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Kosher

Private Regulation in the Age of Industrial Food

TIMOTHY D. LYTTON

Generating over \$12 billion in annual sales, kosher food is big business. It is also an unheralded story of private-sector regulation in an era of growing public concern over the government's ability to regulate the food industry. *Kosher* uncovers how independent certification agencies rescued American kosher supervision from corruption and turned it into a model of nongovernmental administration.

"*Kosher* is one terrific book. It's a wonderfully entertaining account of the squabbles, finger-pointing, and cutthroat competition that turned kosher certification from scandalous corruption to a respectable—and highly profitable—business. Today, if a food is labeled kosher, it is kosher, which is more than can be said of most claims on food labels. You don't have to be Jewish to appreciate the fun in Timothy Lytton's presentation of an unusually successful case study."

— **Marion Nestle**, New York University, and author of *Food Politics*

In overcoming many of the problems of insufficient resources and weak enforcement that hamper the government, private kosher certification holds important lessons for improving food regulation. The growing popularity of kosher food is a response to a more general cultural anxiety about industrialization of the food supply. Like the organic and locavore movements, a growing number of consumers see rabbinic supervision as a way to personalize today's complex, globalized system of food production.

Timothy D. Lytton is the Albert & Angela Farone Distinguished Professor of Law at Albany Law School.

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