

Hechsher Tzedek

Background

The *Hechsher Tzedek* Campaign is an initiative of the Conservative Movement of Judaism to improve the working conditions, treatment of employees, environmental standards, and business practices in *kosher* food-producing businesses.

By definition, *kosher* food is in line with Jewish dietary ritual laws. This campaign will bring *kosher* food in line with Jewish ethical law and social justice values.

The Justice Seal

The Conservative Movement, in consultation with industry experts, will create a set of standards that will most likely focus on 1) Health & Safety, 2) Wages & Benefits, 3) Training, 4) Environmental Impact, 5) Corporate Transparency and 6) Animal treatment, where appropriate. Businesses that adhere to these standards will receive some type of “seal”, indicating that the food was produced in just conditions. **The *Hechsher Tzedek* will not replace existing *kosher* certification – it will be used in addition to traditional *kosher* certification. Only food already certified as *kosher* will be eligible to receive a *Hechsher Tzedek*.**

Pursuing Justice

As Jews, we are in a unique position to advocate for improved working conditions, environmental standards and business practices in *kosher* food-producing businesses.

- We are the consumers of *kosher* foods. We are in a great position to help *kosher* food producers meet the desires of their customers, become more just in their practices, and have their products be more attractive. Also, when consumers come together and ask businesses to make change, oftentimes businesses listen.
- Our tradition teaches us to pursue justice, and to repair the world.
- Many Jews view keeping *kosher* as a means of sanctifying our world. *Hechsher Tzedek* is an extension of this value and a concrete way of practicing it.

Resources for further study

On *Kashrut*

Abramson, Rabbi Robert, ed., *Kosher: Sanctifying the Ordinary*, USCJ Department of Education (CD-ROM), .

Dresner , Rabbi Samuel, *Keeping Kosher: A Diet for the Soul*, Rabbinical Assembly and USCJ Commission on Education, 1982.

Klein, Rabbi Isaac, *A Guide to Jewish Religious Practice*, KTAV Publishing House, 1979.

Lebeau, Rabbi James, *The Jewish Dietary Laws: Sanctify Life*, USCJ Youth Department, 1983.

Stern , Lise, *How to Keep Kosher: A Comprehensive Guide to the Jewish Dietary Laws*, William Morrow, 2004.

www.myjewishlearning.org

www.uscj.org

www.koach.org

On *Hechsher Tzedek*

Rabbimorrisallen2.blogspot.com

<http://www.forward.com/articles/rabbis-move-ahead-with-new-certification-plan/>

http://www.nytimes.com/2007/05/19/us/19religion.html?_r=1&pagewanted=print&oref=slogin

http://www.uscj.org/Report_of_the_Commis7199.html