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

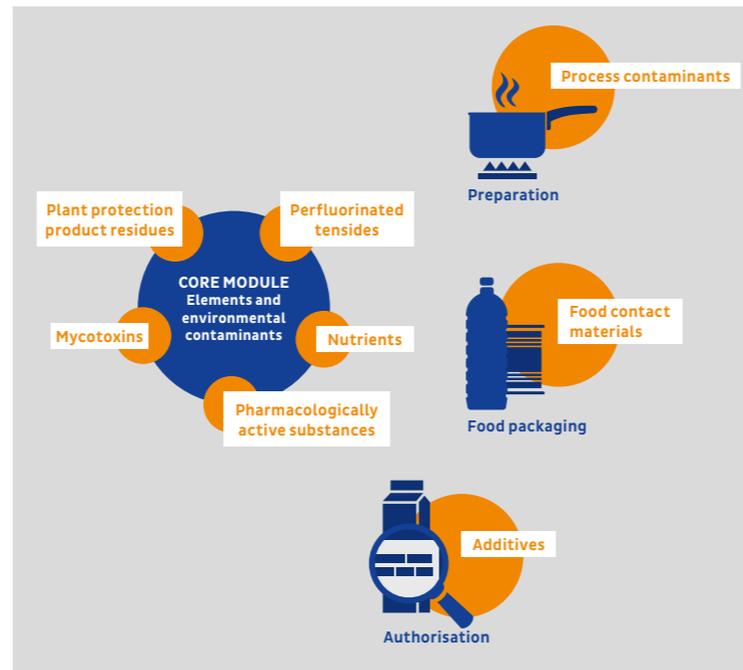
Modular structure of the BfR MEAL Study

One of the central objectives of the BfR MEAL Study is to generate concentration data that are representative for the diet of the German population. To this end, the foods consumed in Germany are categorised into food groups.

For each group, scientists create a representative pool from samples of the prepared foods. In this way, from around 60,000 sub-samples 4,000 pooled samples will be created in the next few years. The pools in the core module will be tested for certain substance groups, including heavy metals and dioxins. Some of these pools and additional foods will be further analysed in substance-specific modules in order to determine the presence of process contaminants or additives, for example.

The modular structure of the BfR MEAL Study enables us to take an in-depth look at the specific characteristics of the various substance groups and to address a wide range of relevant questions.

Modular structure of the BfR MEAL Study



Advisory board and expert groups are supervising the BfR MEAL Study

International scientific advisory board

An international scientific board is advising and supervising the first Total Diet Study in Germany. Thereby, an effective network between the BfR and important partners from other departmental research institutions, the government ministries (Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture (BMEL) and Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Reactor Safety (BMUB)) as well as institutions of the federal states, the *Laender* is ensured. The BfR is also being advised by experts for TDS of international repute.

Expert groups

The modules are supervised not only by the advisory board but also by groups of national experts, who support the planning of the modules and are involved in the discussion of the results.

Cooperations

Cooperation opportunities

Total Diet Studies offer the opportunity to address issues that are not covered by the BfR MEAL Study or which are not part of the remit of the BfR. For this reason, the BfR will support externally funded projects by providing access to the expertise and infrastructure of the BfR MEAL Study. Possible points of reference for partners in the federal *Laender*, the scientific field or associations include:

- Analysis of substances in stored samples that have not previously been considered in the study
- Analysis of regional hotspots
- Detailed investigation of specific food groups

BfR MEAL Study

First Total Diet Study in Germany



The BfR MEAL Study

(Mahlzeiten für die Expositionsschätzung und Analytik von Lebensmitteln – “meals for exposure assessment and analysis of foods”)

The BfR MEAL Study is the first-ever systematic and representative analysis of prepared ready-to-eat food in Germany.

The first Total Diet Study in Germany

The BfR MEAL Study is a so-called “Total Diet Study” (TDS). TDS is a method recommended by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO) for the estimation of the mean levels of substances in the average human diet. The investigated substances include both substances that are beneficial to health and potentially harmful. In combination with information from consumption studies for estimating the intake of foods by consumers, the TDS makes it possible to reach a reliable and detailed determination of the average overall intake quantities of substances via foods.

Commissioned by the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture (BMEL)

The Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR) was commissioned by the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture (BMEL) to conduct the first TDS for Germany starting in 2015. Over a period of seven years, the BfR shall receive a budget of around 13 million euros to conduct the study.

An effective instrument for consumer health protection

The aim of the BfR MEAL Study is to better identify the potential risks of foods for the German population. The first results are expected in early 2019.



The three basic principles of a TDS

1. Consideration of the full range of foods

Existing consumption studies are used to identify foods that are representative for the consumption habits of Germans. This ensures that a TDS covers more than 90 percent of the foods consumed by the population. In individual cases, foods with low substance contamination are also included, as low concentrations can also make a relevant contribution to intake amounts if high quantities of the foods in question are consumed.

2. Processed foods

Prior to analysis, the foods are prepared in the same way they are typically prepared in private households before being consumed. This ensures appropriate documentation of substances that are formed, destroyed or introduced during preparation – such as process contaminants, nutrients or other elements.

3. Pool samples for average concentrations

In order to establish the average levels of the investigated substances for each food, the foods are “pooled”. This means that multiple samples – for example from different varieties of the food in question, different regions or different production methods – are grouped together to form a representative sample, which is then analysed.

The BfR MEAL Study: What’s in your food

