



What Lies Behind the KLBD Passover Label?

The small North Essex town of Tiptree is practically synonymous with the Wilkin & Sons jam factory.

The Wilkin family began farming at Tiptree in 1757, and have been making quality preserves since 1885.

The company first received a Royal Warrant from King George V in 1911, and this prestigious honour has continued with the company presently holding the Royal Warrant as purveyors of Tiptree products to Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II.

Many of the fruits used to make the Tiptree products are still farmed locally, and there is a strong emphasis on maintaining the quality which the company has always been known for. Fruit is inspected and prepared by hand and cooked in small batches using traditional, copper-bottomed pans. The original fruit sieving machine for jellies (clear jams) is still in use after more than 120 years! Products are made in a nut-free factory to time-honoured and cherished recipes; they remain free from artificial colours, flavours and preservatives.

Fruit crops include strawberries, raspberries, mulberries, Morello cherries, rhubarb, damson, Victoria plum, greengage, quince, and the curious medlar. Where items cannot be grown locally, quality fruit is purchased from trusted sources, such as Seville for their marmalade oranges. Tiptree's signature fruit has to be the Little Scarlet strawberry, a tiny wild variety that is very difficult to grow and harvest, but it is worth it for the depth of flavour that it provides. Tiptree is probably the only place in the world where this fruit is grown.

There is a great focus on the relationship between the company and the surrounding environment. Every member of staff is part of an Employee Benefit Trust, giving them a keen interest in the future of the business. The Tiptree farm is LEAF Marque accredited (Linking Environment and Farming), recognition that they work sympathetically with the environment

and encourage links with the local community.

The Kashrut Division of the London Beth Din (KLBD) is proud to have a long-standing relationship with the Wilkin & Sons Company. Their interest in kosher certification was initially only for Passover jams, however, over the past couple of decades, the demand for kosher certified products has increased dramatically and now Tiptree jams and marmalades are kosher certified all year round.



Tiptree Passover advert January 1983

Tiptree is currently sold in over sixty countries, and as well as being kosher certified in the UK, there is much interest from abroad, particularly America and Israel.

The range of products has greatly expanded too. Besides the standard jams, you can now buy more unusual ones such as green fig, loganberry and pineapple. There is a wide selection of honeys, curds and sweet spreads that has become kosher certified in recent years, and the range keeps growing. These developments are, in no small measure, due to the cooperation and professionalism of the Tiptree staff.

The KLBD insists on the highest standards of kashrut in order to grant kosher certification. Each ingredient and processing aid is checked to ensure its suitability. When necessary, the equipment is koshered thoroughly to meet KLBD standards. These measures can be a little daunting to staff who are unfamiliar with this practice, however, the emphasis on quality control at the company and the good will between Tiptree and the KLBD keeps things running smoothly.

The production of Kosher for Passover jams by Wilkin & Sons had lapsed in recent years, but due to the increasing demand from customers, a special batch production was arranged for Passover 2018. In preparation for this, a number of ingredients and processing aids had to be obtained from alternative sources.

Pectin, a water-soluble fibre, occurs naturally in most fruits, with the highest concentration in the peel or skin; its presence causes the setting of jellies and preserves, and gives jams their spreadable consistency. When producing jams from fruits which do not have a high pectin content, extra pectin in powdered form is added to the cooking pans. It is important to ensure that the pectin powder used is suitable for Passover as pectin is often precipitated with ethanol (which can be wheat derived) and often standardised with dextrose (also potentially problematic for Passover). The acidity regulators added to the jam - citric acid and sodium citrate - can also be grain derived. Finally, since some of the Tiptree products manufactured throughout the year contain chometz, for example, marmalade with malt whisky, a full koshering of the factory is essential before kosher for Passover production can take place.

To oversee the 2018 production, two KLBD rabbis travelled to the factory for a 6am start in order to supervise the koshering of the production line from beginning to end, and to verify that the Passover approved pectin was the one mixed into the tank, together with the specially purchased processing aids. The rabbis remained onsite until all the jars were sealed and labelled as KLBD - 'Kosher for Passover'.



Utensils specifically prepared for the Passover production



Checking the pans before beginning the koshering



Checking the Swash (buffer) tank as it fills with boiling water



A boiling pan during the koshering process



Checking the temperature readings of the ten pans being koshered



Koshering the jam jar filling machine



Preparing and checking the apricots



Preparing and checking the strawberries



Cooking the Seville oranges

Adding the Passover pectin into the blender hopper



Transferring the Passover pectin (now in syrup form) to a storage tank



Adding Passover pectin to the conveyor

Discussing the cooking procedure for the Passover jams





Transferring the strawberries to the conveyor



Empty jam jars being sent to the filler



Filled jars being spray cleaned on their way to be labelled



The finished Kosher for Passover jams as they come off the labelling line

