

THE Daf HaKASHRUS

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OU and Scroll K Inspire Denver with Citywide Kashrus Programming

In the days leading up to Kabbalas HaTorah, the Denver kehillah was treated to an uplifting and enlightening kashrus initiative, thanks to a joint effort between OU Kosher and Scroll K – Vaad HaKashrus of Denver, the regional vaad overseeing kashrus across nine states. Over two jam-packed days, three



Rabbinic Coordinators from the OU—Rabbi Eli Eleff, Rabbi Chaim Goldberg, and Rabbi Chaim Loike—traveled from New York to deliver engaging shiurim and presentations that brought the sugyos of kashrus to life for hundreds of community members across the city.

The program began Wednesday morning, with concurrent visits to Beth Jacob High School, where Rabbi Eleff spoke about the inner workings of kosher certification, and Hillel Academy, where Rabbi Goldberg addressed the girls on kosher symbols and labeling, while Rabbi Loike captivated the boys with a live and visual presentation on the mesorah of kosher birds and eggs. That afternoon, the rabbanim visited Yeshiva Toras Chaim, where they shared divrei chizuk and halachic insights with the bochorim. The day culminated in a well-attended community event at East Side Kosher Deli, featuring three presentations: Rabbi Loike on kosher fowl, Rabbi Goldberg on kosher fish, and Rabbi Eleff with an open Q&A session, allowing for people to ask their most pressing kashrus questions.

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The Ingredient Panel

Fetal Bovine Serum

A DERIVATIVE OF CALF BLOOD

BY RABBI GAVRIEL PRICE, RC, INGREDIENTS

Blood serum is a component of blood that contains a number of important constituents, but none of the actual blood cells. As a result, when serum is physically separated from blood, it is translucent (clear) and no longer intensely red; it is often described as amber.



Fetal bovine serum refers to serum that is extracted from blood obtained from an unborn calf. About fifteen minutes after the slaughter of the mother, the calf is assumed dead; a syringe is injected into the heart of the calf to remove the blood. Serum is then separated from the blood through centrifugation. In the laboratory, serum is used in the analysis and development of cell tissue.

What is its status in halacha?

The Torah (Vayikra 7, 10) prohibits the consumption of blood. The Rambam (Maachalos Assuros 6:3) writes that blood from the heart is “dom hanefesh” (life giving blood) which is punishable with kareis. However, since this blood is taken from the heart of an unborn fetus, and not from the heart of the mother cow, it would seem that it is no different than blood from other organs which is an issur lav (malkos) and not kareis. Furthermore, Chazal (Chulin 87b) understood that an essential property of blood is its redness. When blood congeals, however,

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The Ingredient Panel

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a clear substance appears around the perimeter. Chazal refer to this substance as צללתא דדמה, and rule that because this blood lacks its characteristic redness, it is no longer fit to be poured on the Mizbeiyach.

Although it is not clear from the Gemara what, precisely, the status of this clear part of the blood is, Chasam Sofer (YD 70, cited in Pischei Teshuva, 67, 1) writes that it is certainly forbidden, though he is uncertain if it is a Torah prohibition or a Rabbinic prohibition (see also Rav Schachter's article in Mesorah, volume 1, page 44). However, fetal bovine serum is certainly a Torah prohibition, since in addition to the prohibition of blood (which might be Rabbinic), there is also the issur of neveila, a Torah prohibition.

About two years ago the OU was approached for certification by a company that needed to use fetal bovine serum as a component of its production. In vitro cell culturing is a process in which live cells are cultivated in a laboratory dish, outside the original organism from which they originated. Cell tissue (which may be microscopic) is obtained from the host animal. In the lab, the tissue is deposited into a liquid that supports the continued activity, and replication, of the cells. The cells are studied – the lab technician will want to identify a precise type of cell – and provided an environment to proliferate. One cell becomes two, two become four, and so on.

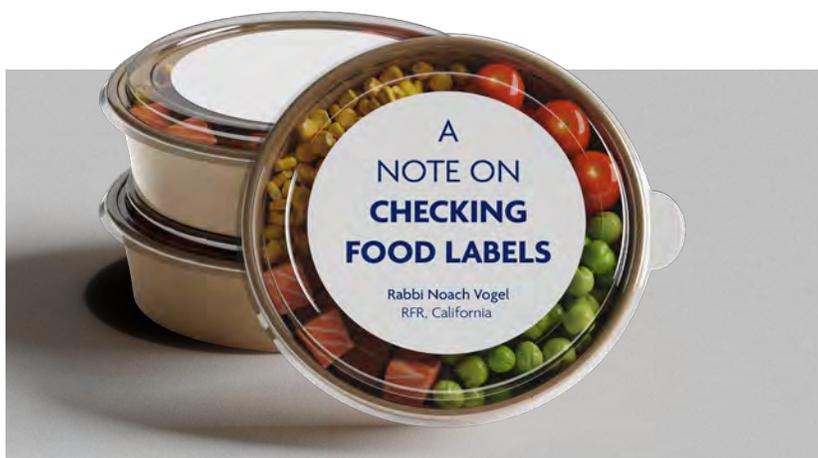
This procedure is used all over the world, every day, in medical and pharmaceutical laboratories. In this case, the applicant was a startup in the fledging food lab-grown meat industry. The company was particularly keen on finding a liquid that could foster the replication of cells for (such was their wish) after a sufficient period of replication, the aggregate of cells, in progressively larger chambers of production, becomes sizeable enough to become a commodity item.

Fetal bovine serum was found to be uniquely suited to support this kind of growth. It is rich in a chemical constituent called a growth factor which is responsible for fostering cell growth.

Because serum is not kosher the OU was not able to move forward with certification. In any event this company, like other companies in the lab-grown-meat sector, has not succeeded in commercializing its product.



Beyond the use of blood serum in laboratory cell development, consumers have occasionally inquired about the status of a product called bovine immunoglobulin serum. This is a dietary supplement, also referred to as a medical food, which is promoted to address people suffering from gastrointestinal tract and other problems. Obviously, a rav would need to weigh the considerations in any given case.



In three of the plants that I visited in the last few weeks I noticed packaging from different companies that had just started producing there. (These plants are copackers, and the ingredients were accounted for.) Curious, I looked at that packaging and noticed that they had a different hechsher on them. I asked my plant contact whether any other Rabbi had come to inspect the plant, and was told no, I'm the only rabbi they know.

I called the relevant hashgachah to confirm and they were also unaware. In fact, this product was only supposed to be made at a different plant.

Having a chazaka, it would appear that this is happening quite frequently, across the board. B"H all the ingredients and equipment were okay for those products, but what happens when a company decides to send their products to be produced at a different plant that is not kosher and no one visits it?!

It may be a good idea for all mashgichim to ask their companies every so often whether they are producing elsewhere. Sometimes, companies are unaware that each new facility needs to be approved before production is authorized.

לא באתי אלא לעורר

DUCHKA D'SAKINA ON A DAVAR CHARIF

Rabbi Eli Gersten

The Gemara Chulin (111b) states that if a radish was cut with a fleishig knife, it may not be eaten with milk. The Gemara explains that a radish is a *davar charif*, so when it is cut with a knife, even though all is cold, the *duchka d'sakina* (pressure of the knife) causes the radish to absorb some of the meat flavor in the knife. The same applies to a non-kosher knife. If a non-kosher knife was used to cut a *davar charif*, even if the knife was cold and clean, the *davar charif* would absorb the taste of the knife and become non-kosher.

The Gemara (Avoda Zara 39a) teaches us another *chumra* that relates to a *davar charif*. Ordinarily, the *ta'am* from a *kli* that is *aino-ben-yomo* is *ta'am pagum*, and *bid'eved* will always be *batel* in food. However, the Gemara rules that if a *chiltis* (a very potent spice) was cut with a non-kosher knife, even if the knife was *aino-ben-yomo*, the *chiltis* will become non-kosher. This is because the strong spicy taste of the *chiltis* has the ability to revive a *ta'am pagum*. While all agree that this *halacha* applies to a *chiltis*, Shulchan Aruch cites two opinions as to whether this *halacha* applies to less spicy vegetables such as a radish. The Shach (Y.D. 96:6) writes that the accepted ruling is to extend this *halacha* to all *d'varim charifim* (e.g. even radishes). Therefore, if someone cut a radish with a non-kosher knife, even if the knife was cold and clean, and had not been used in the past 24 hours (*aino ben yomo*), nevertheless the radish would become non-kosher.

Shulchan Aruch (YD 121:9 – based on Rashba) writes that if one did *ne'itza* on a non-kosher knife and then used it to cut through a radish, the radish would remain kosher. *Ne'itza* involves stabbing the blade 10 times into hard dirt. The Bechor Shor (Chulin 111b)

explains that according to the Rashba, *Neitza* not only cleans the knife, but it is also *polet* a *k'dei klipa* from the knife which acts as a type of *kashering*. This type of *kashering* is effective to allow cutting a cold *davar charif* but it would not allow cutting anything hot. According to the Rema (YD 121:7), one is permitted to *kasher* in this manner to use the knife cold *b'derech arei* (temporary use), but one may not continue to use the knife *b'derech keva* (permanent use), since if one does, one may forget and use the knife hot.

How does *Ne'itza* kasher a knife?

Rebbi Akiva Eiger (96: Shach 9) points out that there is a seeming contradiction regarding *ne'itza*. If a non-kosher blade was used to cut a *davar charif* such as a radish, it is *maflit u'mavlia mi'kulo* (all the non-kosher *ta'am* that is in the entire thickness of the blade is absorbed into the radish). If so, why is it sufficient to *kasher* the blade with *ne'itza*, since scraping the knife in this manner at most only *kashers* the outer *k'dei klipa* of the blade. Rebbi Akiva Eiger leaves this question unresolved. However, the Pri Migadim M.Z. (Y.D. 10:6) explains that the blade does indeed give *ta'am* from the entire thickness. Still *ne'itza* helps, since it is *mivalbel* (mixes around) the *ta'am* that remains in the knife and prevents it from exiting¹. Therefore, if *ne'itza* was done, the knife may be used to cut a *davar charif*. But if *ne'itza* was not done, then the entire thickness of the blade will be absorbed into the *davar charif*.

The Bechor Shor points out that Tosfos (Avoda Zara 76b) argues with the Rashba. According to Tosfos, *ne'itza* is not *polet* from the *k'dei klipa* of the knife, but rather it simply acts as a vigorous cleaning to remove all fatty residue. According to Tosfos, if one

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used the knife after ne'itza to cut a *davar charif*, the *davar charif* would become assur. The Bechor Shor concludes that although Shulchan Aruch paskens like the Rashba, a ba'al nefesh should be machmir for the opinion of Tosfos.

Hagalah in place of Ne'itza

In practice, today instead of doing ne'itza, it is more common to kasher a knife with hagalah. This is because ne'itza is ineffective if there are any grooves in the knife, and there are numerous halachos as to which type of dirt is acceptable for ne'itza. Also, stabbing a knife into hard dirt can be dangerous and might damage the blade. Since hagalah is a more effective method of kashering it can be used in place of ne'itza. Some poskim write that iruy kli rishon (which is polet from the k'dei klipa) as well can take the place of ne'itza (see Darchei Teshuva 10:41).

Hagalah on a knife that requires libun?

Shulchan Aruch (YD 121:5) writes that if a non-kosher kli that requires libun was kashered with hagalah, the kashering is ineffective and the kli may not be used hot. What if a non-kosher knife that requires libun was kashered with hagalah and then used to cut a cold radish. What is the status of the radish? Since hagalah is better than ne'itza, according to the Rashba, the radish would remain kosher. Furthermore, even according to Tosfos (Bechor Shor) since hagalah, is effective in being polet from the knife, even though it did not completely kasher the knife, the radish would be kosher. The Bechor Shor only had an issue with ne'itza, because he had no proof that neitza is *polet*, but hagalah or iruy kli rishon, which are polet from the knife, should allow the knife to be used to cut a *davar charif*.

Common Scenario:

A fleishig knife was washed in a dishwasher and subsequently it was used to cut an onion. The onion was then fried in a milchig frying pan. What is the status of the onion and frying pan? Although washing a knife in a dishwasher is not hagalah (a dishwasher only gets to about 150-160F) and the knife presumably was used to cut meat which was much hotter, yet a dishwasher is better than *iruy* or *ne'itza*. The knife can no longer cause a *bliya* into a *davar charif*, and the onion will not become fleishig. The onion may be eaten, and there is no need to kasher the frying pan.

1. Similarly, the Chasam Sofer (YD 110) writes that it is possible that if one kashered an aino ben yomo kli that requires libun with hagalah, and afterwards cooked in it a *davar charif*, the food would be mutar. Although hagalah was ineffective in drawing out all the bliyos, yet since hagalah was polet some of the bliyos, it weakened the remaining bliyos. Since these bliyos are pagum, the *davar charif* can no longer be *michalya lei lishvach*.



To our dedicated Rabbinic Coordinator, **Rabbi Menachem Adler**, on the engagement of his daughter Leah to Eli Neiman of Passaic, NJ.

To our devoted Business Associate, **R' Yerachmiel Brody** and his wife, on the engagement of their daughter Reva to Yaakov Jofen of Brooklyn, NY.

To our dedicated Rabbinic Coordinator, **Rabbi Moshe Machuca** and his wife, on the Bar Mitzvah of their son Eli Natan.

To our devoted Rabbinic Field Representative in Philadelphia, PA, **Rabbi Yehuda Nosenchuk** and his wife, on the engagement of their daughter Perel to Hillel Freiheit of Toronto, Ontario.

To our dedicated Rabbinic Field Representative in Cincinnati, OH, **Rabbi Alter Raubvogel** and his wife, on the marriage of their daughter Faiga to Avi Greenberg.

To our devoted Rabbinic Field Representative in Australia, **Rabbi Adam Ruschinek** and his wife on the marriage of their son, Sholom, to Keren Berkovits of Melbourne, Australia.

To our dedicated Rabbinic Coordinator, **Rabbi Michael Schwartz** and his wife, on the birth of their son, Shmuel Aryeh.

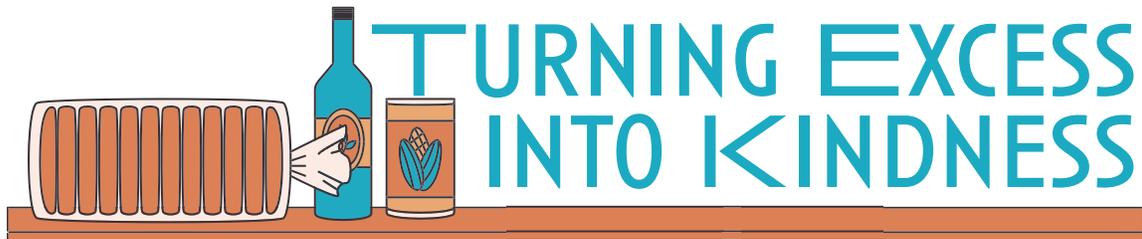
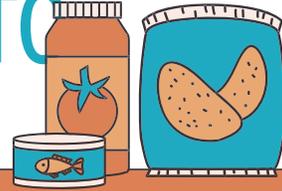
To our devoted Rabbinic Coordinator, **Rabbi Yitzchak Twersky** and his wife, on the engagement of their son, Dovid, to Adina Weg of Lakewood, NJ. Special mazal tov to the kallah's uncle, Vice-Chair of Kashrus, **Rabbi Yosi Heber**.

To our dedicated Rabbinic Field Representative in Charlotte, NC, **Rabbi Binyomin Weiss** and his wife, on the marriage of their son, Kehos, to Tzirel Goldberg of Morristown, NJ.



To our RFR in Chicago, **Rabbi Shloime Newmark** on the petirah of his mother, Mrs. Ruth Newmark, a"h.

FROM SURPLUS TO SUPPORT



RABBI SIMON TAYLOR
NATIONAL DIRECTOR, OU COMMUNITY PROJECTS AND PARTNERSHIPS

An estimated 24 million tons of food are wasted in factories every year — amounting to nearly \$87 billion in waste, according to research by the EPA and USDA. This staggering loss comes at a time when food insecurity is rising at alarming rates.

Unfortunately, the kosher community is not immune to this crisis. A recent survey by the Jewish Nonprofit Research Institute (JNPRI) found that 60% of kosher-observant families receiving government benefits also rely on food pantries. Even then, 63% reported that their food needs remain unmet due to a lack of variety and choice.

EVERYONE
BENEFITS
WHEN
WE TURN
EXCESS
INTO
KINDNESS.

Food pantries often focus on low-cost, high-nutrient staples, but that leaves a gap. Kosher-friendly items like cereals, snacks, baby food, and other family staples are often missing from the shelves. At the same time, inflation and large household sizes are making it harder than ever for kosher families to meet basic needs.

That's where Network for Kindness steps in. By bulk purchasing, negotiating prices, and receiving donated goods, Network for Kindness helps food assistance programs lower costs while offering the products families truly want. And here's the best part: many of those donated goods come directly from kosher-certified facilities — items that might otherwise be discarded due to overproduction, label changes, or nearing best-by dates.

As ambassadors of Kashrus, you can make a difference. If you're working with a company or visiting a plant or facility, take a moment to ask: What happens to the surplus? The rejected batches? The overstock? Often these decisions are made at a quality control level — the same people who are working with the OU.

These companies need to know that it's their responsibility to ensure good food and usable goods don't go to waste—and you can be the one to open that door. Let them know we'll put their excess to good use, turning what would be discarded into support for families in need. Sometimes all it takes is a quick conversation or a referral.

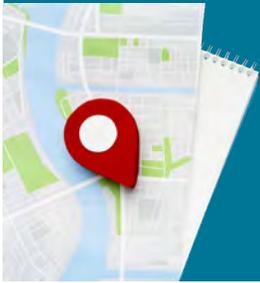
Everyone benefits when we turn excess into kindness.

To connect a company with Network for Kindness, email Boruch at bcohen@networkforkindness.org or call 718-288-5855

KASHRUS  ADVISORY

BEECH-NUT BABY FOOD

The Orthodox Union no longer certifies Beech-Nut baby foods. The products with an OU Symbol are certified, and the products without the OU Symbol are no longer certified. The marketplace may have both certified and non-certified products side by side. Consumers should look for the OU Symbol.



ASK OU & Community Relations *Past Events*



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SCALING THE HEIGHTS

OU and Scroll K Inspire Denver with Citywide Kashrus Programming

Thursday morning continued the momentum with Rabbi Goldberg speaking at Denver Academy of Torah (DAT), delivering a practical and engaging session for middle schoolers, while Rabbi Loike gave an in-depth shiur at the Denver Community Kollel, exploring the halachic methodologies used to preserve the mesorah of kosher birds. This unique initiative successfully bridged the gap between halacha and real-world application, leaving a lasting impression on students, teachers and community members. As Denver prepared for Shavuos, the program served as a powerful reminder of the beauty and depth of Torah and the importance of informed mitzvah observance.



At the Denver Kollel



At Yeshivas Toras Chaim



At Hillel Academy Boys Division



A partial view of the community program.



Presenting at Bais Yaakov of Denver High School



*Brooklyn,
New York*

Rabbi Chaim Goldberg facilitated leaning about the kashrus of fish at Yeshivas Karlin Stolin in Boro Park.



OU Kosher Staff Visits Empire Kosher for In-Depth Tour and Learning



In a remarkable display of achdus and dedication to kashrus excellence, the majority of OU Kosher's Rabbinic Coordinators embarked on an overnight visit to Empire's shechita facility in Mifflintown, PA. The trip, held June 24–25, 2025 brought together senior staff and field experts for an immersive experience in the meticulous halachic and operational standards of kosher poultry production.

The visit featured several guided tours of the Empire plant, with over 30 Rabbinic Coordinators and guests participating. The program started with Mincha and dinner with divrei brachah from OU and Empire leadership, Daf Yomi, and a lively Q&A session that fostered collaboration and clarity on complex shechita topics. All of this was followed by Maariv. In the morning, after shacharis, breakfast and learning, everyone was divided into three groups that proceeded to spend several hours in the plant. Other distinguished guests were invited to attend including, Rav Ahron Twersky, shlit"á, Rav of Bais Medrash of Albert in Lakewood, NJ

This initiative reflects OU Kosher's ongoing commitment to hands-on education, peer engagement, and maintaining the highest standards in kashrus. With food and hospitality graciously provided by Empire, the trip left participants inspired and better equipped to serve Klal Yisrael with excellence and integrity.



צאתכם לשלום

To our RFR in St. Paul, MN, **Rabbi Reuven Drori**, as he retires and moves to warmer environs. We thank him for his years of selfless dedication and commitment to the world of kashrus in general, and the OU specifically. We wish him much hatzlacha.

To our RC, **Rabbi Mordechai Merzel** as he moves with his family to Eretz Yisroel and moves to a different role in the world of kashrus. We wish him **הצלחה וברכה** in his endeavors.

ברוכים הבאים

We welcome **Rabbi Moshe Machuca** as he transitions from his role as a Rabbinic Field Representative to his new position as a Rabbinic Coordinator responsible for Southeast Asia. Rabbi Machuca, a native of Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic is a talmid of Yeshivas Ohr Sameach in Yerushalayim and a musmach of Rav Zalman Nechemia Goldberg zt"l. He can be reached at machucam@ou.org. We wish him much hatzlacha in his new role.



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