

INTERNATIONAL NEWS



Morocco cooperation on food safety

In the future, the BfR would like to cooperate even more closely with the National Office of Food Safety of Morocco (ONSSA) in the field of food safety. For this purpose, a joint declaration of intent was signed in February 2021. In it, the two authorities define the framework conditions for bilateral cooperation and reassert their previous cooperation. The initial focus is on the risk assessment of plant protection products.



INTERNAL AFFAIRS



Award-winning research on micro and nanoplastics

The 87th annual conference of the German Society of Experimental and Clinical Pharmacology and Toxicology (DGPT) took place at the beginning of March 2021. Dr. Holger Sieg from the BfR unit "Effect-based Analytics and Toxicogenomics" was awarded the DGPT prize for the best lecture in the "Emerging Topics" category. In the lecture "Food safety research and risk assessment of submicro- and nanoplastics", he presented new find-

ings on the topic of micro and nanoplastics in food and their impact on the intestinal barrier.

Applying research together

How are food colourings affecting the intestinal bacteria and mucosa? How can substances be detected that trigger changes in genetic material? How does machine learning help to recognise foodstuff in photographs? These are some of the scientific questions which students from the Berlin University of Applied Sciences (HTW) have already investigated at the BfR. The BfR's application-oriented research and the scientific focus of the HTW greatly overlap. For this reason, the BfR and the HTW concluded a cooperation agreement in December 2020. In the future they want to work together even more closely on joint projects, especially on joint student research projects and final theses in the natural sciences and computer science,

**EVENTS**

**Agenda for more food safety in Europe**

Together with member states, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) is planning the second Risk Assessment Research Assembly (2nd RARA) following the first event in 2018. The aim of the event is to promote food safety research and coordinate the risk assessment research agenda. With this agenda, EFSA will prioritise future work in food safety, chemical and microbiological risk assessment, nutrition and environmental risk assessment. The BfR is a member of the 2nd RARA's organising committee, which is expected to take place in Berlin in December 2021.

**New META-DETECT project**

As part of a joint doctoral project with its French affiliate organisation ANSES (Agence nationale de sécurité sanitaire de l'alimentation, de l'environnement et du travail), the BfR's Study Centre for Genome Sequencing and Analysis is working on developing a new genome-based method for identifying Shiga toxin-producing *Escherichia coli* (STEC) and other pathogenic *E. coli* in the environment and food. This joint research project, META-DETECT, aims to use these new investigation methods to improve analytical procedures for monitoring dairy farms in France and Germany.



**BfR-Summer Academy goes digital**

Since 2012, scientists from Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America have received training at the BfR-Summer Academy each year on risk assessment and communication in the field of food safety. In 2021, the training will take place in digital form as the "BfR-Summer Academy: Lecture Series". Live lectures will be held and Q&A sessions will be offered to enable interaction between participants and lecturers during this week-long event.

Registration and further information at: [www.bfr-akademie.de](http://www.bfr-akademie.de)



**Tour of the MEAL Study kitchen**

Experience the BfR MEAL Study up close – this is possible thanks to the new virtual tour through the study rooms. Those who are interested can embark upon a journey of discovery by clicking the mouse and take a virtual look around in a 360° tour of the study kitchen, the receiving area, the homogenisation room or with the buyers in the BfR's group of buildings. Using the brief videos, info graphics and images, find out why the team is buying around 60,000 foods, preparing them and analysing them for almost 300 substances as part of the BfR MEAL Study.

More information: [www.bfr-meal-studie.de](http://www.bfr-meal-studie.de)

