

# Voice OF THE VAAAD

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**KOSHER TRANSPORT**



**KOSHER INFANT FORMULA**



**AKO CONVENTION 2022**



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## KOSHER TRANSPORT

The kosher consumer is well aware of the need to check their grocery products for proper

certification before purchasing. There are numerous steps required before the final product is worthy of bearing a reliable *hechsher*. Some of the more obvious steps include verifying that all the raw materials are kosher, that production equipment is not shared with non-kosher materials, that infestation with insects is prevented and that *bishul akum* is avoided.

One important area which many consumers are not aware of, is the transportation of the ingredients to the production facility. Well, believe it or not, there is such a thing as a kosher truck and a kosher truck wash! In this article,

we will endeavor to give an overview to this fascinating component of the kosher certification process.



How are food products transported to a facility? We will break it down into two main categories: (1) packaged raw materials and (2) bulk/unpackaged items. Packaged goods come in disposable boxes, plastic bottles, barrels, or other single-use forms of packaging. Regardless of the mode of transport used, a packaged item that was produced with proper kosher supervision will not be compromised when transported.

Some ingredients are transported in bulk/unpackaged via tankers to factories and storage facilities.

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<https://kanhaul.com/kosher-transport/guide-to-understanding-kosher-transport/>

## KOSHER INFANT FORMULA

With the current crisis in the USA with a shortage of infant formulas, it is pertinent to remember that these products require kosher supervision. This article will briefly cover the main areas of concern with supervising baby formulas as kosher.

Because infant formula is designed to emulate mother's milk as closely as possible, it must contain a source of fat,

protein, amino acids, vitamins, minerals, sugar, and other micronutrients. Many of these ingredients can be obtained from non-Kosher sources, so formula fatty acids that are ideal for infant nutrition may be of animal origin, vitamins may come from non-Kosher fish, and micronutrients derived from an array of non-Kosher sources may be found in infant formula. As always, "reading the label" is a very inadequate means

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For instance, ketchup manufacturers may transport the liquid sweeteners and vinegar used in production through liquid tankers. Depending on the contents, these tankers can either be heated or refrigerated. For instance, a product that needs to be transported and kept warm (e.g. oils), is transported via a truck with heating coils embedded in its shell to maintain its temperature.

Unpackaged transport is a big area of *kashrus* concern as there are many ways a product can lose its kosher status in a tanker truck. For example a vegetable oil may become non-kosher if it's transported in a tanker which previously hauled non-kosher animal fats. As both these products need to be heated during transport. Furthermore, a tanker holding non-kosher product for 24 hours, even if it's cold, becomes non-kosher as per the rule of *kavush k'mevushal*.

To avoid these and other concerns, *kashrus* agencies<sup>2</sup> must certify bulk trailer companies. This certification attests to the fact that the trailer is fit to carry a kosher commodity. The operator of the trailer is required to dedicate that trailer to kosher service. The company maintains a list of approved commodities and sources from which they may pick up a load.

Monitoring these companies is the next challenge. Unlike a factory, a truck is a moving target. *Mashgichim* can't pull over a truck and inspect it at any given time. Rather, they check certain company records including the activity log for each trailer.

Every time a truck loads, the driver receives a "bill of lading" testifying that the correct amount of the correct commodity was loaded into the trailer and the date on which it was loaded. Also,

every time a trailer comes to load, the driver must present a wash ticket to the company whose commodity he is hauling to verify that the trailer has been cleaned properly and is fit to accept the next load. That ticket will also state what the previous load had been. These documents are kept on file at the terminal of the trucking company. With continuous audits on these important documents, a *kashrus* agency can certify a truck to be kosher.



OVK Certified Tank Wash Facility on Nash Rd, in Cape Girardeau

Tanker wash facilities must also comply with kosher requirements in order to maintain the kosher status of the tankers being cleaned<sup>3</sup>. Only fresh water may be used for pre-washes, rinses, regular washes, and sanitizing of tankers, pumps and hoses. If a wash facility recycles water, it is possible that final-rinse water from a non-kosher tanker will be used to pre-rinse a kosher tanker, which can compromise its status. Additionally when a heat exchanger is used to heat the water for the wash, water passes from the heat exchanger through a hose to the tanker and back to the heat exchanger several times until the desired temperature is reached. If a tanker being

washed is not kosher then the water traveling through the system becomes contaminated and will make the entire heat exchanger system non-kosher. For these reasons, it is necessary to have a kosher tanker wash facility so that kosher designated tankers avoid contamination and retain their kosher status at the end of the wash. Although some of these rules can sound complicated at first, once these systems are put in place, they tend to run smoothly.

So this summer as you are driving, and notice a "kosher certified tank-wash" understand this vital component in kosher certifying many of the products that reach our homes.

<sup>2</sup> <https://oukoshers.org/blog/consumer-kosher/kosher-trucking/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://cor.ca/2012/05/what-is-a-kosher-tanker/>

## KOSHER INFANT FORMULA *Continued from p. 1*

of ascertaining the Kosher status of an infant formula, because ingredients with potential *Kashrus* problems may be listed in a seemingly innocuous manner. For example, beef fat is referred to as "oleo" and "natural vitamins" may be obtained from non-Kosher fish oil. The same care that is routinely exercised in choosing Kosher adult foods must be used in choosing the foods for our children.<sup>1</sup>

Commercial infant formulas can be divided into two categories – dairy based and soy based. Dairy based products use milk, casein, and/or whey for the protein constituent, and lactose as sugar. Soy based formulas use *pareve* ingredients, soy protein and dextrose or

sucrose as sweetening agents. However, soy based formulas may be certified kosher dairy because of their processing equipment. Although manufacturers of these products are fastidious in their cleaning procedures, cleaning alone may not be sufficient to be considered true kosherization to allow *pareve* designation.<sup>2</sup>

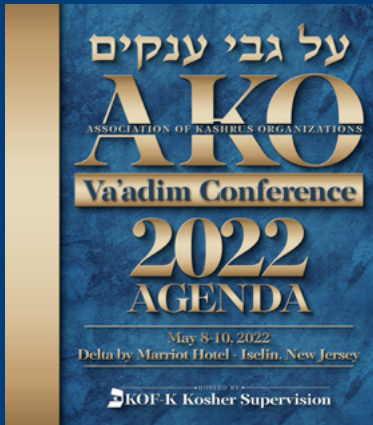
For certain babies, however, none of the standard formulas are appropriate. Many times an infant is incapable of digesting regular formula and requires formula whose protein has been partially or completely hydrolyzed. Complete hydrolysis means that the protein is broken into its component units to make it more digestible. That

<sup>1</sup> Kosher Food Production, Second Edition pg. 339

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.star-k.org/articles/articles/1148/the-kosher-formula/>

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# AKO CONVENTION 2022



Rabbi Moshe Heinemann delivering a shiur



Rabbi Kowalsky Speaking With Rabbi Shmuel M. Katz - Dayan For Kof-K Beis Din



In early May 2002, the KOF-K hosted the biannual Associated Kashrus Organizations' (AKO) Va'adim Conference, at the Delta Hotel in Woodbridge, NJ. The conference was themed "Al Gabi Anakim" – "On the Shoulders of Giants" and was dedicated to the memory of Rabbi Dr. Zechariah Senter z"l, the founder and director of KOF-K Kosher for over 50 years. Additionally, it was dedicated in memory of Rabbi Don Yoel Levy z"l, who headed OK Kosher for over 30 years. The conference featured a packed program of enlightening workshops and lectures and was chaired by Rabbi Sholem Fishbane and Rabbi Moshe Reich. Over 150 representatives attended from Va'adim throughout the USA and beyond, including Amsterdam, Australia, England, Israel, Panama, and South Africa. I had the opportunity to attend as the representative of the Vaad Hoeir of St. Louis. This article provides a brief overview of some of the pertinent classes I attended.

The first lecture was delivered by Rabbi Daniel Senter together with Rabbi Yediyah Ohayon, both from the KOF-K. They brought with them an entire forequarter of a cow recently slaughtered to demonstrate how *nikkur*, the process of removing *cheilev* (forbidden fats), is properly performed. They particularly highlighted areas where mistakes happen and how a local butcher shop could spot them. Additionally, they showed the areas of *cheilev* needed to be removed from raw livers before they are broiled.

The next session was delivered by Rabbi Moshe D. Gutnick, the director of the KA of Australia. He discussed recent attempts to use video cameras in place of onsite mashgichim to certify *cholov yisroel* milk and cheese and why these methods were *halachially* unacceptable. This fascinating discussion was followed by a hands-on demonstration delivered by Rabbi Avrohom Juravel of the OU together with Rabbi Moshe Kaufman of the KVH on how to properly *kasher* commercial dishwashers. Along with their demonstration of various dishwasher parts and how to *kasher* them, they showed extensive videos highlighting some of the more common models.

After a short dinner break, we were treated to an in-depth shiur by Rabbi Dovid Cohen

of Brooklyn. Rabbi Cohen had a long time relationship with Rabbi Chaim Kanievsky zt"l and he shared numerous *chidushei torah* that were shared between them. The depth of their combined Torah knowledge was apparent to all the attendees as the shiur covered a tremendous array of topics. The shiur was followed by a wonderful presentation by Rabbi Manes Blumenfrucht of Brooklyn. Rabbi Blumenfrucht recently published a sefer titled "Chalav Treifah." His talk highlighted some of the main points discussed in his sefer, namely the current status of dairy cows today in the USA. There is a stomach issue in some cows called "displaced abomasum". A medical procedure is sometimes performed on them to alleviate this condition. The issue then becomes that these cows now have a status of a *treifah* and subsequently all milk they produce would be prohibited. Rabbi Blumenfrucht contacted hundreds of dairy farmers as well as many other professionals throughout the country to gather the data of the prevalence of this issue. His presentation was enlightening, and all are invited to read his sefer (available at <https://www.chalavtreifah.com>) to find out his conclusions.

The evening was wrapped up with a roundtable discussion led by Rabbi Haim Arking of the JSOR, together with Rabbi Yaakov Zenwirth of the AKC. They focused on challenges that are unique to local Vaadim, and gave attendees an opportunity to share their stories and learn from each other's experiences.

The next morning after Shachris and a five-star breakfast we were back to the conference room listening to more fascinating presenters and important topics. We heard from Rabbi Nossan Dubin of the HKA discussing an idea to launch a national "Kosher Week" program to help educate consumers in all areas of *kashrus*. Rabbi Dovid Cohen delivered another shiur, titled "Ask the Posek." He fielded a variety of wide-ranging questions including the prohibition of *kashrus* agencies certifying recreational marijuana products, guidelines for *tznius* when working as a *mashgiach*, and understanding when a person loses their *neamanus* in areas of *kashrus*.

The next session was led by Rabbi Sholom

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## KOSHER INFANT FORMULA *Continued from p. 2*

makes the formula hypo-allergenic. Unfortunately, none of these products can bear a kosher certification because of the non-kosher ingredients used to effect the required hydrolysis. However, the use of these products may be halachically appropriate for health reasons in certain cases, so a competent Rabbinic authority should be consulted whenever they are recommended by a pediatrician.<sup>3</sup>

Currently, there are four major companies producing infant formula

<sup>3</sup> See - <https://www.crcweb.org/faq/faqanswer.php?faqid=148>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.npr.org/2022/05/22/1100600797/baby-formula-shortage-overseas-shipment-abbott-ceo-apology>

in the United States.<sup>4</sup> Of these, three produce various products under OU certification. The fourth manufacturer currently uses a fat base made from tallow (beef fat) referred to as “oleo” in the ingredient declaration. Clearly, these formulas, whether dairy or soy based, are not kosher. Even the vegetable fat based formulas made on the same equipment must also be considered non-kosher, so it is critical that the formula being used bear a Hechsher.

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Tendler of the Star-K. He presented a video with a comprehensive overview of how bagged vegetables are washed and processed. He highlighted how the term “triple-washed” is overused in the industry and is not sufficient to remove insects from infested produce.

After a short lunch break, it was back to the lecture rooms for a discussion led by Rabbi Dovid Cohen of the cRc and Rabbi Moshe Elefant of the OU on the topic of consumer lists. There is a conflict between the necessity to provide the kosher consumer with a list of which uncertified products are acceptable. At the same time this information can be easily misunderstood and can lead to *michsholim*. This includes the lists for liqueurs, slurpees and other general products. This generated a lot of feedback from the audience and a variety of opinions were expressed.

This was followed by an in-depth halachic discussion on the *Heter Mechira* used by the Rabbanut this year in Israel. This *heter* is used to circumvent many of the prohibitions of *Shmittah*. The shiur was delivered by Rabbi Menachem Genack of the OU. He prefaced his remarks with words of dedication to Rabbi Nota Greenblatt z”l, who recently passed away. Rabbi Tzvi Holland of the Star-K also delivered remarks in memory of Rabbi Greenblatt coupled with many anecdotes of his *mesirus nefesh* for kashrus. This was followed by a talk by Rabbi Shmuel Weiner of ZNT Kosher in Israel, who discussed the challenges and solutions to in the kosher certification of home businesses. The afternoon then transitioned to words of *chizuk* delivered masterfully by Rabbi Meir Yedid of Congregation Shaare Zion. With his candid sephardic style of speech, he reminded us how to maintain our personal level of *ruchniyus* when we are surrounded by so many challenges in the modern world.

The highlight of the evening was a *siyum* *hashas* completed by members of kashrus agencies worldwide, as well as a *siyum sefer torah*. The *sefer torah* was commissioned by the Senter family in memory of both Rabbi Zecharia Senter z”l and Rabbi Don Yoel Levy z”l.

During dinner, we were treated to a *chizuk shmuz* from Rabbi Shmuel Meir Katz of the Kof-K. He reminded all of those involved in Kashrus to remember that Kashrus brings to *kedusha* in Klal Yisroel.

After which, Rabbi Moshe Perlmutter of the OU presented a very informative session on safety in kashering commercial kitchens and factories. Understanding how the various forms of equipment work is a prerequisite to determining the safest way to kasher them. He peppered his talk with various video clips demonstrating various kashering techniques.

Tuesday morning was back to the conference rooms for the last morning of sessions. Rabbi Nesanel Snow of the KOF-K discussed the importance of spreading kashrus awareness to consumers. He introduced the new initiative AKO recently helped start, which is available at <https://www.kashrusawareness.com/>. This talk was followed by a lecture delivered by Rabbi Eliezer Wolff of Amsterdam. He discussed how European *hashgachos* set their standards and how they are able to implement them. This was followed by an informative presentation by Mr. Nachum Schoenfeld of Cove Hill Consulting. He discussed how a kashrus organization can run its business professionally, even without the financial benefits that a large corporation has. Rabbi Lazer Fisher from Cincinnati Kosher then gave a state-of-the-art presentation on vertical farming, which is the practice of growing crops in vertically stacked layers. This takes place in a controlled-environment and uses soil-less farming techniques which, compared to traditional farming, often reduces infestation with insects. However, it is not foolproof. As with many new innovations, when one problem is solved, other issues crop up (no pun intended!). Hopefully in the near future as this technology develops, we will be able to enjoy many more vegetable insect free. Rabbi Moshe Heinemann of the Star-K, then delivered an in-depth halachic shiur about the status of stem-cell meat. He drew from his vast array of halachic and technical knowledge to discuss the possibility of cultivating such a product from a *ben-pekua* (i.e., a fetus removed alive from its recently shechted mother).

It is difficult to sum up the amazing opportunities I was able to gain from attending the AKO Vaadim conference. Suffice it to say that the wealth of information gained will be adequate to carry me over until the next one and help us keep our Vaad on the cutting edge of kashrus.