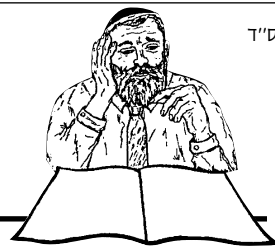


THE Daf HAKashrus



A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FOR THE  RABBINIC FIELD REPRESENTATIVE

SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT ON KOSHER SLAUGHTER

BY RABBI MENACHEM GENACK

Rabbinic Administrator, Kosher Division, Orthodox Union

Many people expressed concern about the standards for humane treatment of animals at a kosher slaughterhouse after viewing a well-publicized video of kosher slaughter at the AgriProcessors plant in Iowa, which was released by the animal rights organization PETA. Any slaughterhouse, whether kosher or non-kosher, is by definition a disconcerting, blood-filled and gruesome place. Torah law, however, is most insistent about not inflicting needless pain on animals and in emphasizing humane treatment of all living creatures.

Kosher slaughter, *shechita*, involves cutting the trachea and esophagus with a sharp, flawless knife. At the same time, the carotid arteries, which are the primary supplier of blood to the brain, are severed. The profound loss of blood and the massive drop in blood pressure render the animal insensate almost immediately. Studies done by Dr. H. H. Dukas at the Cornell Univer-

sity School of Veterinary Medicine indicate that the animal is unconscious within seconds of the incision.

After the *shechita* at AgriProcessors, an additional cut is made in the carotid arteries to further accelerate the bleeding. This is not done for *kashrut* reasons, for after the trachea and esophagus have been severed the *shechita* is complete, but rather for commercial reasons, to avoid blood splash, which turns the meat a darker color. The carotid arteries are attached to the trachea and at AgriProcessors the trachea was excised to facilitate the bleeding.

In the overwhelming number of cases the animal is insensate at that time. However and inevitably, particularly when it is considered that 18,000 cattle were slaughtered during the seven-week period when the video was shot, there was a tiny percentage of animals whose carotid arteries were not completely severed so they were not completely unconscious. Although this is very infrequent, the removal of the trachea immediately after the *shechita* has now been discontinued.

It should be kept in mind that in a non-kosher plant, when the animal is killed by a shot with a captive bolt to the brain, it often has to be re-shot, sometimes up to six times, before the animal

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NEW YORK STATE KOSHER LAW

BY BARUCH CYWIAK

OU Trademark Compliance

New York State has passed a law titled the NYS Kosher Law Protection Act of 2004 (Agriculture and Markets Law, Sec. 201-a, 201-b and 201-c) (the "Kosher Law"). This law requires that any food product being sold in New York State when bearing a kosher symbol be registered with the state for inclusion into a New York State consumer web database. The state's public data base will include the name and address of the company as listed on the label, brand and product name, and certifying agency.

This law has broad reaching implications for the food industry. As of the writing of this article, many facets of the Kosher Law, and more particularly, its enforcement, have not yet been interpreted or applied by the New York State Division of Kosher Law Enforcement (the agency responsible for enforcing the Kosher Law). Nonetheless, utilizing the information currently available to us, this article will illustrate the basic requirements of the Kosher Law and how to comply with them.

It is important to understand the goal of the Kosher Law, namely that the New York State consumer have at their disposal a clear, accessible database where they may obtain complete *Kashruth* information regarding any food product sold as kosher in New York State. To this end, the Kosher Law requires that all

products being sold as kosher in New York State be registered with the state by the party responsible for bringing the product into the State. There are no limitations as to who may register a particular product. As a result, either the manufacturer, label company, wholesaler, or retailer may submit the registration forms. In fact, several large retailers and label companies have placed the onus of registration squarely upon their manufacturers. These retailers and label companies are requiring the manufacturers to register all products (not just those sold in New York State) so as to avoid liability should the product eventually be sold in New York State.

Which products need to be registered? There are two basic categories addressed by the Kosher Law. All food products need registration, regardless of how they are categorized. The first category is termed "Packaged Foods" in the Kosher Law. As represented by the New York State Division of Kosher Law Enforcement, this category includes "foods not intended for sale at the point of manufacture that is packaged in advance for retail sale such as canned foods, condiments, and meats packaged prior to being received at the retail store." As the Kosher Law is consumer oriented, every brand and label sold in New York State must be registered even if the identical product has been already registered under a different brand or label name. For example, if a pickle manufacturer sells sliced dill pickles to twelve label companies, then each label must be independently registered. So too, if the pickle manufacturer sells multiple products to one label company, each product type

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SECURITY AND SEALING DEVICES

BY RABBI HOWARD KATZENSTEIN
 Director – Business Management

The following security and sealing devices are available to OU RFR's through the OU's Kashruth Business Office. **Please note that they are not shown here as per their actual size.** To order please call 212-613-8169 or email howardk@ou.org.

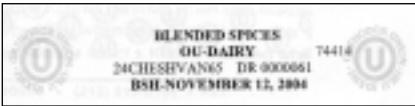
OU PACKING TAPE

Available in 1 inch x 55 yards and 2 inch x 110 yards.



HASHGACHA STICKERS

Custom printed with the company name, product name or type, Hebrew and English date, mashgiach initials, and a serial number as well as a coded number. The © symbol appears in a "non-repro blue" that doesn't photocopy.



3" DRUM CAPS

From Rieke custom imprinted "© KOSHER CERTIFICATION GUARANTEED UNTIL CAP IS OPENED".



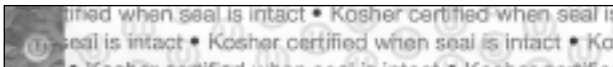
METAL GRIPLOCK

Comes with 8 inch wire.



HOLOGRAM

Comes with hologram only, and also as part of a security strip.



All of the following seals and locks are numbered and have the © symbol. Please order plastic seals and locks by color as indicated:

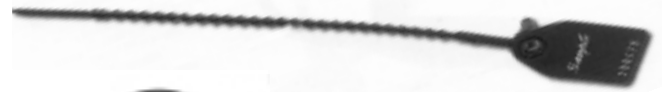
PLASTIC PADLOCKS

(orange) – Good for doors with a hasp or levers. This is not a heavy duty seal.



ROBO-LOCK

Comes in 8 inch (yellow) and 16 inch (blue).



TRUCK SEAL

(green) – Fairly durable; approximately 6 inches.

BAG SEAL

(purple) – Seal has teeth that can grab a bag or drum liner. Approximately 5 inches.



CINCH UP SEAL

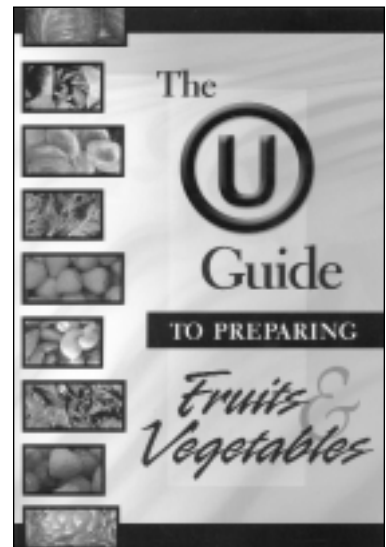
(red) – Is 7 inches long.



PUBLICATIONS

The © Guide to Preparing Fruits & Vegetables

This comprehensive work, several years in the making, discusses the important Kashruth issue of insect infestation in the foods we eat and how to properly prepare these foods. Rabbi Yosef Eisen is the primary author of this guide, having spearheaded the project throughout his tenure at the ©. Rabbi Nachum Katz edited and co-authored the guide during and after his tenure at the ©. A must for every Kosher home, this important work can be purchased at all Jewish bookstores (distributed by Artscroll), through the © at 212-613-8226 or online at www.shopou.org for \$9.95 plus \$3.00 for shipping and handling when purchased from the ©.



SLAUGHTER

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collapses. The USDA permits up to a five percent initial failure rate.

At AgriProcessors and at other plants it supervises, the Orthodox Union is committed to maintaining the highest ritual standards of *shechita* without compromising the *halacha* (Jewish law) one bit. The OU continues to vouch for the *kashrut*, which was never compromised, of all the meat prepared by AgriProcessors,

As I indicated previously, images of slaughter – especially selected images in an abattoir – are jarring, particularly to the layman. Statements by PETA that animals were bellowing in pain after the *shechita* are an anatomical impossibility. After the animal's throat and larynx have been cut, it cannot vocalize.

PETA is well known for the passion it brings to the issue of animal rights, but it is an organization devoid of objectivity. PETA's comparison of the killing of chickens to the Holocaust is, at a minimum, morally obtuse. So to whom should we turn for an objective view about the situation at AgriProcessors and about kosher slaughter in general? Here are the opinions of some experts:

1. Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Patty Judge inspected the plant. She found the handling of the animals to be humane and commendable. She said, after viewing the *shechita*, that the animals were unconscious within two to three seconds. She also said that chickens were handled more carefully by the rabbis than by her own "grandmother on the farm."
2. AgriProcessors is under constant USDA inspection. Dr. Henry Lawson, the USDA veterinarian at the plant, told me that he considers the treatment of the cattle at AgriProcessors to be humane and that the *shechita* renders them unconscious within a matter of seconds. He determines this by certain physiological criteria related to the eyes, tongue and tail of the animal.
3. Earlier this week, Rabbi Dr. I.M. Levinger, a veterinarian and one of the world's foremost experts on animal welfare and kosher slaughter, called the *shechita* practices at AgriProcessors "professional and efficient," emphasizing the humane manner in which the *shechita* was handled. Dr. Levinger was also highly impressed with the caliber of the ritual slaughterers. He issued his evaluation following a thorough two-day on-site review of *shechita* practices and animal treatment at the plant. He viewed the kosher slaughter of nearly 150 animals.
4. AgriProcessors has hired an animal welfare and handling specialist to evaluate the plant processes. The specialist was recommended by both Dr. Temple Grandin, a foremost expert in animal welfare, and also by the National Meat Association. In reviewing the *shechita* process last week, the specialist made the following observations:
 - The *shechita* process was performed swiftly and correctly;
 - The *shechita* cut resulted in a rapid bleed; and
 - All animals that exited the box were clearly unconscious.

The OU and AgriProcessors are committed to the Torah principles of humane treatment of animals. At the OU we constantly review our procedures, evaluate them, and if necessary, improve or correct them. We don't want ever to be wedded to a mistaken procedure. AgriProcessors has been completely cooperative in working with the OU and shares our philosophy.

As Torah Jews, we are imbued with the teachings which require animals to be rested along with people on the Sabbath and fed before the people who own them, and that the mother bird must be sent away before her young are taken to save her grief. These and similar statutes make it clear that inhumane treatment of animals is not the Jewish way.

Kosher slaughter, by principle, and as performed today in the United States, is humane. Indeed, as PETA itself has acknowledged, *shechita* is more humane than the common non-kosher form of shooting the animal in the head with a captive bolt, for reasons noted above. The Humane Slaughter Act, passed into law after objective research by the United States government, declares *shechita* to be humane. For Torah observant Jews, it cannot be any other way.

Clarification of the Second Cut at Agriprocessors

We, at the OU, have received several phone calls asking to explain the purpose of the second cut done at Agriprocessors.

There are two reasons for this cut: *kashruth* and commercial. The additional cut into the carotid arteries accelerates the flow of blood and its depletion from the animal and that helps facilitate a more effective, subsequent, salting (*melicha*). It also improves the quality of the meat by avoiding blood spotting.

The second cut into the carotid arteries, though halachically significant, need not be done by a "*shochet*" (as explained in *Yoreh Deah, Siman 22*).

Rabbi Dr. I.M. Levinger, International Veterinary Expert on Kosher Slaughter, Praises Procedures at AgriProcessors

Postville, Iowa, December 21, 2004 Rabbi I.M. Levinger (DVM PhD), one of the world's foremost experts on animal welfare and kosher slaughter (*shechita*), today called *shechita* practices at the AgriProcessors plant "professional and efficient." Dr. Levinger, a Veterinary Surgeon and Physiologist, made his remarks at the end of an intense review of *shechita* practices and animal treatment at the plant.

Dr. Levinger in his statement noted "that in the process of handling the animals prior to *shechita*, care was taken to lead the animal into the pen in a most humane manner."

As part of his review, the international veterinary expert particularly focused on the *shechita* process: Dr. Levinger observed, "The rabbis performing *shechita* impressed me as experts in their profession. The cut was done in an expeditious manner, cutting the trachea and esophagus and severing the carotid arteries and jugular veins. It is my impression that *shechita* in this facility is performed in accordance with the highest standards of kosher handling. The behavior of the animals seem to be in accordance with the observations recorded in my book *Shechita in the Light of the Year 2000*."

Dr. Levinger's impressive credentials include many studies on the physiology of animals during the *shechita* process. He has often been called on as an expert witness by many international bodies, particularly in Europe. During his visit to AgriProcessors, he carefully studied the physiological effects on the animals and concluded that they were fully within the confines of humane treatment. Dr. Levinger shared his findings with rabbis and certification agencies.

KASHRUTH alert!

JOVY FRUIT ROLL produced by Procesadora de Alimentos CALE S.A. de C.V., Guadalajara, Jalisco, MEXICO and sold in Costco stores in Mexico, bears an unauthorized © symbol and is not certified as Kosher by the Orthodox Union.

CLASSIC SYSCO IODIZED SALT (25 lb. Package) produced by Sysco Corporation, Houston, Texas bears an ©P symbol and is not certified as Kosher for Passover. Product is being withdrawn from the marketplace.

GRAMMY COLLECTION ASSORTED WINES 1) Khvanchkara-Red Semi Sweet 2) Kindzmarauli-Red Semi Sweet 3) Alazanis Valley-Red Semi Sweet 4) Tuishi-White produced by P.M. Georgia Ltd. bear an unauthorized © symbol. Consumers spotting this product are requested to contact the Orthodox Union at 212-613-8148 or via email at kshalerts@ou.org.

EL BURRITO MERCADO TAMALES-Chicken and Green Chile Flavored and Tamales-Pork Flavored produced by El Burrito Mercado Products, Ltd., St. Paul, MN which is sold exclusively in Super Target stores, bears an unauthorized ©D symbol. The product is not kosher and is being withdrawn from the marketplace. (Other El Burrito Mercado Products are kosher when bearing the ©.)

BENSON'S FRUIT CAKE produced by Benson's Bakery, Bogart, GA is certified as ©D, but the dairy designation has been inadvertently omitted. Corrective action is being taken.

PINNACLE GOLD VEGGIE CRISPS (Mixed Vegetable Chips) produced by Pinnacle Marketing, Fairfield, CT bears an © symbol and is not certified as Kosher by the Orthodox Union. Consumers spotting this product are requested to contact the Orthodox Union at 212-613-8148 or via email at kshalerts@ou.org.

WALGREEN'S PEACH RINGS candy produced by Walgreen's, Deerfield, IL bears an unauthorized © symbol and is not certified as Kosher by the Orthodox Union. Product is being withdrawn from the marketplace.

BETTY CROCKER NACHO CHEESE flavor Bugles produced by General Mills Canada Corp. and distributed in Canada, mistakenly bears an unauthorized © symbol and is not certified as Kosher by the Orthodox Union. The product label has been corrected. Consumers spotting this product with an © symbol are requested to contact the Orthodox Union at 212-613-8148 or via email at kshalerts@ou.org. (Original flavor Bugles are certified Kosher by the Orthodox Union.)

Effective Friday, December 24, 2004, **MEYER KOSHER GOURMET**, located at 306 East 81st Street, New York, NY, is no longer certified by the Orthodox Union.

KEMPS STRAWBERRY LOW FAT MILK produced by Kemps LLC, Minneapolis, MN mistakenly bears an unauthorized © symbol and is not certified as Kosher by the Orthodox Union. Future packaging will be revised.

CAPPIELLO AND PRICE CHOPPER MOZZARELLA CHEESE AND SCAMORZE produced by F. Capiello, Schenectady, NY and Price Chopper, Schenectady, NY with the following expiration dates are not certified as kosher by the Orthodox Union and are to have the © symbol covered or crossed out. Mozzarella – expiration dates: 04/02/05 and 02/01/05. Scamorze – expiration date: 10/04/05.

LAW

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must be registered separately. It is not sufficient to register “assorted pickles” if the actual product labels bear different product descriptions. The second category is termed “Non Pre-Packaged foods” in the Kosher Law and includes. “food that has not been packaged in advance of retail sale such as bulk nuts, bakery goods, and fresh meat, restaurant and deli foods wrapped by the seller at the request of a customer.”

Packaged and non pre-packaged foods have similar registration requirements, in that information about the person or entity certifying their products as kosher must be provided. They differ in that registration for packaged foods must include information about the specific packaged goods being sold while non pre-packaged foods need not include such information. Lastly, caterers and food establishments such as restaurants and “take out” delis have to post a sign at the point of sale which describes various aspects of the establishment's certification and food preparation such as frequency of kashruth inspections etc.

Registration forms may be downloaded at the NY State Division of Kosher Law Enforcement's website at www.agmkt.state.ny.us/kosherform.asp. Electronic registration information is also available at the above website. Registration may be tedious (as previously mentioned, each and every product label must be listed separately, even if the identical product, manufactured under a different brand or product name is already registered). We are pleased to inform you that the Orthodox Union, in conjunction with the New York State Division of Kosher Law Enforcement, has arranged to register products of it's certified companies on behalf of these companies. The registration will only be done upon the written request of the companies. A letter has been mailed to each company contact explaining the procedure which should be followed for such registration. Please note that the Orthodox Union can only register packaged foods in this fashion. Questions regarding the Kosher Law may be directed to the NYS Division of Kosher Law Enforcement. Their phone number is 718.722.2852.

PUBLICATIONS

Rabbi Zushe Blech, contributor of many articles in *The Daf HaKashrus* over the years, has just published a new book called **Kosher Food Production**. He has pulled together over 40 of his comprehensive articles, covering such vital *Kashrus* issues as dairy products, tuna, alcoholic beverages, and enzymes, and assembled them in a reference that is indispensable for *Mashgichim*, *Rabbonim* – and anyone who wants to understand the intricate world of *Kashrus*. In addition to the 300 pages of articles, Rabbi Blech has also created a 250-page review of the world of *Kashrus*, serving as a detailed outline of virtually all *Kashrus* issues that confront both companies and *Mashgichim*. He has even included a chapter on Rabbinic etiquette, explaining how *Mashgichim* perform their tasks within the context of modern food production. Additional chapters cover specific industries, including baking, microbiology, dairy, fish, meat, flavors, oils, and foodservice – as well as a detailed exposition of the intricacies of Passover certification. (The OU has made special arrangements with Rabbi Blech for anyone interested in purchasing this book. Please contact Rabbi Blech at blechz@optonline.net)

