15 May 2025

Working together for safe food
Sixth meeting of international food safety authorities

The 6th meeting of the International Heads of Food Agencies Forum (IHFAF) on 'Digital Innovation in Global Trade' took place from 7 to 10 April in Santiago de Chile. The IHFAF is an informal association of the heads of 20 international food safety authorities. The meeting focussed on discussing current challenges and further opportunities for cooperation in the field of global food safety. The participants from all partner authorities also exchanged views bilaterally on intensifying their cooperation.

This year, the 6th IHFAF focussed on innovation and digital transformation in food safety. For example, the question of how digital technologies can help to develop more efficient and tenacity food control systems was discussed. There was also an exchange of views on how IHFAF members and observer countries can gain access to these topics in order to improve food production and safety and promote sustainable and fairer development.

As part of the IHFAF, the President of the BfR, Professor Hensel, also met numerous co-operation partners. These included experts from the food safety authorities in the United Kingdom (Food Standards Agency, FSA), Scotland (Food Standards Scotland, FSS), Singapore (Singapore Food Agency, SFA), Chile (Chilean Agency for Food Safety and Quality, ACHIPIA) and Portugal (Economic and Food Safety Authority, ASAE). Bilateral discussions were held on current cooperation and best practices between the countries.
Discussions were also held with potential cooperation partners. These included the Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ), the authority responsible for food safety in Australia and New Zealand, and the Saudi Food and Drug Authority (SFDA) in Saudi Arabia. During the talks, topics for potential cooperation were finalised.

The BfR has been a member of the IHFAF since 2023. Together with the Federal Office of Consumer Protection and Food Safety (BVL), they form the German delegation. In addition to the continuous exchange of information, the aim of the forum is to evaluate how new challenges can be overcome and resources utilised jointly.

About the International Heads of Food Agencies Forum (IHFAF)

The IHFAF is a network of high-level representatives of international food safety authorities founded in 2020 by SFDA (Saudi Arabia), FSAI (Ireland) and FSANZ (Australia/New Zealand). In 2024, the forum was hosted by the Singapore Food Safety Authority (SFA). The next meeting will take place in New Zealand in 2026.

Further information on the BfR website about co-operations

A-Z Index Co-operations
https://www.bfr.bund.de/de/a-z_index/kooperationen-6925.html

About the co-operations of the BfR
https://www.bfr.bund.de/en/co_operation-10337.html

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 (BMLEH) 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.

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