

behind the

# Union symbol

A PUBLICATION FOR  CERTIFIED COMPANIES

Reaching 4,000 Food Executives & Over 2,500 Companies Worldwide

WINTER 2002

3

## Please Pass the Pareve

A LIGHT-HEARTED LOOK AT PAREVE CERTIFICATION

*How becoming pareve can broaden your consumer base*

9

## Are your Enzymes Edible? MSG, IT'S NOT JUST A GARDEN

*Industry Issues examines concerns in the biotechnology industry*

14

## On the Road with the OU THE GOLDEN STATE AT A GLANCE

*An inside look at an RFR's life in California*

## Spotlight on OU Companies

# What are you, Chicken? An Inside Look at Empire

SIXTY-FOUR YEARS have passed since Joseph Katz revolutionized the kosher market and came to the aid of the Jewish homemaker.

Today, when we pick up a kosher, ready-to-cook chicken in our supermarket or at the local butcher, it is hard to imagine how difficult it was to maintain a kosher kitchen in the days before Joseph Katz pioneered his idea. In the past, the homemaker had to go to the market, buy a live chicken, take it to a *shochet* (ritual slaughterer) and have it slaughtered. The chicken was then taken home and kosherized by soaking for a

have to be brought to a rabbi to rule whether it was effectively kosher or not.

Today, with both parents often working outside of the home, time is limited and convenience is a necessity. With an acuity for innovation and visionary forethought, Mr. Katz decided it was time to modernize the kosher market. He started his business – named after New York, the Empire State – from the back of a station wagon, processing chickens in a garage in the small town of Liberty, N.Y. In the beginning, the core customers were caterers, restaurants, and hotels from the New York metropolitan area.

Empire took a giant turn in the late 1950s when the company moved from upstate New York, to the rolling hills of Pennsylvania Amish country. With a new home, Empire began to introduce innovations such as better freezers and vacuum-wrapped technologies. This facilitated the merchandising of their frozen products to supermarkets throughout the country, reaching places where kosher poultry was previously unobtainable. The advent of vacuum-wrap also opened the door for Empire to sell frozen whole chickens, which previously had been bulky and difficult to package.

Purchasing kosher frozen foods was new to the kosher consumer who had always turned to the local butcher for fresh chicken, but the idea caught on. Empire now has 1,200 employees, including more than 80 rabbis on premises that processes daily more than



The OU recently presented Empire's president with a menorah to officially recognize his guidance throughout his years of leadership.

*Pictured (left to right): Rabbinic Kashruth Commission Chairman Rabbi Emanuel Holzer, OU Rabbinic Coordinator Rabbi Yehuda Kravitz, Empire President Michael Strear, OU Rabbinic Administrator Rabbi Menachem Genack and Empire Rabbinic Head Rabbi S.N. Spiegel.*

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half-hour in cold water, salting for an additional hour and then rinsing again. Only then could the chicken be cooked. This is of course assuming there were no questions or issues regarding the health of the chicken, in which case it would

IT WAS SURELY going to be just another typical Tuesday at the office. I arrived at the OU's headquarters—located just six blocks south of the World Trade Center—at 8:25 A.M. and found the other early birds at their workstations. I began to settle down, turned on my computer and was reading my email, when someone anxiously hurried into my office saying, "One of the towers is on fire." I ran across the office to look out the window and saw uncontrollable flames rushing from the tower's top floors. We did not as yet know of the "first plane," so I naively asked, "How will the firemen get up there?" When the second plane hit, it felt as if a major earthquake had struck lower Manhattan, but the worst was yet to come. When the first tower disintegrated and collapsed right in front of us, spewing forth billowing thick smoke, we were all overtaken by a sense of fear and catastrophe. "Where should we go? What can we do?" It was not a typical Tuesday; it was 9/11.

Our offices could not be reopened for the next week and a half. There was no electricity, no phone service, no computer capabilities and no fax or email access. From an offsite location, we quickly updated our website and posted emergency contact numbers and information that enabled our companies to receive urgently needed responses. When we finally returned and resumed "normal" activities—even as we smelled and sensed all that was emanating from Ground Zero—a note of optimism and humanity reverberated throughout the OU's offices. When phone messages could be retrieved, emails opened and mail read, a collective voice of concern

came through from hundreds of our certified companies all over the country and all over the world. Companies' contacts called their rabbis at home, urgently offering loving concern. The countless attempts to reach out to "my favorite rabbi" were repeated in numerous voice mails. "I know, you must be backlogged, but please just let me know that everyone is okay and safe at the OU," was a refrain that resounded in hundreds of sensitive messages received here.

For this, and for your personal care, concern and outreach, we thank you. Often, we become so involved in our daily routines, that human faces and touches are eclipsed. Indeed, Ground Zero will forever remain ingrained in history's personal and collective psyche as epitomizing man's most bestial and diabolical side. For all of us at the OU who were so closely touched and traumatized by the 9/11 events, your concern and good wishes have reaffirmed our faith in the triumph of the human spirit.

We join hands with you in praying for the restoration of sanity, peace, security, safety and tranquility for America and all mankind.

As our country struggles to address the recent developments in economic uncertainty, *Behind the Union Symbol* will offer tips on how companies can find ways to maximize their consumer base. The main focus of this issue will be the classification of **Pareve**, the lost and least recognized kosher category. Pareve means that the food is neither dairy nor meat, which makes it that much more desirable. Kosher law allows for pareve products to be consumed with all foods, whether meat or dairy. A



PHOTO: Jack Abromowitz

*“For all of us at the OU who were so closely touched and traumatized by the 9/11 events, your concern and good wishes have reaffirmed our faith in the triumph of the human spirit”*

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Confused about pareve? In the following lines, one of our rabbinic field representatives takes a more light-hearted approach to exploring the basics of this important subject. We call his poem...

By Rabbi Avrohom Stone

# A Pareve Primer

Of all the foods I like to eat,  
I like to eat both milk and meat.  
A dairy meal, prepared just right,  
Can be a kosher food delight.

A sumptuous dish that's made with meat,  
Becomes a culinary treat.  
But though these foods I like to eat,  
I CANNOT eat my milk WITH meat,  
'cause these two foods cannot compete.

Or share a plate or share a meal,  
For kosher rules they do reveal.  
That meat and dairy, when they mix,  
Create a problem hard to fix.

And even though each one is fine,  
The two of them cannot combine.

No all-beef patties topped with cheese,  
No milk in chicken fricassees,  
No chicken soup that's cooked with cream,  
No chocolate flavored beef ice cream,  
No roast, no franks,  
No ribs, no veal,  
Can be served at a dairy meal.

No cheese, no quiche,  
You cannot eat,  
Wherever they are having meat.

No burgers with a thick, rich shake,  
Or pizza pie with beef stew cake,  
No steak with sides of buttered peas,  
No leg of lamb with cottage cheese,  
And even AFTER meat is ate,  
You can't eat dairy, you must wait,  
At least one hour, two or four,  
And some wait five,

Or six or more.  
But lest you think there's less to eat,  
With any meal of milk or meat.  
You need not fear that you will starve,  
For someone has invented pareve.

PAREVE??!!  
Pareve, you say.  
What is this thing,  
In kosher manufacturing?  
What is this pareve? what is this word?  
As strange a word as I have heard!"  
The question, though, when asking what,  
Is not what is but what it's not.  
Not what you use, but what you won't,  
Not what it has, but what it don't.

For pareve's the name by which we call,  
A food that has no milk at all.  
And pareve's the name to food we give,  
Which has no meat derivative,  
Or dairy sub-ingredient,  
And made on any e-equipment.

It's purged of any residue,  
From dairy foods and meat foods too.  
It's eaten any time you feel,  
With any food, at any meal,  
And therefore has much more appeal.

Now, if you're saying, let me see,  
What does this pareve thing mean to me?  
What does it mean? What can I do?  
To make my product be pareve, too?

Well, if you have a factory,  
That makes foods marked with **U**D,  
Or **U**MEAT, it's no surprise,  
That you will have to kosherize,

Before pareve foods you start to make,  
And special care you'll have to take.

Ingredients to separate,  
To make sure there is no mistake,  
In any of the foods you make.

To serve with meat or dairy, too,  
And label with a plain **U**,  
Not **U**MEAT, not **U**D,  
Not even with an **U**P,  
You mark it with a plain **U**,  
If you make pareve, that's what you do.

And if you say, it makes no sense,  
That you should go to the expense,  
To make pareve foods, let me explain,  
That making pareve is not insane.

And so I shall endeavor now,  
To make you see and tell you how,  
That products that contain no cow,  
Can sometimes raise your market share,  
And sell much better everywhere  
That kosher shoppers go to shop,  
They often go right to the top,  
And make a product sell so well,  
That it might help your P&L.

And while it might be somewhat more,  
Than your cost basis was before,  
You might find worth in your travails,  
Reflected in your increased sales.

For, though there is no guarantee,  
That pareve will outsell **U**D,  
Or **U**MEAT, we can agree,  
That pareve's an option to explore,  
**Your RFR can tell you more. U**



## A World of Opportunity

**M**OST ORTHODOX JEWS will tell you that there aren't nearly enough kosher pareve products on supermarket shelves. Pareve (pronounced *parv*) means neutral, indicating that the product is free of either a meat or dairy content. A pareve product can be eaten at any time and is not subject to the biblical separation of meat and dairy foods. A kosher diner who has just consumed a meat meal would have to wait anywhere from 1-6 hours (depending on his or her tradition) before eating ice cream for example, unless the ice cream is pareve. The same holds true for having milk or dairy creamer in coffee.

The interest in pareve is so strong in the core Orthodox kosher market that it virtually assures potential new profits for any manufacturer that makes the effort. Today, we have the technology to replace whey and other dairy ingredients with non-meat or non-dairy items. But the big news is not so much that Orthodox Jews crave pareve products, but that the potential for gaining market share is escalating significantly due to the number of lactose intolerant consumers.

Various marketing studies indicate that dairy digestive problems associated with lactose intolerance affect an estimated 20 to 30 million Americans, or 25 percent of the U.S. population. Though 95 percent of people with dairy digestive problems have heard of lactose intolerance, only 49 percent of them understand why their bodies have trouble coping with dairy. In a recent survey sponsored by Lactaid (makers of lactose-free milk and dietary supplements to aid the digestion of dairy products), 1,092

people with difficulty digesting dairy were asked, "How do you cope with dairy digestive problems?" Nearly 75 percent of the respondents said they limit or avoid certain dairy foods.

There is a great deal of anecdotal evidence that many non-Jewish lactose intolerant consumers are aware of the term pareve. They prefer seeking out products with pareve on the label rather than studying ingredients to determine whether there are traces of dairy. These lac-

***“The interest in pareve is so strong in the core Orthodox kosher market that it virtually assures potential new profits for any manufacturer that makes the effort.”***

tose intolerant consumers can readily trust a pareve designation and in most cases, symptoms such as excessive bloating, gas and indigestion will be relieved.

The challenge is then not only to develop and produce more pareve products but to educate consumers in general about the meaning of pareve.

There is already sufficient evidence that a kosher designation can result in up to a 20% increase in sales. More than \$140 billion of food produced in the U.S. is kosher certified, nearly a third of all foods. The dual description of kosher and pareve can significantly add to the bottom line of any company, particularly if marketed to kosher consumers as well as the lactose intolerant.

While many companies believe that they would still have quality control issues if they were to give up on dairy agents, the reality is that texture and taste can be preserved with pareve ingredients. Almost any food product is a candidate for pareve, but the market is particularly hungry for desserts, sugar-free and fat-free items, pastries, ice creams, creamers, chocolates, snack foods and breads. The opportunities are enormous, considering that so much of the kosher action has shifted to supermarkets. Estimates are that 18,000 of the nation's more than 31,000 supermarkets have some sort of kosher section. Supermarket buyers are constantly looking for pareve items.

If marketed properly, pareve has the potential to be the next major frontier in the kosher industry with a significant audience of mainstream consumers. **U**

### **Menachem Lubinsky**

*is the president of Integrated Marketing Communications, a full service-marketing firm that specializes in the kosher food market. IMC also produces the annual Kosherfest, publishes Kosher Today and hosts [www.kosherfest.com](http://www.kosherfest.com).*



## Another Lost Pareve Product

IT MAY SOUND strange to people in the food industry, but one of the most common questions we receive as Rabbis in the field of kosher supervision is, “Can’t you change the product back to pareve (non-dairy)?” Judging from the number of products switching to dairy, dairy ingredients and dairy products are in vogue. However, for the kosher consumer whose favorite pareve product “goes dairy”, this can cause a quick shift to another brand, or a desperate search for an acceptable non-dairy replacement. While there is no question that kosher consumers like to eat dairy foods, they also value the pareve ones – especially in the case of dessert items that can be eaten following a meat meal. Thus, when a company famous for its pareve cookies recently changed to dairy, we received many inquiries into what happened to provoke the change and why!

Indeed, the dairy/pareve status of foods is of tremendous importance to the kosher consumer. While the industry is certainly concerned with dairy from an allergen standpoint, most individuals who do not keep kosher cannot grasp the far-reaching effects of a **D** designation on a label.

For the kosher consumer, a “**D**” designation means that the product may not be eaten with or soon after a meat meal. This can be very frustrating when one’s favorite cookie or after dinner mint changes status. So you can see why dairy designated products – especially dessert items, crackers and fancy foods served at par-

ties (which in Jewish circles are most often meat meals) – are problematic.

When investigating the issue of “dairy” status, it is important to remember that the kosher definition and the USDA definition of non-dairy are very different. A product may be legally labeled as “non-dairy” (coffee creamers being the most famous example), and still be dairy according to kosher law. Thus, it is possible for a label to read “**non-dairy**” and **D** at the same time. Another problem is the use of “minor” ingredients such as flavorings, which, according to the United States government, if used in small enough quantities, does not need to be itemized on labels.

It is also very important to remember that seen through “kosher” eyes, a product need not contain any dairy to be dairy. How so? In kosher law, the production environment – including manufacturing equipment – affects the status of the food. For example, if a snack food company produces dairy and non-dairy coated snacks on the same heated equipment, all of those snacks must be labeled dairy – unless the equipment is kosherized in between. Often by planning ahead and consulting with the OU before designing a production line these problems can be easily avoided.

Changing a formula or a production line from pareve to dairy has far-reaching implications for the kosher consumer, which a company’s R&D or QC Departments may not be sensitive to. As always, the solution is to include the OU in your development process at an early stage so that we can work with you to investigate ways of main-

taining the pareve label, while also fulfilling your need to introduce new dairy products. **U**

**Rabbi Aharon Brun-Kestler**  
*Serves as a rabbinic coordinator in the New Companies department of the OU.*

### Policy Reminder

- ✓ **The Orthodox Union must be informed of any other plants operated by your company that manufacture products identical to the ones produced in your own OU certified plants. This policy, included in our contract, is meant to protect the consumer from purchasing a non-kosher product, which may appear to be kosher because its label is identical to your company’s kosher product.**
- ✓ **All labels bearing the OU symbol must be authorized prior to their use. This is true for all private label and co-pack products, even if the private label or co-pack client is also OU certified. This policy enables the OU to track the use of its federally registered trademark symbol.**



# ► Miss Meringue Cookies become OU PAREVE

**M**ISS MERINGUE BEGAN introducing the world to meringue cookies more than three years ago. The idea of selling meringue cookies in America came to Co-Founder and Master Pastry Chef Jacques Pautrat, while he was working at the Rainbow Room in New York City. Pautrat grew up in France where the meringue is extremely popular, so when he opened his first bakery in Southern California, he felt there might be a market for these light and airy cookies in the U.S.

The meringue cookies were an instant success. People loved the cookies and the fact that they were fat free or low fat. Almost immediately, a southern California based specialty grocery chain ordered 300 cases of the cookies and so Pautrat was forced to build another bakery and import an oven from France to fulfill the order. With Miss Meringue now in business, Pautrat began selling the meringue cookies across the country in grocery stores, delis, bakeries, gourmet stores, and more.

Now almost four years later, Miss Meringue – available in eleven wonderful flavors and five varieties, including Classique's, Petites, Mini's, French

Swirls and our brand new Dessert Shells – is America's favorite meringue cookie. Pautrat prides himself on using only the finest ingredients including fresh egg whites, real chocolate chips and pure vanilla extract. Miss Meringue cookies contain no preservatives or artificial flavors.

In order to keep with our commitment to reach as many consumers as possible, we investigated what steps were necessary to become kosher pareve. We also received feedback from our current and potential clients who said that becoming kosher pareve would increase the distribution of the product and introduce it to a market that would only purchase pareve products. Wakefern Food Corporation, the distributor to all ShopRite Supermarkets, was one of the first customers to request kosher Miss Meringue Cookies. "The decision to pursue kosher certification was an easy one," explained Joe Suchy, Vice President of Sales and Marketing. "Our marketing research made it very clear that there was a growing market for kosher pareve products."

However, getting kosher certification meant we needed to rigorously review all of our ingredients and processes, including changing some of our ingredients so that we could receive pareve certification. In retrospect, the hard work was worth it and would not have been possible without the enthusiastic guidance of our Senior Rab-

*“Our marketing research made it very clear that there was a growing market for kosher pareve products.”*

binic Coordinator Rabbi Eliyahu Safran, our Rabbinic Coordinator Rabbi Yisroel Bendelstein and our Rabbinic Field Representative Rabbi Aharon Shapiro.

The responses we have gotten since we became pareve have been amazing. In fact, our biggest private label client recently requested that their product line be certified kosher pareve. In

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11



# ► Striving to create an Honest Tea Experience

by Seth Goldman

**W**HAT ARE TWO nice Jewish boys from the Boston suburbs doing running a tea company? Our mothers often ask us the same question. When we launched Honest Tea in 1998, my partner Barry Nalebuff and I knew that our company would do more than just sell tea. The name was intended to further the idea that tea should be made with real tea leaves and not from powders and concentrates like other companies do. We also knew the name required us to make a product with integrity – no artificial flavors or colors and no fake marketing messages. The name helped us to pave the way for a broader mission of creating healthy and honest relationships with the environment and with our suppliers. (We also knew that our Moms wouldn't be happy until the product line was OU kosher – what kind of tea would we be selling if we couldn't even serve it at family events?)

We started with five varieties of tea that tasted great as long as you poured in tons of sugar. As our company grew, we realized that we had two other criteria:

- Cultural authenticity - bringing new products to market in a way that was consistent with the culture of origin.
- Social responsibility – we sought opportunities to develop relationships with our suppliers that went beyond standard business transactions.

In our own way, these efforts represented our modest steps toward the Jewish concept of *tzedek* – striving to run our business in a way that would benefit economically disadvantaged communities.

For example, we created First Nation Peppermint, a fully organic peppermint tea made and marketed in partnership with a company named I'tchik that is based on the Crow Reservation in Montana – a community with 67 percent unemployment. In addition to buying the tea from our partners, we donate a portion of the sales to them as well as to a non-profit organization for at-risk Native American youth. So far the partnership is off to a good start and First Nation Peppermint is the 8th-best-selling bottled tea in the natural foods industry with more than 500,000 bottles sold. Since the tea was launched in the Spring of 1999 we've purchased

*“The name helped us to pave the way for a broader mission of creating healthy and honest relationships with the environment and with our suppliers.”*

tens of thousands of dollars in peppermint from I'tchik and written them and the Pretty Shield Foundation royalty checks for more than \$10,500. Of course, there is more to be done – we're still working with our Crow partners to fund a business plan so that they can cultivate the peppermint and other herbs on tribal land. When we can buy our peppermint directly from them, we will be helping

CONTINUED ON PAGE 13

pareve salad dressing can be enjoyed with both a sumptuous steak dinner as well as with an enticing dairy lunch. Essentially, pareve is the universal kosher category. In a recent issue of *Bakingbuyer* (July 2001), Betsy Harter points to the ever-successful pareve bagel as an example of how bakeries can reach a wider clientele. "Bagels by nature are pareve, as they typically include no meat, or dairy, only pareve ingredients such as flour, water, yeast, sugar, malt and molasses. However, Reyna Paulker, co-owner of Bagel Fair in Indianapolis, IN, notes that many bakeries use oils based on animal fats or whey instead of wheat gluten." These companies and others in the ice cream, confectionery, baking and beverage industries miss out on not only the ever-burgeoning kosher market – which includes the millions who eat kosher food on a regular basis – but also on the countless [some say 20-30 million!] vegetarians and lactose intolerant Americans who seek out the OU Pareve designation as an assurance that the product is absolutely non-dairy. The USDA allows food manufacturers to put a "non-dairy" designation on an item that has up to 2% in dairy ingre-

dients. For vegetarians and those who are lactose intolerant, even this small percentage is unacceptable. Only a truly pareve classification can guarantee that absolutely no dairy ingredients, no dairy residue and no contact with dairy equipment were used to prepare the food.

With Rabbi Stone's poem as an opener, Menachem Lubinsky's marketing tips and Rabbi Brun-Kestler's insights, more companies will hopefully discern the great opportunities available in the pareve world. Feel free to discuss your pareve needs with your company's Rabbinic Coordinator and encourage your marketing people to reach out to them as well. You may find that they can shed light on decisions that could ultimately affect millions of dollars of sales.

Keep in touch!




**Rabbi Eliyahu Safran**

*Editor/Senior Rabbinic Coordinator*

## It's important to keep the **line of communication** open between YOU and your RABBINIC COORDINATOR.

BELOW ARE THE E-MAIL ADDRESSES AND PHONE EXTENSIONS FOR OUR RCS.

The address consists of the user name and "@ou.org" (e.g. safrane@ou.org). Please don't hesitate to call your RC whenever you need anything by dialing 212.613.8 plus the 3-digit extension listed below, or by sending an e-mail.



AdlerM	250	Menachem Adler	KravitzY	322	Yehuda Kravitz
BendelsteinY	253	Yisroel Bendelstein	Lebowitz	319	Elimelech Lebowitz
AharonB	340	Aharon Brun-Kestler	LubanY	214	Yaakov Luban
BirnhackP	207	Pinchas Birnhack	MendelsonJ	216	Jacob B. Mendelson
CohenD	222	David Cohen	MincerY	173	Yitzchok Mincer
ColemanM	271	Michael Coleman	MorrisM	327	Michael Morris
CywiakB	298	Baruch Cywiak	Morrison	133	Raymond Morrison
ElefantM	211	Moshe Elefant	NeubergN	205	Nosson Neuberger
EpsteinD	293	Donneal Epstein	OsseyA	314	Avrum Ossey
FerrellE	394	Eliyahu Ferrell	Paretzky	204	Yisroel Paretzky
FrischH	312	Herbert Frisch	PriceG	389	Gavriel Price
SallyG	215	Menachem Genack	RabinowitzN	206	Nachum Rabinowitz
YosefG	295	Jay Goldberg	RockoveD	315	Dovid Rockove
GoldbergN	292	Nosson Goldberg	RosenbaumM	347	Moshe Rosenbaum
GoodmanZ	294	Zvi Goodman	RothenbergI	200	Israel Rothenberg
Gordimer	240	Avrohom Gordimer	SafranE	115	Eliyahu Safran
GorelikD	203	David Gorelik	Scheiner	245	Kalman Scheiner
Grossman	212	Joseph Grossman	SchepanskyE	274	Elchonon Schepansky
Herbsman	210	Chananel Herbsman	YoelS	220	Yoel Schonfeld
HeschelS	349	Syshe Heschel	Schreier	342	Dov Schreier
IndichY	189	Yermia Indich	SingerS	217	Shmuel Singer
JuravelA	396	Abraham I. Juravel	LennyS	281	Leonard Steinberg
HowardK	169	Howard Katzenstein	ZywicaM	219	Moshe Zywica



## Industry Trends takes an inside look at the Biotechnology Industry Enzyme and Out

by Rabbi Menachem Adler

**T**HE BIOTECHNOLOGY enzyme industry has grown rapidly in the past 40-50 years and supplies many essential additives used in food production. Most of these ingredients are used in very small quantities, but are oftentimes essential in creating important properties in foods. For example, microbial rennet and chymosin are employed to congeal agents in the milk used to form cheese and pectinase is employed as a clarifier in juice production. Among the most common ingredients are additives such as citric acid, MSG, aspartame, xanthan gum, ascorbic acid, microbial rennet, chymosin, yeast, glucose oxidase, pectinase and the three corn syrup enzymes used to produce glucose and high fructose corn syrups.

While in almost all cases these ingredients are used in small quantities, under kosher rules, the OU is obligated to ensure that each and every ingredient is derived exclusively from acceptable kosher sources.

The restriction against the usage of non-kosher enzymes at even small levels dates back to ancient times. The *Talmud*, written more than 2500 years ago, requires rabbinic supervision of cheese to ensure that rennet derived from a non-kosher animal is not used. While the sources of the catalysts may have changed (the U.S. cheese industry uses almost exclusively microbial rennets or chymosin in modern day cheese production), the concepts remain the same.

Biotechnology and enzyme production are used when a microor-

ganism that grows naturally is recognized to have various enzymatic properties. For example, Xanthomas Camprestris – the bug that xanthan gum is taken from – was originally isolated off a rotting cabbage. Yeast naturally occurs in rotting bread and has now been isolated as well. Through the use of biotechnology, desired strains were isolated and then propagated to produce enzymes with the preferred

menter. At all stages of production growth, the OU's responsibility is to ensure the kosher status of each and every nutrient, antifoam and other processing aid used. With the cooperation of the company, the OU field representative monitors the ingredients used at all stages of growth.

An enzyme or biotechnology company will have a Schedule A with the approved raw materials



MSG

### Its Not Just a Garden

property. Mutation, cloning and various DNA technologies are now employed to produce microorganisms that produce greater quantities or stronger versions of the favored enzymatic activity. Much to the surprise of many bio-technicians, most of these technologies do not affect a product's kosher status.

Kosher status is determined by ensuring that all nutrients that are fed to a microorganism meet kosher pareve or kosher dairy approval. With kosher laws pertaining to microorganisms, the aphorism, "You are what you eat," truly applies.

Microorganisms are generally propagated in graduated stages from a small flask to a seed fermenter and then to a main fer-

mented (as does any OU company). The RFR must familiarize himself with the company's documentation procedures in order to ensure that the Schedule A requirements are being followed. Of course this is supplemented by physical inspections of the premises and warehouses.

Following the growing stage, there is a harvesting procedure where filter aids, preservatives, processing aids and diluents are added. Kosher control of all these ingredients must be maintained as well.

Passover certification is often an important consideration in the biotechnology industry. Kosher for Passover products may not contain

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12





## An Opportunity to Help in New York City

**T**HE KOSHER INITIATIVE, a collaborative project of **City Harvest** and the **Metropolitan Coordinating Council on Jewish Poverty**, provides kosher food to kosher emergency food programs on a daily basis in New York City.

All types of kosher food—including raw, prepared, packaged, non-perishable, produce, kosher for Passover, meat, dairy, and pareve—are needed to serve Jews who observe the laws of Kashrut.

Donating food to the Kosher Initiative is easy and begins with a simple phone call to **City Harvest**. Using refrigerated trucks, **City Harvest** will pick up your food donation and transport it to people who need it within a matter of hours. They can also arrange freight deliveries for large product donations.

Since September 11<sup>TH</sup>, 2001, **City Harvest**, partnered with the American Red Cross, the Salvation Army and the Office of Emergency Management (OEM), has played a major role in the distribution of food to help the rescuers and victims. By coordinating with New York City restaurants, **City Harvest** delivered food to thousands of recovery workers at ground zero in the weeks immediately following the disaster, while continuing to provide food to over 700 emergency food programs throughout New York City. **U**

*For more information or to donate food to the Kosher Initiative, please call Rabbi Mayer Mayerfeld at City Harvest, 917.351.8700. The Kosher Initiative is a collaborative project of City Harvest and the Metropolitan coordinating council on Jewish Poverty. It is sponsored by the Nash Family Foundation and Kraft Foods.*

*City Harvest also accepts donations of non-kosher food for distribution to over 500 agencies feeding New York's hungry, including food pantries, soup kitchens and senior citizen and day care centers.*

**MERINGUE** CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

addition, many of our new clients – including Target, Bed Bath and Beyond, Albertson's and Publix – have expressed that being kosher pareve only adds value to the product. The market for kosher OU pareve products continues to grow and Miss Meringue is committed to providing our delicious cookies to this market. We proudly display the OU symbol on our meringue cookies.

Miss Meringue recently attended Kosherfest 2001 and the unsolicited comments raving about our

meringue products were wonderful. Consumers and interested retailers who wish to purchase or find out more about Miss Meringue cookies are welcome to visit our website at [www.missmeringue.com](http://www.missmeringue.com).

As Pautrat would say in the French tradition, *Bon Appetit!* **U**

**Rabbi Yisroel Bendelstein**

*Serves as rabbinic coordinator for Miss Meringue.*



either *chametz* – products made from the five grains, their derivatives (wheat, barley, rye, oats, and spelt), legumes (corn, soybean, etc.) – or their derivatives. Nonetheless, in the fermentation stages of enzyme production, legumes and their derivations can be used due to the chemical changes that occur.

Many companies manufacture kosher for Passover products on a seasonal basis while other companies find it more efficient to produce their entire inventory as kosher for Passover year round. For example, many major kosher cheese companies certify their entire product line as kosher for Passover. Therefore, all their cheese enzymes

“The enzyme and biotechnology industry is a dynamic area with companies oftentimes experimenting with new ingredients and processes that can impact kosher status.”

(i.e. microbial rennet or chymosin) need to be Passover approved. The same is true with pectinase for kosher wine production. Wine crushes take place only once a year, so many kosher wine manufacturers will ensure that all additives in their wines have kosher for Passover certification.

Based on the fact that legume products are permitted in the fermentation stage, the OU also certifies many of the enzymes used in corn syrup as *chametz*-free. These *chametz*-free corn syrups are then acceptable to be used in fermentation products such as citric acid, xanthan gum, MSG, Aspartame and ascorbic acid.

The enzyme and biotechnology industry is a dynamic area with companies oftentimes experimenting with new ingredients and processes that can impact kosher status. The OU, with its Ingredient Approval Registry, is committed to servicing its companies with timely guidance on ingredient inquiries as they arise, while also offering in-house seminars to further enhance companies' understanding of their kosher programs. In addition, the OU often provides an overview of basic kosher rules to plant personnel in order to assist them in preliminary evaluation of new ingredients. Under all circumstances, it is necessary to check with our office and receive approval before any new ingredient is used in production or on equipment used for production.

On occasion, OU certified enzyme and biotechnology companies must service a client with a product that may require a non-kosher ingredient. If feasible, a system is developed to ensure the kosher integrity of the equipment that is used for OU certified production. Nonetheless, it is always preferable to maintain an all-kosher program. The OU works hand-in-hand with companies to help find kosher substitutes of the desired ingredient. Thankfully, due to the proliferation of kosher ingredients, this is often easily achieved.

The OU is always available to assist companies and is never more than a phone call away. We are happy to serve as the “catalyst” for enzyme companies in providing solutions that satisfy business objectives while ensuring the highest kosher standards for which the OU is famous. **U**

#### **Rabbi Menachem Adler**

*Serves as rabbinic coordinator for many of the OU certified enzyme companies.*



## ***Marketing Tips***

**If your company maintains a website or puts out a trade journal, be sure to include the fact that you are **U** CERTIFIED.**

- ▶ Many companies have reported increased sales from this simple “advertising” technique.
- ▶ Additionally, by ***including a link to the OU’s website***, you will enable all those interested in your product to learn for themselves what kosher means and why it is important to you. In turn, we will be happy to feature your brand name and logo – with a link to your website – on a special OU client company page we are developing for this purpose.
- ▶ And finally, think how much you will benefit from placing the OU symbol in your consumer or trade advertising. For many people, the OU is much like the “Good Housekeeping” symbol as an endorsement of your product’s quality.

## THE BEST THING SINCE FLINTSTONE VITAMINS

### NEW MILLENNIUM HEALTH & NUTRITION

has announced the debut of its **Doctor's Choice Colostrum™** nutritional supplements, developed exclusively for licensed health practitioners. The world's first and only OU kosher-certified Colostrum line, Doctor's Choice features New Zealand's finest Grade 1 low heat processed Colostrum known as NZGold™ and is available in capsules, chewable tablets, 100% pure powder and two unique drink mixes called Immuno Boost™ and Immuno Boost PLUS™.

The most natural health and nutrition supplement on the market today, Colostrum is neither a plant nor an herb, but it is the fluid secreted by a cow's mammary glands after birth and pre-milk. Rich in immune factors, vitamins, minerals and amino acids, it provides a broad range of immune enhancing properties via a host of immunoglobulins, proline-rich polypeptides, interferon, and other immuno active molecules that assist the human body against infections such as sinusitis, bronchitis, colds and influenza. Research has also shown that Colostrum is effective against gastrointestinal conditions such as cryptosporidium, rotavirus, streptococcus, E. coli, salmonella and giardia.

Due to the public's increasing demand for pure, all natural nutritional supplements that are kosher, to assist the human body against infection and certain gastrointestinal conditions, Doctor's Choice is being introduced to American and Canadian licensed health professionals with its new OU kosher certification.

Doctor's Choice OU Kosher-certified Colostrum is based on New Zealand's Top Grade NZGold™ Colostrum that is collected from specially-selected, range fed New Zealand cow herds. All cows are also free of Mad Cow disease (BSE) and Foot and Mouth disease, and are maintained free from harmful herbicides, pesticides, and synthetic hormones. **U**

TEA CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7



to create economic self-sufficiency in the community.

Earlier this year we introduced Community Green, a fully organic green tea with Maltese orange, also known as blood orange. This tea is marketed in partnership with City Year, a national not-for-profit organization dedicated to rebuilding communities in America's cities.

This tea has been receiving rave reviews for its taste as well as its low-calorie profile and socially responsible elements.

We have also been getting a great response to our line of whole leaf tea bags, a mostly organic line of tea packaged in fully biodegradable bags, which yield a fuller, fresher taste because the leaves are not pulverized like most tea bags.

It has been an exciting year for us – in addition to introducing Community Green, we finally succeeded in collecting the necessary documentation to get our entire product line certified kosher by the Orthodox Union. It took a little more time and effort to gain the approval of the OU, but our customers deserve the best – and so do our Moms. **U**

#### **Seth Goldman**

*is President & CEO of Honest Tea. For more information on Honest Tea visit [www.honesttea.com](http://www.honesttea.com).*

#### **Rabbi Yosef Grossman**

*Serves as rabbinic coordinator for Honest Tea*

**For applications to certify**

**NEW COMPANIES or  
ADDITIONAL PLANTS,**

**call Civia Birnbaum at the  
OU Applications Desk, 212.613.8249.**

# ON THE FREEWAY

by Rabbi Binyomin Kaplan

Welcome to another installment of “On the Road,” a column that features OU RFRs’ experiences while certifying plants throughout the world. This report comes from the diverse and adventurous regions of southern and central California.

ORIGINALLY FROM Louisiana, my impressions of California are those of a non-native. I find that one of the most obvious pleasures of commuting throughout California is the varied beauty of the terrain. Many of the communities in the extended areas that surround Los Angeles are framed by mountain vistas, while the fertile agriculturally rich central valley has a more conventionally rural lushness – which at times presents the familiar sights of cow pastures, oil derricks, and cotton fields to this transplanted Southerner. At other times the terrain has a spectacular amber color, illustrating why California is also known as the “Golden State.”

To reach the northern areas of the region under my supervision, I drive through mountains, sometimes reaching an elevation of 4000 feet, traversing the famous “grape vine.” For me, there is one especially striking moment, when I emerge from the mountains, and look down over the valley stretching for miles before me. I guess I don’t yet have a knack for the “rapture of the freeway” which, according to essayist Joan Didion, is a state of consciousness that involves the trance-like execution of perfect lane-changes.

An obvious cultural aspect of southern California is the strong Latin American presence. This is certainly illustrated by many of the

products I encounter. For instance, three different OU ice cream companies that I visit have a Dulce de Leche flavor. Even though Spanish often prevails on the production floor, I experience few language problems. It is not that the pitiful scraps of high school Spanish that I remember are helpful; it is that there is usually someone present who speaks English fluently.

The atmosphere at plants on the West Coast is relatively relaxed. One RFR told me that he was asked not to wear a tie to a plant. Some plant contacts have even asked me, “Rabbi, would you mind going around by yourself and I’ll see you at the end of the visit?”

As is the case for all OU visits, a trip to a plant is ideally a learning experience for both the RFR and the plant contact. The idea is to apply the complexities of the kosher laws to the particular circumstances of food production at each individual plant. The RFR’s expertise must be customized to speak to the plant personnel’s knowledge; there must be a meeting of the minds.

The information needed by the company’s kosher liaison involves a number of key topics. In plants where some lines are dedicated to dairy and some to pareve, or in plants where equipment has to be re-kosherized between runs of dairy and pareve, or kosher and non-kosher, the plant personnel must become well-versed in the distinc-

tions. A product that contains an ingredient that may not appear to be dairy, such as whey powder, must be marked with a letter “D” after the kosher certification symbol, to ensure the integrity of the product as dictated by kosher guidelines.

The classifications of “kosher” and “non-kosher,” “dairy” and “pareve” apply not only to the actual food items, but also to the equipment, surfaces and utensils used with the food. Making equipment useable for a pareve product after the production of a dairy item involves special procedures that go beyond a thorough clean-up.

It is also important to bear in mind that many of the kosher rules and guidelines are not necessarily intuitive. When a new person is put in charge of the kosher program, or when a company is venturing into a new type of production, the RFR must make sure that separation and equipment issues are not neglected. In general, the RFR’s job is easiest when the plant is conscientious about communicating its changes – new ingredients, products, equipment, or procedures – to the OU.

The RFR’s job is also made significantly easier when plant personnel become familiar with the Schedule A and frequently consult it, even when the Rabbi is not there. The Schedule A is a familiar prop used during the RFR’s inspection visit, and when it is regularly used in the day-to-day operation of the



plant, the kosher program is able to run even more smoothly. When the Schedule A is in the hands of the managing personnel and receiving department staff, the delivery of non-certified or non-approved products can be more efficiently refused on the spot.

At Ice Cream Partners USA – the producer of Nestle’s ice cream and Haagen Dazs products in Bakersfield, CA and Tulare, CA – the Quality Assurance Manager Eddie Trujillo has set up a computerized system where all of the important OU and company information – including the raw material codes – is inputted. This has made it considerably easier to communicate with the company and plant personnel about particular ingredients.

At Odwalla, Inc.– an innovative company in Dinuba, CA, which makes fruit-juice based products and other beverages aimed at a health-conscious consumer – QA Manager David Davis facilitates my visit by greeting me with a binder containing copies of the latest Ingredient Approval Request forms sent in to the OU.

With a wide range of different types of agriculture and manufacturing, the West Coast undoubtedly provides a diverse sampling of the various kinds of kosher issues and plant set-ups that exist throughout the country. My own route includes products such as fruits, nuts, vegetables, spices, ice creams, salad dressings, candy and beverages. California, in general, provides a splendid example of how kosher supervision is occupying an increasingly prominent place on the landscape of modern food production. **U**

### **Rabbi Binyomin Kaplan**

*Serves as one of the OU’s West Coast rabbinic field representatives.*

120,000 chickens and 15,000 turkeys into kosher raw and cooked, fresh and frozen products, including hot dogs, luncheon meats, turkey pastrami and deli foods. In addition, Empire markets a co-packed line of kosher entrees, blintzes, pizza, egg rolls and more.

From the start, Empire recruited leading rabbis from around the world to help the company adhere to the strict Jewish dietary laws. The selected rabbis were diligent in their study, and precise and consistent in their daily slaughtering duties.

Empire faced many obstacles trying to bring the quality of the kosher chicken to the highest level in the industry and beyond. In contrast to other foods, making chickens kosher on as large a scale as Empire is not only more time consuming, but also logistically demanding. Each of the 12,000 chickens that are processed daily must be individually slaughtered by a trained *shochet* (who has an extensive background in the laws of kosher butchering) and individually inspected by a team of rabbis for any blemishes. Unlike the non-kosher de-feathering process where a chicken is first dipped in hot water, the kosher process does not allow hot water to be used before the soaking and salting of the meat. With the help of the OU, the company has spent many hours learning to clean and dress a chicken under the rabbis’ watchful eyes. Only after enormous effort, was the quality that Empire is so famous for achieved.

Though sixty-four years have passed since Empire changed the face of the kosher market, they still maintain the strictest of guidelines to ensure top-notch quality and strict adherence to all Kashrut regulations. With the assistance and guidance of the OU, Empire’s rabbinic inspectors are responsible for making sure that: the knives used in



the slaughter of the chickens are extremely sharp and have no nicks; ensuring that that every chicken and turkey is clear of abnormalities that might render it unacceptable; and observing the cleansing and packaging of the poultry. At Empire, only cold spring water is used to clean and prepare the poultry, which helps keep bacteria and contamination to a minimum. All poultry is first soaked, then hand salted, inside and out, to remove the blood. After salting, every bird is soaked three times in the icy water to thoroughly cleanse the bird and remove the salt. The whole process takes about three and half hours – four times the average of 42 minutes non-kosher plants take to process a chicken.

The scrutiny of the OU rabbinic field representatives and rabbinic coordinator far surpasses the requirements of the USDA inspectors. In fact, today, nearly twenty five percent of the company’s customers consist of non-Jewish buyers willing to pay a higher price, because of the superior taste and health benefits of the kosher process.

Under the leadership of Empire’s current administration, the company’s commitment to quality and maintaining the high standards of kashrut articulated by the OU, is uncompromising, making Empire the most trusted name in kosher poultry. **U**

### **Rabbi Yehuda Kravitz**

*Serves as the rabbinic coordinator for Empire.*

# KOSHERFEST 2001

KOSHERFEST 2001 took place at the Meadowlands Convention Center in Secaucus, NJ on November 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>. By far the largest tradeshow in the world focusing on the kosher food industry, Kosherfest enables producers within the kosher food industry to network with potential new buyers and distributors from throughout the world. With nearly 100 new exhibitors, this year's show featured 500 booths with more than 12,000 visitors in attendance.



PHOTO: Rachel Wolf

Pictured (left to right): OU Executive Rabbinic Coordinator Rabbi Moshe Elefant, OU Rabbinic Administrator Rabbi Menachem Genack and Rokeach Executives Victor Ostreicher and Yossi Ostreicher.

The Rokeach Food Corporation is one of America's leading manufacturers and distributors of quality kosher foods and household products. Rokeach products, including gefilte fish, soups, sauces and salad dressings, are sold throughout the United States and exported to 11 countries worldwide. Rokeach is the world leader in kosher for Passover food products.



Pictured: Kellogg Company displaying their newly certified OU products at Kosherfest 2001. This past year the OU extended their certification to Kellogg's well known Eggo brand which includes: Apple Cinnamon Waffles, Homestyle Waffles, Chocolate Chip Waffles, Strawberry Waffles, Oat Bran Waffles, Blueberry Pancakes and Strawberry Toaster Muffins.



**NOW  
in  
Spanish!**

## Have You Seen It?

**Geared for food and marketing executives, as well as plant personnel, this 15-minute video explains what kosher really means and how food becomes OU certified.**

**It can serve as a wonderful tool for your in-house Kosher Review Seminar.**

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