R’ Yitzchok Hisiger: Hello everyone and welcome back to Let's Talk *Kashrus*, presented by the *Kashrus* Awareness project in conjunction with Torah Anytime. Today I am joined by Rabbi Sholem Fishbane, Executive Director of AKO and *Kashrus* Administrator of the Chicago Rabbinical Council. Thank you Rabbi Fishbane for being here.

R’ Sholem Fishbane: Thank you for having me.

R’ Yitzchok Hisiger: Today we'd like to discuss something that many people have been talking about and that is eggs. Especially as relates to *Pesach*, eggs are are quite a common product and with the fluctuation of prices, I'm curious to hear from you how that specifically impacts the *kashrus* of eggs, if it does?.

R’ Sholem Fishbane: It's it's very true. As we we like to look in our office and see the amount of questions coming in and what's the latest, and the latest questions are eggs, eggs, eggs.

It's not about the pricing, but it's more about we're finding more blood spots. We're finding more, what's going on with the eggs? Is that related to to the fluctuation of the of the pricing? And it absolutely is. So just to understand what is a blood spot? So what's blood spot, you know, when the *Gemara* talks about blood spot, if you find a blood spot in an egg, that was the beginning of an embryo and that means it's completely not *kosher*, the whole egg is not *kosher*. So you crack an egg, you know, certainly when they were raised hens and there were roosters around.

Uh today, most places when they raise hens, there's no roosters around. So what is the blood spot? So basically, the blood spot comes from inside the chicken while it is producing the egg, when the chicken gets frightened, usually from thunder, it will it will rupture and you'll get a blood spot or something like that. And it's in a place called the stigma that's inside the chicken. And therefore the question is now what? I mean blood is not *kosher*.

You can't eat the blood. What do you do with the whole chicken? So there's a *machlokes*. *Rav Moshe* says eggs, you know, throw out the whole egg. *Rav Ovadiah Yosef* says no just take out the blood spot.

Everyone has their way of doing it according to their own *moirah derech*. But the question is today, why are we finding so many blood spots? What is going on? So it's very much related to the fact that supermarkets need to sell eggs and there's a tremendous amount of pressure on the egg layers, give us eggs, we need our quota. We don't have, they killed off a lot of the uh hens from the avian flu. So two things are happening.

R’ Yitzchok Hisiger: So you're saying there was a shortage?

R’ Sholem Fishbane: Major shortage. There's actually three things happening. One is that the government itself is now reconsidering no longer destroying the entire farm when they find one hen rather like by section. They're rethinking it because they can't...

R’ Yitzchok Hisiger: As far as the avian flu?

R’ Sholem Fishbane: The avian flu, yes. Okay. But in terms of why there's so many blood spots. So two things.

Number one, the candling, you know what happens is when the eggs come out, they run it through a conveyor belt, underneath there's this big light that's called candling. And the workers look to see if there's anything irregular which tells us that there's something going on inside and they'll pull it off usually and not sell it. Today a lot of those are passing through because they need to meet the quota. So that's the first reason why there's so many blood spots today.

The second is because there's no younger hens coming in, they're letting the older hens stay much longer than they usually do. And you know, the body begins to break down. It's interesting. Yeah.

R’ Yitzchok Hisiger: And you're saying because of that when an older hen produces an egg, it's more likely to have a rupture or something.

R’ Sholem Fishbane: Yeah, yeah, very interesting. That's fascinating. It is.

And I don't know, this is my own particular thing that one of the complaints we're hearing, nothing to do with *kashrus*, is like, you know that the shells are actually much thinner than the old shell, like you know, you touch it and it's breaking. I wonder if it has to do with the aging of the hens also, I don't know. I'm not an expert but or, you know.

But that's something that is also just so very interesting. So, you know, that is what's going on. And therefore there is an increase of blood spots.

Now, it's very important to point out though. And this is where we help a lot of people. Is that a blood spot or are you seeing something else what we call a protein spot? What's a protein spot? You know, every egg has spots in it. They're actually something called a white spot. You know that? You won't know it cause it's blended into the white, but there are spots that come up in every egg.

When the shell is of a darker, especially the brown shell, it takes from the shell and those spots get colored. So what's really a brown spot, people confuse with a blood spot. We call them protein spots because it comes from the protein of the shell. So therefore, how do you know a protein spot is *kosher*, a blood spot is not *kosher*? How do you know the difference? So there's a couple of ways.

One is look at the color. If it's not red and it's brownish or off white, you're good to go. The second way is that a red blood spot is actually round. Um a protein spot is more um..

R’ Yitzchok Hisiger: Like streaky?

R’ Sholem Fishbane: Streaky. Yeah it's like, it's not oval. it's a little off you can tell.

And then the third one is that the majority of the blood spots are on the yellow, the yolk. And the protein spots which I said earlier is *kosher*, that will you'll find it on the white. So those are the three ways that you know the difference. We, in the restaurants, one of the things we like to do is the *mashgiach* checks the eggs, but sometimes he can't get to it and there's a lot of eggs being cracked and then...

So we put up a sign, all workers that find a a blood spot gets a dollar, okay? And that's a good incentive. They walk up, I found one, the Rabbi, oh very good to go. It's a great system. So we set this up once in Mexico in one of the programs.

Over there I think it was 50 cents cause a dollar is like, you know, a lot of money. And there was just this one lady that was finding blood spot, blood spot, blood spot. And the *mashgiach* called and he says, you're not going to believe it. She was actually pricking herself and and putting in drops of blood. Putting in blood. Yes, so that she was making a killing.

But there's a lot of other things that come up with eggs. You know, one of the things with the shortage that we're talking about, is that we're studying, okay, are they trying to change up the different types of chickens that lay eggs so that they get a better or can fight avian flu?

R’ Yitzchok Hisiger: Like manipulate the genetics?

R’ Sholem Fishbane: Genetics, or find or breed different types of chickens. which makes a lot of sense on the business, but we follow chickens for *kosher* with a *mesorah* only. So we're watching that very carefully and *Baruch Hashem* I can tell you, there hasn't been any… everything so far everything's going *al pi hamesorah*.

But in *kashrus*, these are the types of things we start thinking about. When something happens, we start thinking about it and that's one of the things we've been following. I want to explain because of the shortage. So you're going to see supermarkets they're going to be having something called free range, cage free, organic. And if you're finding what does that mean there's roosters? Does that mean I have to be *choshesh* like maybe *issur d'oraisa*? No. Don't worry about it. Don't get worried about those words. I mean I know in Trader Joe's they're starting to sell now free range and cage free much more and all that.

That doesn't mean there's a rooster. If it says somewhere on the package the word fertile, then you would have to worry about it. But all those other things they don't have to worry about. So that's the story with eggs.

And I'll just tell you that the first time I walked into an egg factory, two things occurred that hit me. One is that what happens is they bring in the eggs from the coop and the coop is very dirty and they have to wash it off and it came in dirty stuck onto the eggshells with the the feed. Okay. And this was it was actually before *Pesach*.

And I'm looking at the feed. Is this *chometz*? it's grains, you know, what's going on there? But, you know, obviously when you buy it, you're not buying a dirty egg, but what I was looking at was the way they were washing it off. They were washing off with hot water. Let's say it's *chometz*, is it going into the egg? So the *bleeya* an egg. But the good news is it was under *yad soledes*. And you're good to go. I also saw in that particular factory they were actually sprinkling on every egg mineral oil to make sure that it lasts longer. Like to seal it.

R’ Yitzchok Hisiger: to seal it, really?

R’ Sholem Fishbane: Yeah. So mineral oil's okay, you know, I looked around in the industry do they use vegetable oil? It turns out they don't. So these are just types of things.

R’ Yitzchok Hisiger: No, but that's interesting both on the oil and then also on the feed end, both with regard to the throughout the year and *Pesach*.

Is there an issue let's say that people like in my family, we put the eggs directly into the *cholent*. You know, you make *cholent* eggs or if you put eggs into a a *maichel* of some sort with the shell, is there any *kashrus* concern at all?

R’ Sholem Fishbane: No. So the *maskana* is there are not.

R’ Yitzchok Hisiger: And for *chometz* for *Pesach*?

R’ Sholem Fishbane: So the mineral oil is not a *chometz* thing.

The only thing that we in the CRC are *machmir* on is some of the eggs actually have the name of the company ink jetted. So there's ink. That is edible ink.

R’ Yitzchok Hisiger: Really?

R’ Sholem Fishbane: That's edible ink. Well it has to be by law. So the edible ink could either be *kitniyos*, it's most likely *kitniyos*. Sometimes it could be *chometz*. So I would tell you the majority will be *kitniyos*. So if you put it in and you're like, oh no, what did I do? Don't worry. But that would be maybe something to think about.

R’ Yitzchok Hisiger: To think about. Interesting. Yeah. As always Rabbi Fishbane, you never fail to amaze. Thank you for sharing your knowledge on this interesting topic.

R’ Sholem Fishbane: Thank you for having me.