

# The Newsletter for Bnei Torah

By The Kosher Consumers Union @ WWW.kosherconsumer.org Pesach 5760

**Tropical oils:** Tropical oils include "palm kernel & coconut oils." The oils originate in the Malaysia & Thailand areas. Only the tropical oils being sent to Israel have an adequate kashrus system in place. The kashrus in place in all other countries are very deficient. Due to the amount & size of the certified products under the Orthodox Union (O-U) they should be in the forefront in setting up an acceptable kashrus supervision acceptable to all.

## Cholov-Stam (unsupervised milk)

Approximately three years ago there was the famous "milk-gate", the "treifa cows". It was determined at that time that milk is being produced from cows that have had veterinary procedures that have rendered them permanently "Treif". All products & by products were rendered not kosher.

In Israel & some of the "cholov Yisroel" farms retained veterinarians and have set up a system whereby all cows that have had any of the veterinary procedures are removed from the farm permanently. In Europe & other countries we believe it was not done. It is incumbent for the consumer to ascertain which Cholov Yisroel products have implemented a system of removal of the cows from the farms. This pertains to all dairy products including cheeses, ice cream, chocolates, etc. All of the non-cholov Yisroel farms (unsupervised milk) of course does not have a system in place for the removal of those affected cows. Therefore all milk or milk products from those unsupervised farms should not be used till a monitored system is in place, where all of the affected cows are removed.

Some claim that some partial Responsa was written on the subject, but nothing conclusive that would permit the use of the milk or milk products.

**Note:** All hand Matzos from any bakery should be checked before "Yom-Tov" for "Kefulos" etc.

**Glatt meat mart:** In the Flatbush section of Brooklyn, NY there is a Glatt Meat Mart under the *Hashgocha* of a Maryland based agency. Many consumers did their purchases there assuming that it had a high level of Kashrus. After numerous visits by "Menakrim" it was determined that the standards for "Nikur" are unacceptable.

It was found that certain "*chelev*" which the "*Ramah*" says should be removed- was not removed. In addition certain *Chelev* that may be a "*Di-oraisa*" was also not removed. The Certifier when confronted said it was "*botul*". It was also found that the non-Jewish workers (who do the actual "*treiboring*") many times did not have the "*Mashgiach*" check their "*nikur*" if it was done properly.

The Owner himself is a person that is being misled by his kosher certifier. The same certifier misled him and many others a few years back by the GALIL chickens scandal. A number of the Flatbush Rabonim are aware of the serious concerns but are being respectful of the kosher certifier. Ask your Rav what to do & there are available places before *Yom-tov* to *kasher keilim* if your Rav advises so.

## ROMAINE LETTUCE:

It seems that like every year there is unacceptable kosher certified romaine lettuce available on the market. There are the whole leaves and even whole hearts (the leaves are still attached to the stem). The hearts can not be done in a matter that is acceptable but must be separated and checked leaf by leaf. The whole leaf ones should also be checked leaf by leaf. The system of checking for infestation is not acceptable. We have found that the Whole leaves from Israel "Katif" just required a rinsing and it can be used.

If one is not proficient in checking romaine lettuce he should only use the "Katif" brands from Israel.

## VITAMINS & Natural Health foods:

There is a Glucosamine based product certified as kosher. The glucosamine is derived from shellfish, which of course is non-kosher. Therefore regardless of the process being used to produce the Glucosamine, the kosher consumer should refrain from using it.

As far as we know acidophilus is made on a base of milk.

As far as we know all Natural health products without a reliable Hashgocha contain "Treif" ingredients, even the ones that sound innocent.

## DAGIM (=FISH) PRODUCTS: (3<sup>rd</sup> article of 5)

We wrote previously about some concerns with the *kashrus* of a certain distributor of fish products. The real Rav Hamachshir are the owners of the Company. The Rav that goes to some of the productions is actually the Mashgiach, is a big "Talmud Chochum". Kashrus is an industry that is constantly changing & getting more sophisticated. There is more to giving a proper *Hashgocha* than knowing what a quality fish should be. Only one that is constantly in the know of manufacturing, processing etc. is qualified to give a proper *Hashgocha*. The International certifier including their Rabbinic consultants do not have a handle of what is really going on by the productions. The owners & their associates felt it more appropriate to attack me than correcting the kashrus flows. If one disagrees with the "Dor-yishorim" concept, is it therefore proper to attack & attempt to deceive them?

Reb Dovid Thumim of blessed memory, was sent by an

## Bnei Torah Newsletter

international kosher certifier to supervise and write a report about their kashrus standards & mashgichim. His report stated clearly that the kashrus standards are deficient. When the owners were confronted by Reb Dovid Thumim O"H report, their response was "we will not allow him to be a mashgiach by any of our productions". The certifier went along with the demand. Another very experienced individual was sent by the international certifier to do an inspection & report. His report also brought out many shortcomings. The kashrus standards are low while the prices should be able to support a higher standard.

To all of those that are wondering "yes-Reb Dovid Thumim did stop eating all of their products".

One of the owners asked me for a "list of problems" for their fish productions. A highly respected Rov said "in kashrus -we do not give shopping lists".

### AHAVA DISTRIBUTED CHEESES:

Ahava distributes many different cheeses under different names, ie. Golan etc. Approx. 2 years ago we contacted the *Chug Chasam Sofer Hashgocha* in *Bnei Brak* to verify if they certify the kashrus of the various cheeses? Their response was "no" they do not. In December of '98 Chug sent a letter which was ultimately published in various newspapers that they do not certify the various hard cheeses distributed by Ahava Dairy. Kosher Consumers "beware".

### STEAK SEASONING & POULTRY RUB- O-U DAIRY?

R.L. Schreiber Steak Seasoning & poultry rub is certified by the O-U as Parve. There was published a Kosher Alert by the O-U that the product is actually dairy & they forgot the "D". We are wondering if every consumer worldwide knows what the "D" means? Why would a kosher certifier be willing to certify a seasoning that is intended for meat & poultry and has dairy ingredients?

We have also seen an interesting seasoning blend "PORK & VEAL MAGIC" certified by the STAR-K. The STAR-K claims that in most size cans of Pork & Beans the pork is actually *botul-* as the manufacturers put in less than 1.67% of pork. When the seasoning product was to be distributed in Israel the Israeli Rabbinat refused to grant approval.

### Kolatin / Elyon Gelatin:

The Kolatin/ Elyon gelatin based products is not a parve product but a Fleishig product. We are not discussing at this time the kashrus of the hides that the gelatin is derived from.

The individual became a partner in the Kolatin/Elyon gelatin Co. & was marketing a meat based Gelatin Marshmallow. The individual wanted to make the marshmallow in Israel where the *Gedolei Haposkim* (as was

written to a member of the *Moetzes* by one of the *poiskim* in Israel) were vehemently against such a product. It is being manufactured against a specific requirement in a printed responsa by Reb Aharon Kotler, O' BM.

As time went & they did the Marshmallows again & they got away with it the O-U decided to skirt the whole *Mehadrin* standard in Israel.

The Consumer should be aware that "product of Israel" with the O-U should not be considered a *Mehadrin* product.

### PASKESZ CHOCOLATE COINS:

There were *Parve* Paskesz chocolate coins that were found to contain dairy product. It was produced in England under the supervision of a certain England based Dayan. The dairy equipment was not cleaned out from dairy *cholov akum* before making parve, The Dayan ran some dark chocolate & then allowed the *parve* product.

There is a filet Salmon lox produced under the *hashgocha* of the England based *Dayan*. It has only one seal, The non-Jewish Company is in control of the seals and puts on the seals. A *Mashgiach* comes in to the Company only once a month. The *Dayan* claims that the *Hashgocha* is a forgery, yet he did not publicize that claim in any kashrus alert. There is a letter from his kashrus agency stating that it is under their *Hashgocha* and that the *Dayan* is of the opinion that the red color is a sufficient *simon*. We all know that the color could be a dye.

The England based *Dayan* produced a fish based gelatin in a non kosher facility without cleaning or *kashering* certain equipment & called it a "*mehadrin*" product.

The England based *Dayan* Produced meat based gelatin product in Israel. The *Dayan* wrote to us that before he did it he consulted with Rav Blau of *B'datz*, *Yerushlaim* and Rav Wosner of *Bnai-Brak*. When they were approached by us to verify the facts they both were at a loss, they said they told the *Dayan* specifically that they do not agree with the *Heter* of making meat-based gelatin.

### ISRAEL CONSUMERS BEWARE:

A number of candy products being sold in Israel and being manufactured by HARIBO Co. of Spain, Baltimore & Bonn with a *Hashgocha*. There are some inconsistencies in the ingredients & the labels seem suspect. The source of the gelatin is also at this time suspect. Consumers beware!

### RUBASHKIN (AGRI-MEATS) IOWA:

There are many people who still believe that the fact that the KAJ (*Breuer Kehila*) gives a *hashgocha* in the plant means at least "their" meat is acceptable even though the rest may not be. The main problem at the Rubashkin plant is the *Dayan* of KAJ (*Breuer kehila*). He has caused the

## Bnei Torah Newsletter

serious kashrus problems in the plant.

We are sure they made a *heter* for the plant to be working on *Shabbos & Yom-Tov*. It is also a very convenient set up in a company that there is no control on the kosher labels. Lubavitch claims that even though others may not control their kosher labels, they do have a control on theirs.

We are not aware of any significant changes that would render the meat products from there to be acceptable to the discriminating kosher consumer. Their products under any label still remain as not recommended.

The KAJ *Kashrus* used to be a very reliable *Hashgocha*. Times have changed since the present *Dayan* took over & got tenure. We pray and hope that the KAJ Kehila will open their eyes and put in the right people that will return the glory to the Kehila. The Kosher consumer is very sensitive to high kashrus standards.

### STAR-K & NEW SQUARE HASHGOCHAS:

There are a number of products that have the New Square kosher symbol and the Star-K. Rav Neushloss O"bm the Dayan of New Square instructed the New Square kashrus Org. on at least 2 occasions to refrain from being on the same product as the Star-K. The Kosher consumer should therefore refrain from purchasing any product that has the two Hashgochas on them.

### PRE-PESACH SHIURIM in Borough park & Lakewood:

As we have said on previous occasions that a specific pre-pesach shiur that does not allow taping among other concerns etc, remains unreliable.

The sponsors of the shiurim should review the PSAK from the Baltimore Bais-Din (the featured speaker V. the investor partners of Kolatin/Elyon). It is important before deciding if to feature a specific speaker to check on the reliability of the information he is dispensing. Others have read the PSAK and have made their educated decision. They did not accept what they were told the Psak said. What they were told was not what they ultimately read.

# Bnei Torah Newsletter

## LASHGOCHA STANDARDS?

Some Hashgochas are gaining in popularity. There are many reasons that can be the causes. 1) Their standards are impeccable so the discerning kosher consumer is looking to purchase the products with their certification. 2) The distributors and manufacturers want certain hashgochas because their requirements are minimal so there is a big saving in outlay of dollars. They are convinced that the consumer is gullible and they will not realize the sub-standard kashrus that they are receiving. The Kosher consumer may and should ask certifiers what are their standards. Do they have a full time qualified Mashgiach by every production? Is the hashgocha based on certain assumptions? What are they? etc. We would start with the following: Star-k, Rabbi Yechiel Babad-Tartikov, Udvarie kosher, Manchester, Gemf Hashgochas.

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