

Associated Communal **ACKO** Kashrus Organization

Rabbi Moshe Heisler
Executive Director

Public Hearing Kosher Laws

1) Kashrus standards should be defined as basic minimum standards prescribed by the Code of Jewish Law (Shulchan Aruch), as promulgated by a consensus of the two major non-profit national Kashrus organizations:

- a. Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America, New York, New York.
- b. Vaad Hakashrus of Baltimore, Baltimore, Maryland.

or based on ACKO standards which represent approximately 25 members in the United States and Canada.

2) Deceptive labeling and advertising. No symbol may be used unless it is the official symbol of a recognized Kashrus organization which recognizes and upholds the standards in Paragraph 1 above. A recall of unauthorized symbols is imperative.

3) Private labels. All kosher products bearing private labels must have plant codes imprinted, so that the particular manufacturing plant can be verified. (See explanation of present problem on separate sheet.)

4) Kashrus Commission and/or Attorney General must have power to enforce laws, impose sanctions, and prosecute violators. In addition to criminal penalties, perhaps there could be civil penalties, such as seizure and forfeiture of facilities and property used in fraudulent activities.

5) Harsher penalties and possible imprisonment for offenders intentionally violating kosher laws.

Associated Communal **ACKo** Kashrus Organization

Rabbi Moshe Heisler
Executive Director

There are two areas in kashrus that are problematic. They are as follows:

1) The competency of the Rabbi or Kashrus Organization

We are all aware of the fact that all professionals have their rating in three basic categories, fair, good, and excellent. It is my opinion that most people want to deal with the excellent, i.e. one who seeks a doctor, lawyer will want to work only with the very best (not second rate), especially if ones life depends on it. In kashrus it is a similar approach. Spiritually our lives depend on it and physically we wish to depend solely on the best.

Professionally and ethically we will not condemn a "colleague" publicly for his inadequacies and leniency in his approach or philosophy (unless at a very extreme case).

By the suggestions made under the heading of "Public Hearings Kosher Laws" I believe we can help the consumer decide to what rating he/she wishes to participate in kosher foods.

2) Private labels

Many companies subcontract their own labels to other manufacturing firms. For instance, Company A needs to produce 10,000 cases per day to maintain its quota. Unfortunately, it can only do 5,000 cases. Subsequently, it has Company B supplement its quota. Company B may not be kosher approved while Company A is. Thereby Company A may be selling products as kosher from a non kosher plant.

Another example is Company A does private labeling - is kosher approved. Company A loses its contract with its client. Kosher symbol is on label Company A ships to Company B all labels and material as per request of client. Company B is not kosher and does not realize it is shipping product with kosher label. Kosher consumer will buy product because of kosher symbol.

In both cases the consumer is being misled and he/she is thinking that they are purchasing kosher items.



Associated Communal

Kashrus Organization

Rabbi Moshe Heisler
Executive Director

ACKO Background:

In kashrus there has been much havoc and confusion in standards of kashrus organizations and products. We have seen many technical changes in food production and many kashrus organizations spring up with different kashrus requirements. Thereby, ACKO was created for the following purpose:

- Establish a system of peer review,
- Establish standards for mutual acceptance,
- Establish methods for the upgrading of Kashrus,
- Pool and share information,
- Better educate the public,
- Research specific problems,
- Provide emergency notification to all constituent members in the event of a major kashrus violation,
- Present a unified voice in issues, and
- Establish and maintain professional standards of ethical practices among members.

We are not here to suggest that our organization is the only one that can set standards and educate the masses. There are a few esteemed national organizations that have been in existence for years and their criteria have been adequate.

ACKO with approximately 25 kashrus organizations behind it (and still growing) is here to assist not to dictate. To act possibly as a clearing house for the above and mostly to upgrade kashrus standards.