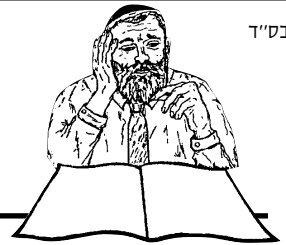


THE DAF HAKASHRUS



A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FOR THE  RABBINIC FIELD REPRESENTATIVE

INGREDIENT PROFILES: PEANUT BUTTER STABILIZERS

BY RABBI GAVRIEL PRICE

Ingredients Approval Registry

Flipping through some files on peanut butter production, I found, near the end of a U.S. Patent, a simple table:

| Standard Peanut Butter Formula (by weight) | |
|---|------|
| Peanut Butter | 90% |
| Stabilizer | 2% |
| Salt | 1.5% |
| Sugar | 6.5% |

The stabilizer was the item of interest. An OU Rabbinic Coordinator had walked into the office wanting to know whether an OU peanut butter company in Fitzgerald, Georgia could use its certified trailer to haul the peanut butter of other Georgia companies even though they were not kosher certified. I told him I don't know. He said that his OU group leader told him that stabilizers in peanut butter can be a problem. I told him that I would look into it. In the course of doing so I learned something of interest, slightly but not overwhelmingly technical, and thought it would be worthwhile for others to know as well.

Peanut butter manufacturers have grappled with the following nettlesome problem ever since peanut butter became commercially popular: how to prevent peanut oil from separating out of the peanut paste. Nobody likes this oil. It is - there's no pleasant way of saying it - messy.

Various strategies to solve this problem have been pursued over the years, but they all take advantage of the following phenomenon. Peanut oil is, of course, a liquid at room temperature. The layer of peanut oil on the surface of natural peanut butter attests to this. Hydrogenated oils such as cottonseed, rapeseed, soybean, and palm, our sources told us, are hard at room temperature. These oils only begin to melt at temperatures of about 145° Fahrenheit.


During the grinding of peanuts to make peanut butter the heat of friction created by the grinding itself reaches temperatures above 160° Fahrenheit. If a small amount of hydrogenated vegetable oil is added to this grinding process, the vegetable oil will melt. If the peanut butter mixture is then cooled down to room temperature, the vegetable oil inside the peanut butter will harden.

Peanut butter makers have found that when the vegetable oil hardens within the peanut butter it forms thousands, perhaps millions, of tiny crystalline matrices. Each of these matrices is a kind of entrapment, a way of preventing the peanut oil from rising to the top of peanut butter.




The solution is an elegant one, but it can run into some complications. If too much hydrogenated vegetable oil is added, the peanut butter may be difficult to spread - it will be too hard. If

there's not enough, the hydrogenated vegetable oil will not prevent the peanut oil from rising to the top. So it is important for a peanut butter maker to figure out exactly how much hydrogenated oil to use. And it's also necessary to determine exactly the right combination of oils which will be effective.

This effort to arrest an inevitable process is called, in the language of the food industry, stabilization; the ingredient responsible for this task is a stabilizer. Food manufacturers try different ways to stabilize, so to speak, a dynamic or changing process, and that's why "stabilizer" is a word so often found on ingredients labels. We see it even in *heimishe* brands of whipped cream cheese, where stabilizers are used to hold, or bind, the natural moisture content inside the cream cheese. Without a stabilizer the moisture would be released and the cream cheese would dry up. Hydrogenated vegetable oil, in preventing the natural tendency of peanut oil to separate, is a stabilizer for the peanut butter.

How all this bears on hauling capabilities of Georgia trailers is a bit complex and, fortunately, outside the responsibility of this office (even though that's where the question was first addressed). Certainly, the Standard Peanut Butter Formula from the files indicates that a peanut butter stabilizer may be used at two percent of the product - an amount that *halacha* does not permit us to discount and a figure that drove this investigation in the first place. It is worth mentioning, however, that the legendary RFR from Georgia, Rabbi Norm Schloss said that he has never, in all his years visiting peanut butter companies, seen a non-kosher stabilizer. In the end it turns out that the question became moot as the trucking company committed to carrying only  certified peanut butter.

צאתכם לשלום...

to Ms. Zehava Fulda who has been the 's Product and Private Label Coordinator for the past fourteen years. During this time Ms. Fulda exerted much energy, talent and time to guarantee the accuracy of products and private labels properly certified by the . She also managed several major projects including the on-going creation of the 's new Kashruth computer system. We wish her much success in her future endeavors. Her responsibilities will now be handled by Ms. Dorit Shamouelian at (212) 613-8192, email dorits@ou.org.

ובואכם לשלום...

We welcome our new employee R. David Polsky, who is completing Smicha at RIETS/YU, and will be working as part of the Consumer Relations (Webbe Rebbe) staff.

ASK 7 IN ACTION!

Rabbi Chaim Goldberg checks for kosher scales



Checking for "toyloim"

Rabbi Moshe Perlmutter demonstrates kashering at the Grand Hyatt



The Nirbater Rov examines a "re'ah"

Rav Yisroel Belsky explains the intricacies of "nikkur".







Rav Belsky performs "bedikas hasakin".



Photos: David P. Rose, ASKOU7 participant




KASHRUTH alert!


Some jars of **HELLMAN'S  CERTIFIED MAYONNAISE** produced by Unilever Bestfoods, Englewood Cliffs, NJ have been distributed with a promotional insert containing either Knorr brand Vegetable soup, dip, and recipe mix or Lowry's Taco Spices and Seasoning Mix. These inserts are not certified kosher by the Orthodox Union. Orthodox Union policy requires that the  symbol be removed from kosher product containing non-kosher sample inserts. Corrective action is being taken.

APPLES WITH CARAMEL DIP, a refrigerated item sold in Starbucks, mistakenly bears an  symbol. The dip is not certified as kosher by the Orthodox Union. Future packaging will not bear the .

CONDOLENCES TO...

our devoted RFR in Tulsa, OK **RABBI YEHUDA WEG AND FAMILY** on the loss of their mother Mrs. Liba (Linda) Weg.

the **FAMILY OF RABBI MOSHE VERSCHLEISSER Z'l** on his tragic Petirah. Reb Moshe Z'l worked for many years with great devotion as an  RFR at  certified restaurants and caterers. His last position was at Essex on Coney Downtown Restaurant around the corner from  headquarters.

the family of **RABBI YEHUDA RODKIN Z'l** on his recent untimely demise. Reb "Yudel" Z'l worked very conscientiously for the 's Foodservice Division. He was often called upon for his expertise in Kashering restaurants and catering facilities.

◆ המקום ינחם אתכם בתוך שאר אבלי ציון וירושלים ◆