

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

A better understanding of food crises

In 2021, the German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR) and its Belgian sister institution Sciensano signed a declaration of intent to collaborate. The research institutions will in the future cooperate more closely in the area of food safety and applied genomics. The focus is on the exchange of knowledge and on the further development of methods to provide information on the outbreak of food crises particularly those caused by micro-organisms.

**Working together to increase food safety in Latin and Central America**

In October, the BfR, together with the Chilean Food Safety and Quality Authority and international cooperation partners, organised the 2nd 'Latin American and Caribbean Risk Assessment Symposium' (LARAS). Some 500 experts from the fields of science, politics and industry came together virtually at each of four meetings and

shared views on the current topics of food safety at the regional and international level. The symposium also provided a forum for networking between key actors in the field of food safety and so made a major contribution to the developing structures of food safety in Latin and Central America.

Perception of microplastics

What do you think: Are microplastics harmful to human health? How can they get into food and drinks? Together with the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) and the University of Vienna, the BfR is investigating the risk perception of microplastics in Germany and Italy. Using population-wide surveys – with regard to the environment and health – the risk perception and risk appraisal of microplastics are measured, along with general aspects of the topic. A comparative analysis of the data will subsequently be conducted. The results are expected in summer 2022

Securing high-quality animal products

As part of the EU-funded INTAQT project, the BfR together with the institutions from a total of ten European countries will investigate the quality of animal products from various production systems. Possibilities to improve these production systems will also be researched in order to improve product quality and the sustainability of production. All stakeholders in food production, including farms, consumers and certification bodies, are involved in the work. The project kicked off in the summer of 2021.

INTERNAL AFFAIRS

**Award-winning**

BfR scientist Dr. Anissa Scholtzek of the Biological Safety department has been awarded the sponsorship prize of the Wirtschaftsgenossenschaft Deutscher Tierärzte (WDT) for her dissertation on specific antibiotic resistances in *S. aureus*. With the award, the association recognises Scholtzek's research in the field of antibiotic resistance of bac-

terial pathogens. The results are evidence that new resistance mechanisms are constantly developing. These can impede correct diagnosis, and require particular attention.

New members of the BfR Scientific Advisory Board

The Scientific Advisory Board of the BfR has been reconstituted for the 2021 to 2025 term of office. In addition to the 11 members of the previous advisory board, six new professors have been strengthening the scientific expertise of the board since October 2021. The board thus comprises a total of 17 experts from different fields and disciplines, including food chemistry, hygiene and analysis, nutrition, toxicology and epidemiology, as well as psychology, communication sciences, statistics and animal welfare. They advise the BfR on the strategic development of medium and long-term goals in the technical and scientific field as well as on setting priorities for its research and establishing collaborative partnerships.

More Information www.bfr.bund.de/en > The Institute > Scientific Advisory Board

PUBLICATIONS

**Who does what in Europe?**

How is food and feed safety organised in Europe? What institutions are there in the various countries? The 5th edition of the BfR 'EU Food Safety Almanac' brochure has been published and provides an up-to-date overview of the responsibilities of the key players in 37 European countries. Each country chapter contains an overview of the responsible institutions as well as a detailed description of their legal bases, tasks and activities. The EU Almanac is published in English as a start, and can be ordered and downloaded free of charge on the BfR website.

More Information: www.bfr.bund.de/en > Publications > Brochures