



KOF-K

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בס"ד

Dissecting D.E. – Simplifying the Symbol Rabbi Ari Senter

As a mashgiach with ## years in the business, Rabbi _____ has stopped counting the number of times he has been asked to “bless” the machines in a food processing plant to make products kosher. If only it were that simple!

The availability of kosher foods has grown exponentially in the last twenty years to an approximate 80,000 kosher certified products. When a kosher-minded shopper picks up a food item, the first thing he or she looks at is the product’s kosher certification. Most of the products, in addition to certification by a Kosher supervising agency, possess an additional marking, designating the status of the product. This designation can include dairy, parve, meat or Kosher for Passover. There is an entire subset of kashrus designations, including Kosher for Passover, Dairy, Meat, Parve, D.E., and M.E.

The modern Kosher symbol on our everyday foods tersely and purposefully shows that a vast amount of knowledge, time, and effort has been expended to verify the kosher status of that particular item. One immediately recognizes that a particular product displaying the KOF-K trademark symbol has been thoroughly investigated from the raw ingredients through the manufacturing process.

The KOF-K wants to avoid possible confusion to consumers or companies which might be caused by various “code letters”. Examples: Does P mean Parve or Kosher for Passover? Does the lack of any designation mean that the item is Parve or that the inclusion of a designation was overlooked? For this reason, most KOF-K products have a fully written out designation (e.g. Parve, Dairy, etc.) to accompany the kosher symbol for any certified item. One exception is the designation D.E.

What exactly does D.E. mean?

The D.E. designation means that the KOF-K has verified that the ingredients used in this product are all parve, but the product is produced using heat on equipment that is also used to produce hot products with dairy equipment without any koshering in between. The D.E. designation is not allowed unless the KOF-K has verified that the company’s standard cleaning procedures are such that there is no concern that the



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residual dairy from a prior product might make the product in question dairy according to Halacha.

The designation "M.E." or "Meat Equipment" also exists for parve products prepared on clean meat equipment and while this article focuses on dairy, much of the discussion applies to those products as well.

So, that being the case, may I eat D.E. products with or after meat?

These halachos are complex and, as with any halachic issue, one should consult their personal Rav for guidance in their specific circumstances. The basic concept that applies here is "Nosein Tam Bar Nosein Tam" commonly abbreviated as "Nat Bar Nat". This means the taste has been transferred twice, once from the food into the equipment and a second time from the equipment back into the food. In Halacha, this double transfer of taste is considered to give a weaker taste that may not retain its original status. The *Shulchan Aruch* (*Yoreh Deah* 95:2) rules that parve food cooked in clean dairy equipment is parve, as long as the food was not cooked or baked with specific intent to use with meat. Thus, for Sefardim who follow the *Shulchan Aruch*, it would seem to be permitted to treat D.E. as Parve. However, the Rama, whom Ashkenazim tend to follow, rules (*Yoreh Deah* 89:3) that the food in question may not be cooked or eaten together with meat. However, it may be consumed immediately after eating meat. The Rama points out that the D.E. food may even be warmed in a fleishig pan (*Yoreh Deah* 95:2).

Therefore, a Parve whipped cream produced from Parve ingredients on clean dairy equipment (without koshering) would be parve according to Sephardim. Ashkenazim would be forbidden from eating the whipped cream with meat, but would have no problem doing so immediately after eating, for example, the Shabbos afternoon cholent.

What if I am Makpid on Cholov Yisroel and the product was made on non Cholov Yisroel equipment?

As mentioned above, with any such halachic matter people should ask their personal Rav. There exists a *Machlokes* amongst the present day *Poskim* whether to apply the concept of *Nat Bar Nat Liessura*. This means that when the taste that is being transferred is non-kosher (and not a kosher dairy or meat taste), then no amount of transfer will weaken its effect. The new product is still not kosher. In the case where a person is careful to only eat Cholov Yisroel and also treats non-Cholov Yisroel as non-kosher, any product produced on non-Cholov Yisroel equipment (without a complete kosherization) would be considered non-kosher as well. R' Moshe Feinstein ZT"L (in



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Igros Moshe in *Y"D V II-31* at the end) said that one should not eat products made on non-*Cholov Yisroel* dairy equipment without a proper kosherization in between. Many other *Poskim* including R' Eliyahu Henkin ZT"L (in *V II-43*) seem to indicate that one can be lenient and allow the use of a D.E. product made on non-*Cholov Yisroel* equipment.

I have a very serious dairy allergy, should I eat D.E. products?

The KOF-K will never allow non-kosher ingredients to be put into kosher products, or dairy ingredients into Parve item even in miniscule amounts, including ingredients and remnants that are not halachically significant (*batel*). Even with that said, it is possible that airborne particles could inadvertently settle on a product or are still absorbed in the equipment (usually a few parts per million) that would not be a *kashrus* concern, but could potentially cause an allergic reaction to people with severe allergies. The D.E. designation should make it obvious that the product was made in a facility that also produced dairy products and one who has severe dairy allergies probably should be careful. Equipment which was properly *Kashered* from dairy to Parve may pose a health problem to a severely allergic person.

Does the KOF-K always issue the D.E. designation to products containing parve ingredients made on dairy equipment?

There are many reasons why the KOF-K may discourage the use of D.E. or require that the Dairy symbol used. Typical examples are where it will be hard to verify that only parve ingredients are being used or where there is a potential for labeling errors to occur.

On occasion, the KOF-K might discourage the use of the D.E. symbol if the product did not lend itself to proper use. For example, if a company that manufactures dairy salad dressing contacted the KOF-K about entering the parve market with mustard (produced on their clean dairy equipment), the KOF-K would explain that the D.E. designation would be virtually useless or even misleading as the primary use of mustard is with meat.

In the past few decades, kosher shoppers in the United States have become much more knowledgeable as the production and sale of kosher food products have become more readily available. With that in mind, the KOF-K is using the D.E. for the benefit of companies and kosher consumers.

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For those seeking a more information on the KOF-K and the products they certify visit our website. Weekly shiurim are held weekly at the national offices in Teaneck, New Jersey which are a public service of the KOF-K. The halachos of D.E. have been included in this series of lectures and tapes of the classes are available upon request.

For information on purchasing tapes, attending shiurim or other kashrus concerns, please call the KOF-K at 201-837-0500, email them at info@KOF-K.org or visit them on the web at www.KOF-K.org, where you can also find for up to the minute kashrus information.

Disclaimer: This article offers a concise overview of the D.E. designation and should not be accepted as the final word on the subject. Please contact Rabbi Ari Senter at the KOF-K (extension 116) or consult your local Rav with any questions.