

## How certain are you? The BfR supports the EFSA with a survey on the communication of scientific uncertainty

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Statements about the future can never be made with absolute certainty. This applies both to everyday events and to science. Even in case of high probability, there remains always some degree of uncertainty concerning the consequences of an event. Taking this uncertainty into consideration often leads to better and more transparent decisions. It is for this reason that the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) is conducting an online survey to ensure that scientific uncertainty is communicated better. Making available its expertise, the Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR) has contributed to the development and translation of the questionnaire.

The online survey can be found at [https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/Uncertainty\\_Survey](https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/Uncertainty_Survey). Completing the questionnaire takes about ten minutes and can be done in English, German, French, Spanish, Greek or Romanian. The Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR) and the EFSA are seeking participants with a view to improving risk communication and enhancing public understanding of scientific uncertainty.

For the last ten years, the BfR has carefully probed the question how scientific uncertainties are best communicated, although its exchange with EFSA about this topic goes even further back. Acting as the central national hub (EFSA Focal Point), the BfR coordinates the exchange of scientific information between EFSA and the German authorities in charge of food and feed and also with stakeholders from the worlds of business, politics, science and consumer organisations.

### Further information on the subject is available on the BfR website...

<http://www.bfr.bund.de/cm/350/leitfaden-zur-unsicherheitsanalyse-in-der-expositionsschaetzung.pdf>

[http://www.bfr.bund.de/en/press\\_information/2016/46/between\\_truth\\_claims\\_and\\_wishful\\_thinking\\_science\\_for\\_politics\\_and\\_society-199226.html](http://www.bfr.bund.de/en/press_information/2016/46/between_truth_claims_and_wishful_thinking_science_for_politics_and_society-199226.html)

[http://www.bfr.bund.de/en/efsa\\_focal\\_point\\_bfr\\_co\\_ordinates\\_health\\_risk\\_assessment\\_on\\_the\\_national\\_level-24975.html](http://www.bfr.bund.de/en/efsa_focal_point_bfr_co_ordinates_health_risk_assessment_on_the_national_level-24975.html)

### About the BfR

The 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. It advises the Federal Government and Federal Länder on questions of food, chemical and product safety. The BfR conducts its own research on topics that are closely linked to its assessment tasks.

The BfR is celebrating its 15th anniversary this year. To mark the occasion, the institute has published a jubilee brochure which can be downloaded or ordered free of charge at [www.bfr.bund.de](http://www.bfr.bund.de).

### Disclaimer

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