



ISRAEL MATTERS!

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Israel's Efficient, High-tech Dairy Industry is an Unsung 'Start-up Nation' Story

Israel to Slash Payments to UN

Israel will cut \$2 million from money it has allocated to the United Nations and give it instead to programs in developing nations that support it in international organizations, the Foreign Ministry recently announced. The ministry issued a statement saying that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu directed it to slash the \$2 million to the United Nations as a result of the anti-Israel resolutions recently passed in the UN Human Rights Council.

The cut is in addition to \$6 million that Jerusalem slashed in January in the aftermath of the passage of anti-settlement Resolution 2334 in the UN Security Council. Following these cuts, Israel will contribute only \$3.7 million this year to the UN, instead of the \$10.7 million that was originally earmarked.

The ministry said that this decision is part of an Israeli campaign – along with its friends, first and foremost the US – to change the “obsessive bias against Israel at the UN and in its agencies.”



In January, Israeli Ambassador to the UN Danny Danon (left) announced the cutting of \$6 million by saying, “It is unreasonable for Israel to fund bodies that operate against us at the UN.” The UN, he said, “must end the absurd reality in which it supports bodies whose sole intent is to spread incitement and anti-Israel propaganda.” [Jpost.com]

Amid all the buzz around Israel’s “start-up nation,” including Intel’s recent \$15 billion acquisition of Mobileye, a lesser-known phenomenon is the high-tech and hyper-efficient Israeli dairy industry. The combination of Israelis’ high demand for dairy products and the Jewish state’s well-documented ingenuity makes the cutting-edge dairy industry a natural development in what the Bible describes as a “land flowing with milk and honey.”

Michal Kraus, executive director of the Israeli Dairy Board, tells JNS.org Israelis prefer milk, yogurt, cottage cheese, or soft cheeses during the warmer summer months because these dairy products are cooler and easier to digest. Hard cheeses tend to be consumed in foods such as toast and pizza, and more frequently during the winter months. Israeli supermarket shelves feature about 800 varieties of dairy products. The Israeli Dairy Board’s estimates show that last year 32 percent of Israelis consumed soft cheeses, 30 percent drank milk, 26 percent consumed hard cheeses and 12 percent ate other dairy products such as desserts.

The latest trends in Israel’s dairy market involve “going back to basic, nostalgic products but also clean label [production]” and the “reduction of salt and sugar,” says Tzvika Dor, director of business development at the premium dairy plant Gad Dairy, whose production represents 5 percent of the Israeli dairy market.

Milk production in Israel is carried out under a quota system that exists in only two other nations—Canada and Norway. “In case of an increase or expected increase in the demand for milk products, the Dairy Board lifts the quota ...The Dairy Board advises the farmers, considering the expected high demand for holidays and summer months, allowing the farmers to plan and get organized accordingly,” says Dr. Ephraim Maltz, a senior researcher emeritus at the Volcani Center, the Israeli Ministry of Agriculture’s research arm.

Demand is particularly high for Shavuot, when eating dairy is a holiday tradition.

Israel’s dairy sector functions in a unified manner because the country is relatively small, Kraus explains. All the industry’s players know at any given moment about virtually each individual cow, what its environment is and if it carries any germs. This information, she says, provides an advantage in the cultivation of herds—Israel uses artificial insemination to breed cows—and enables increased milk produc-

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tion. More than 80 percent of the country's cows are registered in the Israel Herd Book, a computerized database that allows tracing the genealogy, history, milk yield and other factors for each cow. These metrics "are monitored continuously for production health and reproduction," Maltz says.

Israel's Holstein cows—the nation's specific breed of dairy cattle, which has adapted to a warm climate—produce about 3,000 gallons of milk per cow per year. This figure is "among the highest productions in the world, if not the highest," says Maltz.

With the government's support, Israeli farmers have learned to breed cows by better utilizing the natural environment, despite the nation's arid climate and chronic water shortages. The farmers' methods include feeding cows with recycled natural foods, using recycled water to grow fodder and reusing manure in agriculture. Several delegations from other countries have visited Israel to learn from these techniques.

To obtain the necessary metrics, a majority of Israel's dairy cows are "equipped with electronic individual identification, and almost all the milking parlors are equipped with electronic milk meters," Maltz says. Most Israeli dairy farms use electronic methods to detect a cow's estrous cycle—the reproductive cycle of mammals such as cows—"by using individual cow activity as an indication for insemination time," he says. Special sensors measure cows' daily body weight and milk composition for protein, fat, lactose and more. Many farmers also measure daily rumination and eating times. These sensors improve cows' health and reproduction, and increase efficiency in the milking process. The monitoring and production technologies are managed by two Israeli companies, Afimilk and SCR, that are internationally known dairy industry pioneers who export their product all over the world, says Maltz.

More cutting-edge technology comes from Tnuva, Israel's largest food manufacturer. Recently, the company began feeding some cows with a substance containing flax, which the company says improves both the cows' health and their milk. Based on this technique, they rolled out a new brand of milk, "Chalav Hameshek," which is rich in Omega-3 fatty acids. Tnuva aims to expand the project—still in its early stages at a few dairy farms—so it will ultimately be implemented for all farms whose milk is delivered to the company.

Israel has experienced a notable growth in demand for dairy products since 2016, Kraus says. "The combination of high milk production [around the time of Shavuot], together with careful planning," says Paikowsky, "enables [Tnuva] to provide the full range of products before the holiday." [jns.org]

Intel Buying Mobileye in Biggest Ever Deal in Israeli High-tech

Confirming Israel's leading place in the global race to put autonomous vehicles on the road, the U.S. semiconductor giant Intel announced it would buy driverless-technology company Mobileye for \$15.3 billion in the biggest acquisition ever of an Israeli high-tech company.

The deal was so big and important that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called Mobileye CEO Ziv Aviram to congratulate him soon after it was announced. "The deal is a dramatic testimony to the vision that Mobileye has realized. Israel has become a world technology center, not just in cybersecurity, but in automobiles," the prime minister said in a statement.

"This acquisition essentially merges the intelligent eyes of the autonomous car with the intelligent brain that actually drives the car," Intel CEO Brian Krzanich wrote in a note to employees about the acquisition.

Intel said it expected the transaction to close within the next nine months. Intel will integrate its automated driving group with Mobileye's operations, with the combined entity being run by Amnon Shashua, Mobileye's chairman and the Hebrew University professor who invented Mobileye's core technology.

Intel has sought to develop a major new market segment for its semiconductor technology with the rapid transition now underway to self-driving cars. As part of these efforts, Intel began a partnership with Mobileye and the German automaker BMW to put a fleet of around 40 self-driving test vehicles on the road later this year.

Buying Mobileye will also significantly deepen Intel's presence in Israel, where it employs some 10,000 people in making chips and in research and development and exports billions of dollars of semiconductors annually — making it both Israel's biggest employer and exporter.

Mobileye, which accounts for 70% of the global market for driver-assistance and anticollision systems, has 660 employees and had adjusted net income of \$173.3 million last year. Founded in 1999, the Jerusalem-based company initially offered collision-prevention technology, which gradually evolved into autonomous cars. The company listed its shares in 2014 on the NYSE, where it became an investor favorite.

U.S. automakers and some technology companies are testing autonomous vehicles in California, Michigan and a few other states. Nearly all use Mobileye's software, which reads inputs from cameras, radar and laser sensors and makes decisions on what an autonomous car should do. Mobileye says it has contracts with 27 different automakers. It also makes software that runs automatic emergency braking and semiautonomous cruise control systems that are in cars and trucks now on the road. [haaretz.com]