, are among the fastest growing current trends in food processing. Here in the United States, home to 40 percent of the world's Jewish population or about 6.15 million consumers, kosher food has always occupied an important marketing sector, but it is not Jews fueling this explosive growth in kosher foods. More and more, we are seeing that kosher foods are increasingly attractive to the non-Jewish population; the population that now makes up the leading and fastest growing consumer base for kosher products. This demographic includes, among others, members of other religious denominations, vegetarians and those who are considered lactose-intolerant.

“Having OU certification is a crucial component to our operations,” said Sam Sylvetsky, the brand’s Business Development Global Functional Lead. “We proudly display the OU symbol and certification on our products because it signifies to our customers that our premixes incorporate only the finest, purest ingredients. It is a value-added proposition for our premixes.”

Kosher certification also plays a significant role in food safety. With the increased demand from today’s consumers to know the origin of ingredients, or if those ingredients are GMO or non-GMO, kosher certification easily answers their questions. No doubt is left in their minds that only the purest ingredients have been included in the products they are consuming. Much like the criteria set forth in the DSM Qualify for Life™ seal, additional, elevated standards for food-safety, beyond those regulations mandated by government authorities, are an integral part of kosher certification.

Rabbi Moshe Bomzer oversees the brand’s kosher production parameters at the Schenectady, NY plant. Food, beverage and pharmaceutical manufacturers interested in learning more about nutrient fortification with kosher certification can visit http://www.fortitechpremixes.com.
SJVC’s Natural Colors

BY JOSEPH ROSSI, VP & GENERAL MANAGER, SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY CONCENTRATES

The Orthodox Union has provided San Joaquin Valley Concentrates with a competitive advantage and we are sincerely grateful for our relationship with the OU.

Our team’s history with the OU began in 1970, when I had the privilege of working with Ernest Herzog at the Royal Kedem Winery in Milton, New York. This relationship continued in the 1980s with the manufacturing of grape concentrate and alcohol at a large California facility under the supervision of Kedem’s employees and Rabbi Gruenwald. In 1995, I brought this experience to Fresno, California, which marked the beginning of San Joaquin Valley Concentrates (SJVC).

SJVC began as a manufacturer of white grape concentrates. Through a strong, stable supply chain we have expanded our product portfolio, and with the support of the Orthodox Union we have gained a competitive advantage in our market. In 1996, we added the production of red grape concentrates and dark red grape colors.

When customers began to request dark red grape colors, OU certification and supervision became instrumental in converting our Rubired grapes into a staple for red-colored foods and beverages. In 2008 we became the world’s largest supplier of natural grape colors to the food and beverage industries. In 2010, we began producing natural colors in a unique crystal form. Our crystal colors differ from typical spray dried colors because they have fast solubility, are much less dusty, have no carriers, and contribute zero calories to a finished formulation. Our natural colors are made from fruits and/or vegetables and are used to replace synthetic colors. Our liquid and crystal colors can be used in a variety of applications ranging from confections, yogurts, smoothies, juices, nutraceuticals, and flavor formulations.

SJVC’s ability to produce OU Kosher colors is unmatched. We make our fruit colors only from Rubired grapes, which are grown in the Central Valley and have superior color stability compared to other fruit and berry colors. SJVC is a wholly owned subsidiary of E & J Gallo Winery and is located adjacent to their Fresno Winery facility. This close proximity enables SJVC to decrease the total processing time and carefully monitor our products. SJVC manufactures its natural colors under year-round, 24-hour rabbinical supervision.

SJVC is one of the few companies with the ability to
produce OU Kosher grape colors. Our customers hold us in high regard because we manufacture high quality, OU Kosher-certified products that are not easily replicated by other companies. Our certification with the Orthodox Union creates a positive association that provides credibility and reputation to our company.

SJVC is proud to be an OU Kosher-Certified Company!

To learn more about our company and products, please visit our website at www.sjvconc.com. Feel free to email or call us with any questions at inquiries@sjvconc.com or at 800-557-0220

RABBI NACHUM RABINOWITZ IS ORTHODOX UNION’S RABBINIC COORDINATOR FOR E & J GALLO WINERY.

WWW.OUKOSHER.ORG, the world’s most frequented kosher website, features OU certified companies and their products on its OU Featured Companies section. Close to 1,000 companies are already posted.

In order to be posted at no cost, please submit the following information to safrane@ou.org:

- Name of company or brand to be featured
- Jpg image in 75x120 px
- Website link
- 25-75 word description of your products/company

You can apply to be featured at oukosher.org/featured-company-application/
At Flanigan Farms, the “Personal Goals Project” Pays Attention to More Than the Bottom Line

BY RABBI ZVI B. HOLLANDER

Tony Hsieh, CEO of Zappo’s, the on-line shoe store, writes in his best-selling book, Delivering Happiness, an ominous warning. He says that everything a company does, from hardware and software utilization to business strategy, can and will be copied by its competitors. That is, except one thing—the culture it imbues in its stakeholders: employees, management, and investors.

Mr. Hsieh knows of what he speaks. By making the commitment to create a company “in the customer service business, which just happens to sell shoes,” he profoundly affected the nature of Zappo’s entire corporate culture, and in the process, its bottom line. Zappo’s became the first company to reach the $1 billion in sales mark by only its eighth year of operations.

One of the OU certified companies I visit, a natural and organic fruit and nut producer in Culver City, California named Flanigan Farms, won’t likely reach that milestone any time soon. But on a recent kosher inspection I saw first-hand how Mr. Hsieh’s idea of developing a corporate culture of positive values and growth in action, albeit on a smaller scale, can be duplicated.

Under the direction of President and CEO Monica Heeren, this family-owned business creates a reputation for quality and attention to detail in all areas of product handling, of course including its kosher certification program with the OU. One of the newest ways it accomplishes such branding is by investing in the personal growth of its staff of 15 or so employees. I witnessed a touching example of this last October, persimmon harvest time in California.

In a two year-old initiative called simply “the Personal Goals Project,” each staff member is encouraged to choose an area of personal growth. It may be taking a class at a local community college to develop a new skill, or, as in the example I saw, something more intimate, fundamental to the employee’s daily life both at work and home—increasing one’s proficiency in English.

It’s not often I walk into a packaging area, filled with a group of young, female employees whose first language is Spanish, prominently displaying signs which state, “Today’s Goal: English Only.” As I toured the plant for my Fall, 2013 inspection, my interest was piqued. “What’s up with the signs?” I wondered.
Monica, my host leading the walk-through and the OU’s kosher contact, promptly led me into Flanigan Farms’ nurturing culture of supporting its employees’ growth. Unlike other businesses which only care for the business metrics a worker can generate, FF presents a familial concern on a personal level. “Our project is open to any goal, as long as it meets two criteria,” Monica told me. “First, it represents personal advancement for our staff member; and second, it will positively impact our company. Then, we help employees reach their goal by weekly all-staff monitoring meetings and by quarterly support luncheons, where everyone has fun supporting each other’s progress.”

The popular dried persimmon product must be processed quickly when it becomes ripe, usually in the late fall. The pace in the packaging department can be frenzied. But for Eva (not her real name), the hubbub is a perfect opportunity to acquire greater proficiency in her adopted country’s tongue. This fluency positively impacts her own self-esteem, presenting a meaningful role-model for her family, all in addition to significantly increasing her value as a skilled team member. By supporting her in her quest to acquire a second language, Flanigan Farms is investing in Eva’s becoming a better person, sister, mother, wife, and, of course, employee.

But as this Rabbinic Field Representative “fly-on-the-wall” sees it, FF is doing so much more than that. It exhibits an extension of its “family-run” close-knit quality-focused ambience. Supporting the “Personal Goal Project” efforts, Flanigan Farms demonstrates the values of caring and loving encouragement which are at the heart of the quality-oriented business that it is. Tony Hsieh is right. You can’t copy that kind of culture. And I’m privileged as an OU representative to be “part of the family” too.

RABBI ZVI BORUCH HOLLANDER HAS SERVED AS OU KOSHER WEST COAST RABBINIC FIELD REPRESENTATIVE SINCE 2008. HE TRAVELS THROUGHOUT THE LOS ANGELES AREA, AS WELL AS SERVING OVER 75 OU CERTIFIED FACILITIES IN OREGON. HE IS MARRIED, FATHER TO FIVE CHILDREN AND BLESSED WITH FOUR GRANDCHILDREN. RABBI HOLLANDER ENJOYS HIKING IN THE CALIFORNIA MOUNTAINS AND ON MT. HOOD AND OUTRIGGER CANOEING IN MARINA DEL REY.
Shell Game: An OU Expert Tells How to Determine Which Quail Eggs Are Kosher

BY RABBI CHAIM LOIKE

Recently quail eggs have become available in many local supermarkets in the United States. Although none of these eggs are currently supervised, there have been a number of people who are taking the eggs assuming they are kosher. Twice, the biblical narrative testifies to the kosher status of quail (Exodus Ch. 16; Numbers Ch. 11). What bird could be more kosher than one divinely certified? From the outset it must be understood that there are quail (Coturnix coturnix) which are universally accepted as kosher. At the same time, there are dozens of species of quail which are not known to be kosher. The Talmud had a tradition that when identifying kosher species, the species was shown to Moses in a fire form. It was thus clear to Moses both the name as well as the likeness of the species which were to be considered kosher. Name alone is insufficient to determine the identification of a kosher species.

In Talmudic times there were four species (Yuma 75) which were generically called quail. Each was distinct and would need to be independently known to be kosher. In America many exotic quail are available; however only three are raised in significant numbers. The three quail widely raised in the United States are the bobwhite, button and coturnix. Button quail are raised to be pets; they are smaller than sparrows and have minimal potential as food, kosher or otherwise. However, the eggs of the button quail are large considering the size of the bird; some of the eggs are almost the same size as the kosher coturnix quail. The bobwhite is raised industrially and its egg is the same size as that of the kosher coturnix egg. It is thus imperative that a person who wishes to consume kosher quail eggs be able to differentiate between the kosher coturnix quail and the eggs of the button and bobwhite quail.

Bobwhite quail eggs are white and are thus easily differentiated from the splotched kosher coturnix quail eggs. However, the button quail eggs are also splotched and one has to be familiar with the various color patterns to be able to ascertain the source of the eggs. OU Kosher has been getting two to three calls a week from people interested in purchasing quail eggs. On the East Coast all the eggs which were examined were determined to be those of kosher coturnix eggs. However, in the Midwest there have been a number of instances when the quail eggs were those of the bobwhite. The OU has not yet found an instance when supermarkets sold for consumption the eggs of button quail or any of the other exotic species of quail.
To further clarify the issue the OU has maintained a flock of button quail and a flock of coturnix quail. The eggs when harvested are blown (the albumen is removed) and are available for a nominal fee for those who want to have an example of a kosher quail egg and for comparative purposes those of a button quail egg. The author wanted his children to learn about birds. He delegated to his son Avidan the task of blowing the eggs. He would gather the eggs and when Avidan was so inclined he would blow the eggs which would be distributed to those who wanted them. It was noticed that the button quail eggs kept vanishing. Then late at night chirping sounds began emanating from the laundry room. Upon further investigation it was discovered that someone had turned on an old incubator stored in the laundry room. The incubator was promptly turned off, but the chirping continued. It was soon discovered that 96 button quail eggs had been placed in the incubator and had hatched. Fortunately, the quail reached maturity just around the holidays and were therefore a special gift to many friends.

End Note: The incubator has now been turned off and the wire connecting the incubator to the wall has been removed and is now in a safe in an undisclosed location.

RABBI CHAIM LOIKE, OU KOSHER RABBINIC COORDINATOR, SPECIALIZES IN THE AREAS OF CHEMICALS, EGGS, OLIVES, AND NATURAL FOODS. HE LIVES WITH HIS THREE CHILDREN IN WEST HEMPESTAD ON NEW YORK’S LONG ISLAND. HE IS ALSO ON THE FACULTY AT BOTH YESHIVA UNIVERSITY AND TOURO COLLEGE, WHERE HE TEACHES COURSES ON VARIOUS ASPECTS OF KOSHER FOOD.
Ask the Rabbi

BY RABBI CHAIM GOLDBERG

Q: My company cuts pollock on a floating processor in Alaska (a large fishing vessel which also has the ability to process the catch on board). We make a fish oil out of the waste, and we have a customer that would like the oil to be OU certified. Having a rabbinic supervisor onboard the vessel is inconvenient (especially if we wish to use multiple floating processors). Is it possible to certify fish without a rabbi on board? What are your concerns, and how could we address them?

A: Whenever OU Kosher certifies a product, there are several considerations which must be addressed. Assuming we can address all of them sufficiently, we would potentially be able to certify the item. Let’s discuss some of those issues:

• Non-kosher fish: We are always concerned with the presence of non-kosher ingredients in a manufacturing plant. A bakery which has lard lying around, a candy manufacturer which colors its product with carmine or a French fry plant which fries in tallow are all concerns. In a fish plant, our primary concern is the presence of non-kosher fish in the plant. This includes by-catch (incidentally occurring species which were not the target catch), which must be handled in a way which doesn’t affect kosher production. If your plant can show that non-kosher fish need to be removed for business reasons, or that the amount of by-catch is negligible even in the worst case scenario, we may be able to certify the product.

• Other seasons: Fishing vessels rarely fish for a single fish (whose season might be for a few weeks per year). What does your vessel fish for in the off-season? Is it cod, herring, tuna or salmon? Is it crab or shrimp?

• Additives: what else is added to the oil on board? Are there any anti-foam agents, anti-oxidants or other items which might affect the kosher status of the oil?

• Off-loading: Once produced on the vessel, how is the oil off-loaded? Do you pump into brand-new drums, flexi-tanks or iso-tanks? Do you pump into railcars or trucks directly? How could we track the delivery of the oil to confirm the oil received was the oil produced under OU certification?

• Blending: Fish oils are often blended with oils from another species to achieve desired levels of DHA/EPA. What do you blend your oil with? How can we guarantee the integrity of the product before it is sent to the secondary producer?

In addition to the concerns about the oil, we also have some concerns about the handling of the supervision itself, such as:

• OU policy requires unannounced inspections. How could we facilitate that on a floating processor?
• How long would a rabbinic field inspector need to spend once on the vessel (assuming he is unable to swim the hundreds of miles to shore)?

• Are there appropriate accommodations for the rabbi to be safe/comfortable during his stay onboard, including the ability to store and consume his own kosher food?

Assuming all these questions could be answered favorably, we should be able to certify the product.

RABBI CHAIM GOLDBERG HAS MANAGED THE LION’S SHARE OF OU CERTIFIED FISH COMPANIES FOR 11 YEARS, AND HAS REVIEWED THE OU KOSHER PROGRAMS IN FISH FACILITIES ON FIVE CONTINENTS, EARNING FREQUENT FLYER STATUS ON TWO AIRLINES THIS PAST YEAR. RABBI GOLDBERG STORES HIS PASSPORT IN BROOKLYN, NY IN A FORT HELD DOWN BY HIS WIFE, THREE CHILDREN AND QUAIL.
OU NEWS

Kasher Paris Expo

Inaugural Kasher Expo Paris, International Exhibition of Kosher Products, to take place in May, 2014

OU Kosher will be prominently represented, along with an expected 150 exhibitors, when the first edition of Kasher Expo Paris, held at Espace Champerret Paris, opens on May 14.

According to the show’s organizers, HAKOA Kosher and Halal Consultant, the trade show, “meets a growing demand from retailers and consumers for quality and certified products, guaranteeing food traceability and safety. Indeed, kosher certification provides strict control of ingredients, production tools, processing, and packaging.”

Oliver Prince, who developed the show, calls Kasher Expo Paris a “targeted food show concentrated in two days, which guarantees maximum efficiency to exhibitors, buyers, and distributors.”

The exhibitors will display their kosher certified products – including food, beverages, ingredients, and cosmetics – to international buyers from large distribution chains; retailers; trades; caterers; importers/exporters; wholesalers and distributors. Suppliers of kosher products are expected from the United States, Canada, Israel, Europe, and South America. 5,000 professionals are expected to attend to get the opportunity to discover new kosher products and ingredients, from small manufacturers to major brands.

The kosher market in Europe is estimated at 4.5 billion Euros, according to HAKOA. In France alone, it is over 380-million Euros, with a growth rate of roughly 16% yearly. According to a Toluna Survey for ESSEC Business School made in December, 2012, 5.3% of French consumers regularly or occasionally purchase kosher products. Given that France has 24-million households, that represents over one million households in that country alone in which kosher food is purchased.

Information about the show can be found online at http://www.kasher-expo-paris.com/index.php/en/.
Seek and You Shall Find: How Information Makes OU Kosher’s Job Easier

BY RABBI ELI GERSTEN

Often OU Kosher will request information from its certified companies regarding products and product lines that we do not directly certify. To properly certify a company, one must understand the totality of its operation. Setting up a kosher program is as much about arranging that things should go right as it is in understanding what can go wrong. Of course, we appreciate that this information, as well as all other information that is shared with the OU, is to be treated with the highest level of confidentiality.

It should be noted that it can also be advantageous to take the initiative in sharing information with the OU. In one classic example, a rabbinic field representative was asked by one of the companies that he visits if the company would be required to kosherize after running an uncertified bacon product. The initial answer of the rabbi was a resounding yes. Bacon, of course, is not kosher. However, when the batch sheets were reviewed, it became abundantly clear that all the ingredients were, in fact, kosher. The “bacon” product was merely a bacon seasoning. Although the product was not certified kosher, in truth there was nothing non-kosher about it, and there would be no need to kosherize. By going the extra step and sharing all the information, needless effort and lost productivity was avoided.

Often the OU needs to determine not only the list of ingredients in a non-certified product, but the exact percentages of certain ingredients as well. Also, we might need information regarding the temperatures, or range of temperatures, for the equipment on which the product is run. This can help us determine what method of cleaning and kosherization should be utilized. The more precise the information we have to work with, the more flexible we can be in setting up a workable program. In companies where anything can happen at any time, with little warning, obviously stricter safeguards are required.

We recognize that at times this information is not easily obtained. For example, a “non-kosher” ingredient might be purchased from another company which is hesitant to share its formula, or it might be difficult to get a temperature reading on a specific piece of equipment. But when possible, we appreciate the effort that is expended in obtaining this information, as it makes our job easier, and will hopefully benefit you as well.
Blake Hill Preserves’ Award-Winning Range of Chutneys, Jams and Marmalades Now OU Kosher Certified

Blake Hill Preserves, producers of award-winning, all-natural chutneys, jams and marmalades in historic Grafton Vermont is proud to announce its entire line of gourmet preserves is now certified kosher by the Orthodox Union.

Third generation English preserve makers uniquely combine Vicky’s family traditions of jam making with her husband Joe’s Mediterranean culinary palate spanning southern Spain, North Africa and the Middle East, to create some of the finest chutneys, jams and marmalades on the market today.

Good Food Awards, the organization that sets the nation’s standards for taste, authenticity and social responsibility, has just honored Blake Hill Preserves with three finalists for 2014 -- Blake Hill’s “Plum & Fennel” chutney, “Raspberry & Hibiscus” jam, and “Grapefruit, Lemon & Thyme” marmalade (winners to be announced January 16). This is the first time in the history of the awards that a preserves maker has achieved such broad recognition across its entire range.

Blake Hill Preserves is passionate about providing its customers with the most incredibly full-flavored, fruity preserves that are completely all natural. Being a true artisanal preserves maker, every jar Blake Hill is made with only the finest fruits picked at their peak of perfection, and ingredients are carefully layered in during the cooking process and slow-cooked to maximize evaporation and hence concentrate flavors further. “We believe every jar should taste fresh and wholesome, showcasing the top-quality fruits used in every batch – just like true homemade, small batch cooking.”

Blake Hill’s mission to produce only the very best preserves also ensures you will never find any artificial ingredients in its jars, or other ingredients simply added to “bulk-up” contents, speed up cooking, or compensate for less-than-perfect fruit. You will therefore never see commercial pectin, citric acid, colorings, artificial preservatives, thickeners or flavor enhancers in its ingredients list.

The Orthodox Union was an easy choice for Blake Hill when considering an agency for kosher supervision. Joe explains, “We believe in exemplary standards in everything we do, and we wanted to work with an organization with the same core standards. We have been incredibly impressed by OU’s meticulous supervision and efficient administrative processes, and believe that providing our customers with the confidence that the OU certification logo embodies is an excellent investment.”
Vicky adds, “We have been thrilled with the reception Blake Hill Preserves is receiving in the kosher market. We love many of the foods and flavors so popular in kosher cooking and this is therefore a natural market for us to serve. We are receiving phenomenal feedback at customer tasting events, proving the popularity of our chutney, jam and marmalade varieties for the kosher palate, and we are developing additional unique varieties in 2014 to provide our customers with a fresh, exciting choice of preserves on an ongoing basis.”

AN INTRODUCTION TO OU Certification and the Kosher Marketplace: A PowerPoint Presentation

Dear Friend,

Thousands of companies choose OU Kosher certification. OU Kosher is recognized as the world’s largest and most respected kosher certification agency and symbol. OU Kosher certification is a clear mark of superior quality, and OU certified companies know that having the OU Kosher symbol enhances the marketability of their products worldwide. The OU Kosher symbol opens untapped channels of distribution in new markets for OU companies, thereby increasing their revenues.

The PowerPoint presentation, for which you have the attached link, can be used to educate and enlighten your colleagues about why OU certification is so important to your company. Please share it as well with your suppliers, your customers, and others with whom you do business. It will give them a better understanding of the scope and reach of OU certification, the ever growing kosher marketplace, and the OU advantage for your company’s growth and development. They will agree that OU certification is a major contributor to your company’s success.

Sincerely,
Rabbi Dr. Eliyahu Safran
Editor-in-Chief, BTUS

http://www.oukosher.org/marketing-presentation
Byrd Cookie Company of Savannah, GA, baking “Byrd’s Famous Cookies” since 1924 for both Savannah locals and consumers around the world, has received kosher certification for its entire line of cookies from the Orthodox Union, the world’s largest and most respected kosher certification agency. For 90 years, and through four generations, Byrd’s continues its standard of using quality ingredients. Byrd Cookie Company President, Geoff Repella, says, “This endorsement is a long time coming. Using kosher and all-natural products has always been important to us; this process will formalize our efforts. We are excited for our customers to see the OU symbol on our packaging in 2014.”

Byrd Cookie Company has grown from its roots, since its founding by Benjamin Tillman Byrd, Sr., in locally delivering to regional mercantiles. While its international sales have expanded to reach six continents, OU certification is a welcome addition to its product line, company leaders say. Local loyalists were thrilled that the Original Scotch Oatmeal was the first cookie coming off the bakery line as OU certified, but national and international customers were quick to inquire about the company’s number one selling product, Key Lime cookies. All cookie lovers will be pleased, as every cookie flavor including Ginger Snaps, Lemon & Butter, Peach cookies, Chocolate and Chocolate Chip baked in 2014 will bear the OU symbol on the package.

The company made a dramatic move in 2011 when Stephanie Lindley, daughter of Kay Curl, herself the daughter of the second generation company leader Benjamin Tillman Byrd, Jr. (“Cookie Byrd”), and her husband Benny Curl, took the helm as CEO and ushered in a new awakening for the brand. Building on relationships built throughout the years Stephanie inked deals with Fortune 500 companies like Nieman–Marcus and Delta. Locally she gave new life to the company, revamping the retail store, the Cookie Shop @ Byrd’s. She opened Byrd’s first off-site store in the heart of City Market in downtown Savannah, just a few steps from where her grandfather started the entire legacy. In late 2013 Stephanie opened BT Byrd’s in Drayton Tower. BT Byrd’s highlights a bit of everything the company does: focusing on cookies in a fun and lively atmosphere.

In December 2013, Rabbi Norman Schloss, OU Kosher rabbinic field representative for the southern region, visited Byrd’s Savannah bakery for a final inspection and verification, to assure
that all OU Kosher standards and policies were in place. Byrd Cookie Company is excited to have the certification finalized so that all product packaging can now bear the coveted OU symbol. The certification is the culmination of documentation, ingredient sourcing, as well as kosherization of all the ovens, bands and baking equipment.

Rabbi Schloss, who worked closely with Byrd's officials, was pleased to note, “It was truly a pleasure assisting this renowned Savannah institution into the ever-growing OU family of baking companies. Byrd Cookie Company well understands the value of maintaining long-standing traditions intact and is proud of its new association with the OU. Attaining OU certification is a source of great pride and satisfaction for the company.”

When attending industry conferences or exhibiting at shows, be sure to display signs that say:

“WE ARE PROUD TO BE AN OU KOSHER-CERTIFIED COMPANY”

Marketers and show organizers should always have the signs in their show kits. They are sure to attract kosher buyers to your booth.

If you need more copies of the sign, we will be glad to supply them. Just email Becks@ou.org.
GET YOUR PRODUCTS FEATURED
on OU Kosher’s facebook page,
www.facebook.com/oukosher,
and twitter page, www.twitter.com/OUKosher

Email Safrane@ou.org
a short blurb of text and an image
of the product you wish to feature
on our OU Kosher social media accounts.

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