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Could a Restructured Fairway Turn into Many More Kosher Options?



New York...For now, it seems that kosher shoppers who enjoyed the specialty and gourmet items at Fairway stores may have to look elsewhere for some of their favorite foods including the high-end bakery items. The New York grocer filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy recently for the second time since 2016 with an agreement to sell five stores and a distribution facility to Village Super Market Inc., owner of many supermarkets including 30 ShopRites. Rabbi Avrohom Marmorstein of Mehadrin Kashrus announced that “after supervising Fairway’s bakery since its inception for

over 25 years ago, Mehadrin Kashrus is no longer supervising the bakery at Fairway on 74th Street. Supervision has also been removed from the Fairway at East 86th Street, Kips Bay and Chelsea.” This was a decision made by the new owners of Fairway, according to Rabbi Marmorstein. Village Supermarkets (Shoprite) purchased 5 Fairway locations and the central bakery. Some stores that were not sold continue to have kosher supervised products, albeit outsourced from various vendors.

According to Rabbi Daniel Senter of the Kof-K Kosher Certification in Teaneck NJ, which co-certified Fairway in the past, the agency is currently evaluating its ongoing role with Village but kosher food sources say that the Kof-K may emerge as a major certifier for the Fairway stores as well as Village Super Markets, ShopRite and Gourmet Garage, all owned by Village. A consolidation of production and baking into a major production facility may lead to this major new certification for products to be sold in as many as 40-50 supermarkets.

Nathan Glickberg founded Fairway’s forerunner in 1933 as a fruit and vegetable stand before the business settled into a storefront on Manhattan’s Upper West Side, according to the chain’s website. In the 1970s, Glickberg’s grandson Howie added groceries and specialty foods to the offerings, as well as expanding floor space. It grew to employ more than 3,000 people.

Greek immigrants Nick and Perry Sumas opened the first Village Market in 1937. Just under 10 years later the brothers joined Wakefern, becoming one of the cooperative’s earliest members. As the Sumas family grew, so too did their business. Today, the family, including Nick’s son Robert, and Perry’s sons William and John, and their children and extended family, own and operates 30 ShopRite supermarkets in northern, central and southern New Jersey, Maryland, New York and Pennsylvania.