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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OU KOSHER TO RECOMMEND ORGANIC CERTIFICATION AGENCY TO OU CLIENTS

As part of its practice of providing a full range of services to its certified companies, **OU Kosher** has announced that it will recommend **Organic National & International Certifiers (ON & IC)** of Lincolnwood, IL to its client companies who are seeking certification that their products are not only kosher, but organic as well.

Organic food must adhere to standards of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), which require that crops be grown without synthetic pesticides, artificial fertilizers, biotechnology or radiation. Among other standards, there are also requirements for the feed given to animals on organic farms and how the animals are to be confined. Organic foods, therefore, can be said to provide a more healthful diet than standard foods while being more environmentally friendly.

The demand for organic products has been growing at a rapid rate in recent years, and ON & IC has proven to be a reliable and respected certifier in its field, just as the OU is in kosher certification.

The agreement is not the first in which the OU has reached out to a certifying agency in another field related to food production – in 2005 it entered into a relationship with the Gluten-Free Certification Organization (GFCO) to certify that products do not contain storage proteins found in grains such as wheat, rye and barley – a necessity for people on gluten-free diets.

Now it is organic's turn.

“For a long time, it’s been clear that the kosher consumer and the organic consumer share a lot of overlap and that many companies that are seeking kosher certification are seeking organic certification, and vice versa,” declared **Rabbi Moshe Elefant**, Chief Operating Officer of OU Kosher, who was instrumental in bringing the arrangement to fruition. “Organic certification is clearly a field of expertise – you cannot grant organic certification unless licensed by the federal government to do so.”

Consequently, unlike the situation with GFCO in which OU rabbinic field representatives also provide gluten-free certification, only USDA accredited staff of ON & IC at present will be doing the certifying. The OU's role will be to direct its clients to the company.

“In order to help service our clients who are seeking this certification to market their products, we entered into a relationship with the group which has the know-how to offer this service to companies,” Rabbi Elefant declared. “We will recommend them to our clients who want organic certification as a good organization to work with.”

Among the companies currently certified by ON & IC are Pasco Onions, one of the largest crispy fried onion companies in the United States; Topical Pharmaceutical, a large distributor of personal care products; Interbake Foods, one of the largest manufacturers of wafers in the United States; and several of the Del Monte fresh produce plants.

According to Marketing Director **Pearl Siegel**, ON & IC chose to work with the OU because “we were looking for a kosher certification agency with a reputation for the highest quality and with a substantial list of client companies. Of course, the OU was a perfect fit. Despite their size,” she added, “they are cooperative, easy to deal with, and gave every indication that our working relationship would be extremely productive.”


According to ON & IC, its mission and goals are:

- To provide organic certification to processors, handlers, growers, livestock brokers, traders, distributors, retailers and private label entities that want to be in conformity with USDA rules and regulations;
- To assist in the growth of public acceptance and demand for organic products; and
- To assist in making organic products freely available to the general public.

According to Rabbi Elefant, the relationship “provides an opportunity to work together to reduce redundancy and costs. If we see it is beneficial to the companies, we will jointly train our rabbinic field representatives to be accredited by USDA,” and thereby to handle certifications, just as they perform the gluten-free certifications now.

For companies needing further information on ON & IC and organic foods, contact Pearl Siegel at pearl@on-ic.com, or 847-763-0218.

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The Orthodox Union, now in its second century of service to the Jewish community of North America and beyond, represents the fastest growing segment in Jewish life. The OU is a world leader in community and synagogue services, adult education, youth work through NCSY, political action through the IPA (Institute of Public Affairs), and advocacy for persons with disabilities through Yachad and Our Way. Its kosher certification label, the , is the world's most recognized kosher symbol and can be found on over 400,000 products manufactured in 80 countries around the globe.