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Risk assessment and communication in focus Scientific exchange on food safety between the FSA and the BfR

How can global food standards be raised? How can the scientific evidence base for food safety be expanded? And how should institutions communicate food safety risks appropriately?

These questions were the main focus of the scientific exchange between the UK Food Standards Agency (FSA) and the German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR) on 9 November 2023 in Berlin. The cooperation between the FSA and the BfR goes back to a long-standing partnership aimed at assessing health risks associated with food while at the same time ensuring transparent and effective communication about these risks.

The scientific exchange brought together experts from both organisations to discuss best practices and innovative approaches.

The UK Food Standards Agency (FSA) is an independent government agency that works to protect public health and the general interests of consumers in relation to food in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The FSA's role extends not only to food safety but also to other consumer interests regarding food, such as price, availability and some aspects of food production standards, such as environmental protection and animal welfare.

The delegation visit, led by Professor Susan Jebb, Chair of the FSA, focused on sharing knowledge. In addition to panel discussions on, among other things, the assessment and communication of new molecular biology methods, experts from the FSA visited two BfR laboratories. There were guided tours of the food technology laboratory and the National Reference Laboratory for *Campylobacter*, during which BfR scientists explained their tasks and were available to answer questions. Further meetings are planned in order to give a more concrete shape to the areas in which there is potential for closer cooperation.

Professor Susan Jebb then gave a keynote speech at the "International Conference on Using Epidemiological Studies in Health Risk Assessments: Relevance, Reliability and Causality",

which was jointly organised by EFSA and the BfR. The main topic was the use of epidemiological data for the assessment of health risks.

About the BfR

The German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR) is a scientifically independent institution within the portfolio of the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture (BMEL) in Germany. The BfR advises the Federal Government and the States ('Laender') on questions of food, chemicals and product safety. The BfR conducts independent research on topics that are closely linked to its assessment tasks.

This text version is a translation of the original German text which is the only legally binding version.

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