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By: Rabbi Shmuel Singer
Director, Passover Certification

The OU continues to give certification to Passover Quinoa. Quinoa will be available with an OU-P from Goldbaum, Pereg, and La Bonne. They will also have OU-P chia seeds. Goldbaum, La Bonne and Pereg will also be selling quinoa flour. The OU will also continue certifying OU Kitniyot retail items as it did last year. Flaum's will be selling Sonny & Joe's OU Kitniyot hummus and tahini. Holy Hummus will also have three types of OU Kitniyot hummus. Ferrero will have OU Kitniyot Nutella Spread and Kinder Chocolate. Osem will also have a number of OU Kitniyot items. Telma corn flakes will also be available marked OU Kitniyot. All these products are clearly marked OU Kitniyot Ochlei Kitniyot and are all made with Mashgiach Temidi like all OU-P products.

Kedem continues to bottle grape juice under its own name as well as under the Haddar and Gefen labels. All these items have always been and will continue to be Mevushal. Kedem has one not Mevushal grape juice. This is bottled in 1.5 liter glass bottles and clearly labeled Non-Mevushal. Kedem also has Fresh Pressed Grape Juice as an OU-P grape juice made without sulfites. Kedem will have Sangria Grape Juice and Sangria Sparkling Grape Juice. Kedem also has Pomegranate and Sparkling Pomogrape Juices with the OU-P certification. Passover vodka will be available from Lvov and Pravda OU-P vodka imported from Poland. OU-P liquors will be available under the Queen Esther, Spirit of Solomon & Gold Shot labels. Zachlawi will have OU-P arak and vodka.

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בברכת חג כשר ושמח!

SEARCHING FOR YOSHON PRODUCTS IS NOW EASIER



Until the mid-1970s, chodosh (new grain) was largely a non-issue in the United States, as the country had large surpluses of wheat. Since wheat becomes yoshon once Pesach has passed, and the wheat was being stored in grain elevators at that time, the U.S. crop was yoshon. In 1974, the Jackson-Vanik Amendment was enacted to pressure the Soviet Union to permit Jew-ish emigration — tying the loosening of trade barriers to emigration. As emigration restrictions eased, trade barriers were lifted, allowing large-scale exports of wheat to the Soviet Union and later China as well. The legislation had an unintended halachic impact: as exports grew, the surplus disappeared; wheat now reached the market soon after it was harvested, and chodosh became an issue.

OU Kosher CEO Rabbi Menachem Genack notes that Rav Ahron Soloveitchik was stringent about keeping yoshon. He said, "It is largely due to him that awareness of yoshon spread."

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Manischewitz continues to bake matzah under OU Passover supervision. TAs in past years, there is an OU-P on Aviv, Osem, Yehuda, Rishon and Holy Land matzah products coming from Israel. These products are supervised by local Rabbanim and are satisfactorily made with OU Pesach guidelines. In addition, we certify Yanovsky matzah baked in Argentina. This matzah is widely distributed in Latin America. This company manufactures various types of matzah.

Manischewitz has Passover whole wheat matzah and whole wheat matzah meal. They also make OU-P spelt matzah. Manischewitz also bakes OU-P Matzah under the Horowitz Margareten label. Geula will have OU-P 18 minute matzah and 18 minute matza meal as well as Shemura matzah meal. Manischewitz continues to produce Egg Matzah as well as Passover Egg Tam Tams. These are made from egg matzah dough and marked as Matzah Ashira on the box. Yehuda, Aviv, Rishon, Osem and Yanovsky also produce Passover Egg Matzah marked as Matzah Ashira on the box. Manischewitz also bakes machine Shmura Matzah. Manischewitz will also be producing Manischewitz Handmade Shemurah Matzah. The various Israeli OU matzah companies will all be selling machine shmurah matzah as well. The OU also supervises hand shmurah matzah under the Holy Land label.

Manischewitz will again have gluten free OU-P crackers and gluten free OU-P matzah style squares. Yehuda will also have these gluten free products as well as gluten free cake meal, fine meal, and farfel. Kedem will also have Absolutely brand OU-P gluten free flatbread and crackers as well as Jeff Nathan gluten free Panko Flakes. In addition, Manischewitz will have Jason gluten free coating crumbs and panko coating crumbs. None of these products are made from matzah and none of them can be used in the place of matzah. This is clearly marked on the label.

Coca Cola will again be available with an OU-P for Pesach in Regular and Diet flavors. Aside from the New York metropolitan area, Coke will be bottled in Jacksonville, FL and Los Angeles. Coca Cola items will be made with an OU-P in 2 liter bottles. All these items, of course, require the P symbol. All the Passover Coke items will be marked with a distinctive yellow cap bearing the OU-P symbol.

The Haddar and Gefen lines of Passover chocolate and candy items will again be available. The Barton brand of various chocolate items will be back again with the OU-P. A full line of Holiday candy items will be available with the OU-P symbol. Manischewitz will have different types of chocolate covered OU-P plain matzah. Holiday will also have chocolate covered plain matzah. These items are all not Matzah Ashirah. Absolutely Cranberry Chews and Chocolate Chip Chews will also be available. Holiday will also have chocolate covered egg matzah. This item is Matzah

Ashirah and labeled as such.

Norman's has a full line of Cholov Yisroel yogurt. In addition, there will be OU-P Cholov Yisroel goat cheese and sheep cheese from Barkanit and mozzarella, provolone and pecorino cheese from Yotvata.

J&J will have OU-P cottage cheese, cream cheese and farmer cheese. All of these will be Cholov Yisroel. Friendship, Bowl & Basket and Ahold cottage cheese and sour cream will be available with OU-P certification. Breakstone sour cream will also be available. Bowl & Basket and La Yogurt OU-P plain yogurt will be available in whole milk, low fat and no fat varieties. These items are all not Cholov Yisroel.

Bernie's Foods will have Frankel's blintzes, waffles and pizza as well as LeTova Kichel and bread sticks. These are not made with matzah meal. Dayenu OU-P pizza, rolls and pierogies are made with matzah meal. Manischewitz will continue to have its line of OU-P baked items including various types of macaroons as well as Mandel Cuts, Egg Kichel and Soup Nuts. These are all not made with matzah meal. Manischewitz will again have a number of cake mixes. These are all made with matzah meal. Manischewitz will be selling a line of OU-P Mezonos cookies in different flavors baked with matzah meal.

Tuna fish is available with an OU-P from Gefen and Dagim. Kirkland and Shoprite OU-P Smoked Salmon will also be available. Old Williamsburg will have BBQ Smoked Salmon, Original Smoked Salmon, Honey Smoked Salmon and Nova Salmon. Old Williamsburg will again be making OU-P Meat Beef Jerky in different flavors as a Passover meat snack. Gefen will have OU-P canned salmon in both regular and no salt versions. Kedem will have Sea Castle sardines in tomato sauce, olive oil and water. Vita will have smoked salmon, herring in wine and herring in cream sauce. The herring in cream sauce will be OU-P Cholov Yisroel. King Oscar sardines in olive oil and sardines in water will be available. Benz's, Banner and Haifa smoked fish items will again be available with the OU-P. Kedem will again have Sea Castle roasted seaweed and roasted spicy seaweed snacks. All these items are made with mashgiach temidi and Bishul Yisrael. Flaums will be selling whitefish salad and tuna deluxe salad. Flaums will also have OU-P potato salad, egg salad and many varieties of dips. Sonny & Joe will have OU-P grilled eggplant, babaganoush and matbucha.

The OU position remains that OU supervised extra virgin olive oil can be used without special supervision for Pesach. Manischewitz will have OU-P Grapeseed Oil and Grapeseed Oil Spray available this year. Prepared olives with an OU-P will be available from Gefen, Osem, Kvuzat Yavne, Gilboa

and Mishpacha. The OU position is that all virgin coconut oil is acceptable for Passover.

Gefen will again have Zero Calorie Harmony, as an artificial sweetener. This year Fox's U-Bet syrups will be available with OU-P certification. These syrups are all pareve. The OU continues to certify various White Rock, Bowl & Basket and Adirondack seltzers as OU-P. Bowl & Basket will be selling a number of OU-P certified flavored seltzers. These include Ginger, Raspberry, Orange, Lemon Lime, Grapefruit and Black Cherry.

The OU position remains that regular tea bags, which are not flavored or decaffeinated, are acceptable for Pesach without special supervision. Wissotsky will continue to have Passover herbal teas. Bowl & Basket will have specially marked OU-P plain tea bags available. In addition, Sweet-Touch-Nee will have OU-P decaffeinated tea bags for sale. **Some coffee companies add maltodextrin, which is either chametz or kitniyos, to instant coffee. As a result this coffee is not kosher for Passover. Only coffee bearing an OU-P symbol or brands listed in the yellow pages of the Passover Directory should be used. Both Folger's and Nescafe Taster's Choice instant coffee remain acceptable without special Passover certification. Gefen Decaffeinated Instant Coffee will be available with OU-P certification. Ground coffee remains acceptable from any source as long as it is unflavored and not decaffeinated.** There is a full listing of unflavored and not decaffeinated K-cups that are acceptable in the yellow pages of the guide. Bowl & Basket Classic Ground Coffee is certified OU-P manufactured with a mashgiach present.

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CHOZER V'NIYUR ON PESACH

Rabbi Eli Gersten

Shulchan Aruch (OC 447:1-2,4) writes that chametz on Pesach is not batel, even in cases of one in a thousand. But before Pesach (even on erev Pesach) it is batel b'shishim. In certain cases, even when it is batel before Pesach, it is chozer v'niyur (reawakens) on Pesach and becomes assur. The Rema (OC 447:4) differentiates between mixtures that are yaveish b'yaveish and mixtures that are lach b'lach.

Mixtures that are yaveish b'yaveish - Chametz is chozer v'niyur and it may not be eaten on Pesach. The Magen Avrohom (447:11) adds that since on Pesach the chametz is not batel, unless it is a makom hefsed, one must destroy the entire mixture. Otherwise, one is owning chametz on Pesach. However, if it is only a safek if there is chametz in the mixture, though one may not eat it on Pesach, it may be owned (Magen Avrohom 447:12).

Mixtures that are lach b'lach - Chametz that was batel before Pesach remains batel and is not chozer v'niyur on Pesach. This food may be eaten on Pesach. The Mishnah Berurah (447:32) adds that even mixtures of flour (kemach b'kemach) are also considered like lach b'lach.

Rav Schachter explained based on Mahar"i Kurkus (brought in Kesef Mishnah Sha'ar Avos Ha'Tumah 1:17) that there is a fundamental difference between a ta'aruvos of lach b'lach and yaveish b'yaveish. Lach b'lach is a complete bitul as though the issur no longer exists. As such it can no longer be chozer v'niyur. However, regarding a ta'aruvos of yaveish b'yaveish the issur still exists, it just is not known where it

is. Therefore, in this case, we are machmir that on Pesach the issur is chozer v'niyur.

Example: A breadcrumb got mixed into a box of matzah meal crumbs. Although the breadcrumb is unrecognizable and batel b'shishim before Pesach, these crumbs may not be used on Pesach. Furthermore, according to Magen Avrohom, the box of matzah meal must be destroyed.

Kemach b'kemach

The Pleisi (109:1) brings two opinions from Tosfos (Yevomos 82a) as to how to view kemach b'kemach (mixtures of powders). According to one opinion it is lach b'lach and according to the other opinion it is viewed as yaveish b'yaveish. The Rambam (Hilchos Terumos 13:4) as well writes that kemach b'kemach is yaveish b'yaveish. However, the Chochmas Adam (51:23) writes that most Achronim view mixtures of powders as lach b'lach. Therefore, so long as it was batel before Pesach, it will not be chozer v'niyur. However, the Magen Avrohom (466:9) points out that for a dry blend to be considered lach b'lach, it must be a mixture of fine powders. Any larger particles even if they are they are not noticeable in the blend are viewed as yaveish b'yaveish. The Pri Megadim (MZ 467:18) writes that the consistency of finely ground coffee or bran with flour is considered yaveish b'yaveish.

Cooking Together Yaveish B'yaveish

Although mixtures of yaveish b'yaveish will be chozer v'niyur and become assur on Pesach, still the Mishnah Berurah (447:33) writes that if the chametz is less

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than 1:60 of the mixture, if one cooks the mixture all together before Pesach, it won't be chozer v'niyur. One is even permitted to do so (this is not considered bitul issur because it is all heter before Pesach) and the cooked mixture may even be eaten on Pesach.

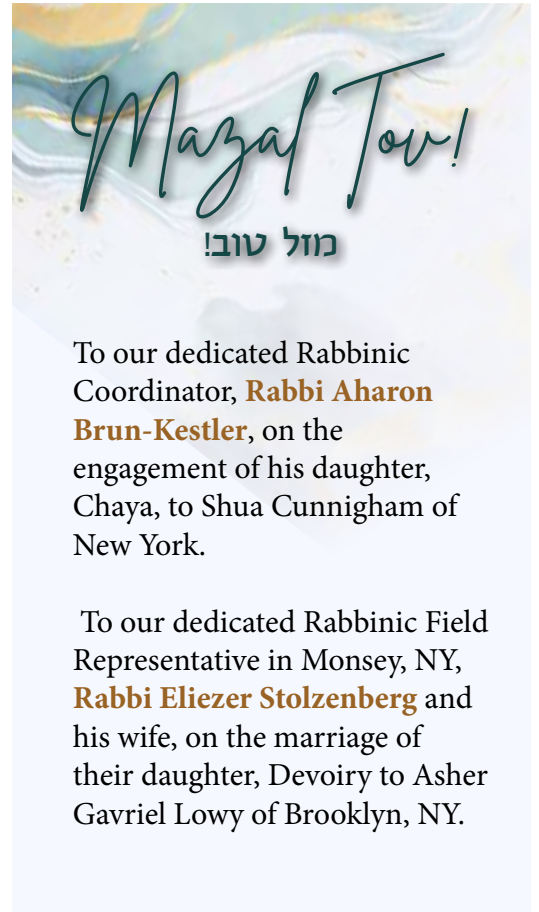
Baking Together Yaveish B'yaveish

Shulchan Aruch (466:4) writes that if sacks of Pesach flour got wet and formed pirurim of chametz (tiny dry flecks of dough), one must be very careful to remove the Pesach flour without causing a mixture. If one was not careful, it may not be used on Pesach. The Mishnah Berurah (466:17) cites the Chok Yaakov (453:13) that if the flour was used to bake matzos, even if this was done before Pesach, the matza would be assur on Pesach. Since the pirurim are not lach b'lach with the rest of the flour, we would say chozer v'niyur on Pesach, even though they were already baked into matzos. However, the Mishnah Berurah writes that there are other poskim who are maikel that since the flour was already baked into matzah, it is no longer chozer v'niyur. He concludes that when there are additional sniffim, and it is a makom hefsed, one may be maikel.

The difference between baking and cooking

Why is that the Mishnah Berurah writes that it is mutar to eat the mixture if it was cooked before Pesach but assur (or questionable) to eat the mixture if it was baked before Pesach? The reason we say chozer v'niyur when a mixture is not lach b'lach is because we say "ain bila" (the mixture is not uniformly distributed). Since it is not uniformly distributed, we are concerned that one section might have a higher concentration of the ta'am of chametz. Though the chametz overall is less than shishim, it might accumulate in one section and there will not be shishim. Bishul (cooking in liquid) is "maflit u'mavlia b'kulo" (it disperses the ta'am evenly through the entire mixture). Therefore, we can rely on bitul and not say chozer v'niyur. However, baking is not that way. Regarding baking, the ta'am stays put within a k'dei klipa (or k'dei netila) of where the chametz is. The concern is that when you use this dough to bake a matzah, one section of the matzah might have more than shishim of chametz, and since baking does not disperse the ta'am, that part of the matzah will remain chametz. However, the Maharsham (2:4) explains that there is a limit to how much we need to be concerned that the chametz did not fully disperse. He writes that if the amount of chametz would be less than twice shishim (1:120), then even though we say "ain bila", one need not be concerned that chametz will accumulate in one area that it would not be batel and it will be chozer v'niyur.

Example: There are different levels of standards for machine matzah. "18 minute" machine matzah means the machines are cleaned out every 18 minutes. "Regular" machine matzah means the machines are not cleaned out so long as new batches of dough are being made. Although each batch of dough is processed and enters the oven in less than 18 minutes, but theoretically, tiny pirurim of dough can remain on the line (stuck to a roller or the conveyor belt) for more than 18 minutes. This is allowed because the constant "eisak" (kneading) of the dough prevents it from becoming chametz. However, there is an additional sevara. Even if the dough were to become chametz, it would be batel b'shishim in the subsequent batches of dough. Although we have seen that some poskim are concerned that we would say chozer v'niyur if chametz dough is mixed with Pesach dough ("ain bila"), still in this case we can be maikel since the amount of these pirurim is certainly much less than 1:120. Of course, it is a hidur to purchase shemura matza or "18 minute" matzah.



To our dedicated Rabbinic Coordinator, **Rabbi Aharon Brun-Kestler**, on the engagement of his daughter, Chaya, to Shua Cunningham of New York.

To our dedicated Rabbinic Field Representative in Monsey, NY, **Rabbi Eliezer Stolzenberg** and his wife, on the marriage of their daughter, Devoiry to Asher Gavriel Lowy of Brooklyn, NY.

Condolences

המקום ינחם

To the family of former RC and RFR, **Rabbi Chaim Tuvia HaCohen Chernoff** zt'l, on his petirah.

To RC, **Rabbi Gavriel Price** on the loss of his father Professor Monroe Price, a"h.

To our RFR, **Rabbi Aaron Rubin**, on the passing of his brother, Allan J. Rubin, a"h.

To our CFO, **R' Shlomo Schwartz**, on the petirah of his father, R' Yeshayahu Schwartz, z"l.



ASK OU & Community Relations *Past Events*



Minneapolis

Minneapolis Kehilla Gains Insider's View of Kashrus Through ASK OU Program

Hundreds of members of Minneapolis' frum kehilla recently got an insider's look into kashrus certification, thanks to ASK OU (Advanced Seminars in Kashrus), OU Kosher's one-of-a-kind educational initiative that brings expert-led presentations and workshops to kehillos, schools, shuls, and kollelim in collaboration with local kashrus councils.

As the world's largest and most widely recognized kosher certification agency, OU Kosher certifies 1.5 million products manufactured in 15,000 plants across 108 countries, covering two-thirds of all kosher food in the United States.



OU Kosher Rabbinic Coordinator Rabbi Chaim Goldberg presented a workshop at Yeshiva of Minneapolis

Over two days, OU Kosher's Managing Director Community Relations Rabbi Eli Eleff; Rabbinic Coordinator and Safra D'dayna Rabbi Eli Gersten; and Rabbinic Coordinator Rabbi Chaim Goldberg visited seven locations, sharing halachos and industry expertise with people of all ages.

"We feel that it's important to bring kashrus information to consumers where they are," says Rabbi Eleff. "Beyond giving hashgachos, one of OU Kosher's missions is to support communities and equip them with the knowledge to keep kashrus to the highest standards."

As the administrator of Minnesota Kosher, the local vaad hakashrus, Rabbi Eli Markowitz was eager to host ASK OU in his community.

"I'm the primary kashrus contact in town, and often get dozens of daily kashrus questions regarding many products, including



OU Kosher Rabbinic Coordinator and Safra D'dayna Rabbi Eli Gersten delivers a shiur at Minneapolis Community Kollel

OU Kosher-certified ones," he says. "I wanted our community to benefit from the halachic expertise of the OU, and appreciate the significance of kosher certification both on a communal level and on a global scale."

At Kollel Lomdei Torah, Rabbi Gersten delivered a shiur on the halachos and OU practices related to bedikas tolayim. Later, at Minneapolis Community Kollel, he spoke about the halachos that caterers must adhere to around Shabbos food preparation, including shehiya, chazara, and hatmana. He also discussed halachos related to OU Kosher-certified appliances, including those with Shabbos modes or recalibration features.

"I was extremely impressed with the high level of Torah learning in Minneapolis," Rabbi Gersten reflects. "The kollelim are serious places of learning. The yungeleit were very receptive and these shiurim were followed by another 30 minutes of spirited questions and answers."

The OU Kosher rabbonim also brought kashrus to life for high school and middle school students at the Yeshiva of Minneapolis, Torah Academy (boys' and girls' divisions), and Bais Yaakov High School of the Twin Cities. In "Kosher 101," led by Rabbi Eleff, students gained hands-on insight into the fundamentals of kashrus, including ingredients, production processes, finished products, and what mashgichim look for when certifying food as

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Rabbi Eli Gersten discussed recent kashrus developments at the community-wide program at Congregation Bais Yisroel.

kosher. Meanwhile, Rabbi Goldberg, who oversees fish production for OU Kosher, captivated students with lively presentations on the kashrus of fish. The rabbonim also answered common questions about products like Slurpees, Oreos, and Starbucks coffee.

Rabbis Eleff, Gersten, and Goldberg also met with local shul rabbonim to discuss communal kashrus issues and ways OU Kosher could offer support. ASK OU's impact was perhaps most evident at an evening program at Congregation Bais Yisroel, the largest frum shul in Minneapolis, which drew 120 men and women despite sub-zero temperatures.

The dynamic session, which ran significantly overtime due to attendees' interest, explored the breadth and scope of OU Kosher's worldwide work, recent changes in the beer and liquor industry that have made kosher certification essential, and the kashrus of fish — a topic that Rabbi Markowitz believes particularly resonated with participants.

"As we don't have a kosher-certified fish store in Minneapolis, many people weren't aware of the complexities involved in buying fish," he says. "At the same time, they appreciated the clarity provided at the session, which now enables them to know exactly which fish they can purchase."

The presentation was followed by a Q&A session which only ended because Maariv was scheduled to begin at 10 p.m.

"One can see from the strong turnout and the questions that were submitted that this is a community with high standards, who appreciate what the OU does, and that we came," reflects Rabbi Gersten.

Rabbi Yechezkel Greenberg is the Rav of Congregation Bais Yisroel, and says that ASK OU generated tremendous interest from the kehilla.

"Kashrus is always evolving, and it's invaluable to hear from the professionals who possess the expertise. Beyond sharing such important information, the OU Kosher rabbonim kept everyone fully engaged with eye-opening presentations. Our kehilla is deeply grateful to OU Kosher and the rabbonim, who dedicated so much time and effort to prepare for this visit. They are providing a tremendous service to Klal Yisrael, l'Shem Shamayim. Sharing their knowledge with communities across the U.S. is truly wonderful."

To bring ASK OU to your community, contact OU Kosher Community Relations at 212-613-0602 or koshereducation@ou.org

SEARCHING FOR YOSHON PRODUCTS IS NOW EASIER

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As yoshon awareness and certification grew, so did the need for guidance on which products were permissible. Rabbi Yosef Herman, of Monsey, New York, devoted decades to making yoshon observance accessible to the broader community. For more than 40 years, he re-searched yoshon products across the U.S., compiling his findings into an annual guide.

"Rabbi Herman worked very closely with OU Rabbinic Coordinator and yoshon expert Rabbi Dovid Gorelik," reflects OU Rabbinic Coordinator Rabbi Stareshesky. "He would ask companies detailed questions about their grain sourcing and production. Because of him, people who were makpid on yoshon suddenly had access to a wide variety of foods. He knew how to interpret every code and date on products containing grain to determine whether they were yoshon."

It was in Rabbi Herman's zechus that Shmuel Stefansky became one of the first business leaders in America to introduce yoshon into his product line. The CEO of the Dagim fish company has warm memories of learning the mishnayos and halachos related to the Korban HaOmer and yoshon with his father, Reb Yitzchok, on the second day of Pesach each year.

In 1986, Rabbi Yosef Herman called Stefansky and asked which of Dagim's products were yoshon.

"At the time, awareness of yoshon was limited, and few manufacturers truly understood what it involved," Stefansky recalls. "Our only wheat-based item then was breaded fish, and Rabbi Herman explained the requirements and process of yoshon. I reached out to Rabbi Elimelech Friedman, the OU mashgiach at our supplier, and he helped put a system in place to ensure only yoshon flour was used. Since then, we've been makpid to use yoshon in all of our flour-based products, and that commitment has remained a point of pride for us."

Of Dagim's nearly 70 products, between 40 and 50 contain flour, including pizza bagels, pizza, and breaded fish and eggplant. The company's pretzels are the only items that are some-times chodosh, but Stefansky says those, too, will soon be yoshon year-round, with updated packaging to reflect the change.

"Yoshon products are in high demand, and we're committed to customer satisfaction," Stefansky says. "It costs nothing to make yoshon flour, so it's a no-brainer. Or, as Rabbi Gorelik says, a no-grainer."

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Since Dagim's founding in 1957 by Stefansky's grandfather, the company has maintained close ties with its certifier, the OU.

"We have partnered with the OU for decades and are excited about the new Yoshon Quick Search tool, which is especially helpful for consumers," Stefansky says.

An OU-certified company in Hudson, Kansas, has been serving yoshon consumers for the past 25 years. Founded in 1906, Stafford County Flour Mill Co. produces all-purpose, high-gluten, and whole wheat flour, and holds the unique position of being the only flour mill in America that solely mills locally grown wheat and stores it onsite from harvest to milling.

"It's all hard red winter wheat," explains Food Safety and Production Manager Randy Watson, who has been with the company for 40 years and oversees its yoshon processes. "Winter wheat is planted in October and remains dormant throughout the winter. It's harvested after Pesach, so it's naturally yoshon."

Stafford County Flour Mill Co. entered the yoshon market in the early 1980s, when it was approached by a flour company seeking yoshon flour for its customers in New York and surrounding areas.

"For 120 years, we've grown by offering specialty products, so we agreed to do it," says Watson. "I didn't know what the yoshon symbol looked like or what it meant. The first time a rabbi came by, he explained it to me and gave me an article about it. Once I understood its importance, it became important to me, too."

Through that relationship, Stafford County Flour Mill Co. was later approached by a New York bakery producing brownies for Ben & Jerry's ice cream in Israel. Because all imported grain products in Israel must be yoshon, the bakery required yoshon flour.

"Between those two companies, we probably produce about two to three semi-truckloads of yoshon weekly — anywhere from 42,000 to 50,000 pounds of flour," Watson estimates. "We've respected Jewish laws and customs, and it's worked very well for us."

To ensure consistent yoshon status, Stafford County Flour Mill Co. sources ingredients well in advance. As Watson explains, quality flour begins with quality wheat. Wheat naturally contains an enzyme called amylase, which enhances baking quality by bonding protein and starch.

"We tend to add a bit more amylase," he says. "Malted barley is rich in this enzyme, but barley isn't naturally yoshon because it's planted in the spring. So we buy it early and keep it in cold storage, with enough to last well past Pesach, ensuring we're always using old-crop barley. We do the same with wheat starch, which we add as an enrichment."

For Watson, working with OU Kosher has been a positive experience marked by camaraderie and mutual respect.

"I've had so much fun learning from and teaching the OU Kosher rabbis who have come here over the years," he says. "They're easy to get along with and a lot of fun. Our current OU Rabbinic Field Representative, Rabbi Shraga Kaufman, and I have a good time, and we talk about our kids."

Watson also gives tours of the plant and says one highlight for students and larger groups is his explanation of the yoshon symbol and its significance.

"When I give a tour, I always pull out a \$100 bill, show them the yoshon symbol, and say, 'If anyone can tell me what this says, what language it's in, and what it means, you'll win this.' If people come from a larger town, I ask whether anyone in the group is Jewish, and if the answer is 'yes,' I pull out a smaller bill. But no one has ever won the money! It's been great to explain yoshon to them, and also to show that we do this out of respect for other people's customs and religious laws, which I believe is very important."

Watson is glad that Stafford County Flour Mill Co. is included in OU Kosher's Yoshon Quick Search database.

"We're proud to be part of a community that serves yoshon consumers," he says. "The new search tool is a useful resource, even for companies like ours, because it helps us find potential suppliers. It's a win-win, with everyone helping everyone else."

For those who are makpid on yoshon, a quick supermarket run can easily turn into a scavenger hunt, with brand-checking and label-decoding to ensure products meet yoshon criteria. OU Kosher, the world's largest kosher and yoshon certifier, has now simplified grocery shopping with a searchable database of more than 5,000 yoshon products.

Available at ou.kosher.org/yoshon and on the OU Kosher app, the Yoshon Quick Search database allows users to search by brand or category, whether they are preparing a shopping list at home or checking an item on the go.

"As the community that is makpid on yoshon continues to grow, OU Kosher is there to support them and to respond to communal needs," says OU Kosher COO Rabbi Moshe Elefant.

OU mashgichim monitor factories that manufacture products made from barley, rye, oats, wheat, and spelt to determine when grain from the new harvest is first used. From that date forward, all products produced at that facility are considered chodosh. As a result, whether a product is yoshon or chodosh depends on the production date or the "best by" date code printed on its packaging.

Rabbi Stareshefsky, who spearheaded the Yoshon Quick Search project, explains: "The new tool tells consumers whether a product is yoshon year-round or only up to a specific date. It also explains how to read the product's date code, whether it's a four-digit production code or a 'best by' date. Each brand uses its own system, but every product includes a date code."

OU Kosher Managing Director of Marketing and Community Relations Rabbi Eli Eleff says that OU Kosher is always looking for ways to innovate and assist people, especially when it comes to information that isn't always readily available.

"This new tool advances our mission to help Klal Yisroel keep kashrus at the highest standards, while empowering consumers to make informed decisions around yoshon."



May I buy any kosher raw fish for Pesach, or does it need to be labeled with an OU-P?

OU Kosher-certified raw frozen fish is acceptable for Pesach, as long as it is plain, additive-free, and neither smoked, spiced nor seasoned. A detailed list of acceptable brands is available at <https://oukosher.org/passover/food-items/#fish>.

What are the guidelines for purchasing meat and poultry?

While OU Kosher-certified factories always pack unprocessed raw meat and poultry on equipment that is chametz-free year-round, ground, cooked, or broiled meat and poultry may be processed on equipment that also handles chametz products. Accordingly, the following guidelines should be observed:

Raw meat and poultry sold in original, factory-sealed packages may be used for Pesach when bearing an OU (even without an OU-P).

Meat and poultry that are repackaged by a local supermarket or butcher should not be used for Pesach, unless there is a special Pesach program in place. For information regarding specific venues, contact your local supervising agency.

Ground, cooked, or broiled meat and poultry (including liver) are only kosher for Pesach when bearing an OU-P or another reliable supervision. Exceptions to this rule are listed in our OU Guide to Pesach.

My pet's food contains chametz. What should I do for Pesach?

Since it is forbidden to own or benefit from chametz during Pesach, food that contains chametz may not be fed to pets. However, it is permitted to give pets food that contains kitniyot.

If one is unable to procure pet food that does not contain chametz, some rabbinical authorities allow for a sale, which would transfer the ownership and responsibility of caring for your pet to a non-Jew. Consult your rabbi for guidance.

May I buy Kirkland brand bottled water for Pesach?

Kirkland Purified Water with minerals is approved for use on Pesach, but only when purchased prior to the start of Pesach.

I take vitamin C (ascorbic acid) daily. May I take it on Pesach?

Non-chewable, unflavored OU Kosher-certified vitamin C tablets or pills are acceptable for Pesach, since non-chewable pills are inedible, and swallowing pills for medicinal purposes is not considered eating chametz. Moreover, since most ascorbic acid manufacturers do not produce it from wheat glucose, one can generally assume that the vitamin C pill being consumed is from that majority.

In cases when an OU Kosher-certified vitamin C tablet is unavailable, any unflavored tablet, pill, or vegetarian capsule of vitamin C is acceptable during Pesach.

Chewable vitamin C tablets or other flavored vitamin C supplements should be avoided for Pesach. In addition to the issue of the ascorbic acid, a number of other ingredients used to compose these products can be chametz as well.

OU Kosher's hotline (212-613-8241) will be open for extended hours in the week before Pesach (9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.), including on Sunday (10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.) and erev Yom Tov (10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.). It will also be open on Chol Hamoed. Contact OU Kosher's Webbe Rebbe at kosherq@ou.org, and download the OU Guide to Passover at oukosher.org/passover/download-passover-guide-signup



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