

## Reform rabbis embrace ethical kashrut

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The Reform movement's rabbinical group endorsed the Conservative movement's ethical kosher initiative.

The Board of Trustees of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, the Reform movement's rabbinical association, resolved last month to explore ways to cooperate with the initiative, known as Hekhsher Tzedek.

The conference urged producers of kosher meat to adhere to the highest ethical standards, applauded the Conservative movement for integrating ethical concerns into kashrut and encouraged Reform Jews to consider the initiative's guidelines in making dietary choices.

"Those who keep kosher, including the growing number of Reform Jews who are embracing the observance of kashrut, should not be forced to choose between their ritual observance and their ethical values," the Reform conference said.

Spurred in large measure by the continuing controversy over Agriprocessors, the Iowa meat producer that was the target of a massive immigration raid in May, Conservative Rabbi Morris Allen has pushed Hekhsher Tzedek as a supplementary certification attesting that kosher food products are produced in an ethical manner.

In recent days, Allen has reached out to Conservative rabbis to seek their endorsement of the initiative, which is a joint project of the movement's rabbinical and congregational arms. Among the Orthodox, the initiative has provoked unease from those who believe it modifies the notion of kashrut.

Agudath Israel of America, an umbrella group of fervently Orthodox Jews, is expected to release a statement shortly criticizing the initiative.

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