

Discovery of some of the most serious violations concerning kosher law resulted from serious-minded, alert consumer complaints. Concerned consumers are encouraged to call (212-488-4830 or 212-488-5780) to report any apparent violation or suspicion of wrongdoing involving the production or distribution of food represented as kosher.

For further information:

*New York State
Department of Agriculture and Markets
Two World Trade Center
27th Floor
New York, New York 10047*

*Rabbi Schulem Rubin, Director
Kosher Law Enforcement Unit
212-488-4830*

*Felise Gross, Director
Kosher Food Marketing
212-488-4827*

KOSHER and the Consumer in New York State

*Mario M. Cuomo, Governor
Donald G. Butcher, Commissioner*

'We will continue our intensified efforts to insure that misrepresenting... kosher food will not be tolerated...' Governor Mario M. Cuomo

In the 1985 State of the State Message Governor Mario M. Cuomo clearly expressed his concern for the 1.5 million consumers of kosher food in New York State and for the kosher food processing industry when he said, "We will also continue our intensified efforts to insure that misrepresenting non-kosher food as kosher will not be tolerated."

Vigorous enforcement of New York State's kosher labeling laws protects an important industry as well as the consumer. The term "kosher" is given integrity, accuracy and authenticity through the State's efforts to see that kosher consumers are protected against fraud, and that honest producers of kosher products are protected against fraudulent competition.

It is the responsibility of the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets' Kosher Law Enforcement Division to enforce a secular law designed to assure that any product labeled kosher is in fact kosher.

During the last ten years the Division annually conducted between 10,000 and 21,000 inspections, investigations and around-the-clock surveillances. Its jurisdiction is all food establishments within New York State which produce, process, sell or serve food represented as kosher.

The kosher food laws are enforced through warnings and the assessment of civil penalties for violations. In cases involving blatant fraud, the Department works in cooperation with the State Attorney General, district attorneys and U.S. Department of Agriculture compliance officers.

Between 1983 and 1988, the Kosher Enforcement Division developed 1,291 cases which resulted in \$2,317,250 in assessed penalties. Among the most serious cases of fraud exposed through our inspection services were:

--A poultry slaughterhouse which used a hot water defeathering process, rendering the fowl non-kosher.

--A slaughterhouse which engaged the services of an unauthorized slaughterer.

--A kosher meat wholesaler who was penalized heavily for selling huge amounts of non-kosher meat as kosher.

Many meat purveyors found to be in violation of laws concerning the sale of food as kosher left the kosher industry after being heavily fined.

The legislation governing kosher enforcement is contained in Sections 201-a-h of the Agriculture and Markets Law of the State of New York. Regulations have been promulgated by the Commissioner to implement those statutes and to prevent profiteering through the sale of non-kosher food as kosher.

During the administration of Governor Mario M. Cuomo, protection of the kosher consumer has been a high priority.

Commissioner Donald G. Butcher and the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets have vigorously carried out the mandate of the kosher laws.

The kosher inspection services are regularly conducted in supermarkets, kosher restaurants, resort hotels, provision factories, catering and butcher establishments and non-meat enterprises such as bakeries, candy manufacturers and wineries.

In 1988, Commissioner Butcher added a new dimension to the State's activities on behalf of kosher by creating a unit to promote the marketing and sale of kosher products from New York State. He also arranged for the first Governor's Conference on the multi-million dollar industry. The Conference was held in New York City in May of 1988.