

Press release

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Together for Safe Food: BfR and SFA sign cooperation agreement

Joint Press Release by BfR and SFA

Every day, food is produced, packaged, and shipped to end up on consumers' plates. Whether these are novel foods or your favourite spread, they all have to be safe. This starts with the production process and extends to the ingredients and packaging. The Singapore Food Agency (SFA) and the German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR) will enhance cooperation in the area of emerging scientific developments in food safety. The signing of a Joint Declaration of Intent (JDI) on Cooperation in Food Safety today reflects a commitment to advance the collaboration in research and risk assessment.

“The topic of food safety is constantly growing and evolving. For us, this means that our research must also continuously expand and improve. We are delighted that we will now be tackling this challenge together with the National Centre for Food Science in Singapore Food Agency and will benefit from each other's expertise,” says Professor Dr Tanja Schwerdtle, Vice President of the BfR.

“Both the German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment and Singapore Food Agency share an understanding that food safety is an important field to strengthen cooperation in. We are optimistic that this collaboration can help to strengthen food safety science and risk assessment in both countries,” says Dr Tan Lee Kim, SFA's Director-General (Food Administration) and Deputy Chief Executive Officer.

The year 2023 saw strategic and technical meetings between experts from SFA and the BfR. Prof. Dr Tanja Schwerdtle has travelled to Singapore from 15 to 19 April 2024 as part of the global network meeting "International Heads of Food Agencies Forums" (IHFAF) to sign the JDI with Dr Tan Lee Kim. The IHFAF was established in 2020 and forms an informal association of the heads of international food safety authorities. Its objectives include the continuous exchange of information and assessment of dealing with new challenges and sharing of resources. As part of her itinerary, Prof. Dr Tanja Schwerdtle will also visit SFA's National Centre for Food Science to observe its food safety capabilities. With the signing of the JDI, a multi-year work plan was also defined, which envisages cooperation in various subject areas. SFA and BfR want to work together to close research and data gaps. The cooperation will ensure a continuous exchange of knowledge, which will lead to progress and innovation in food safety science research.

The signing will be followed by scientific exchange between BfR and SFA scientists, during which joint projects will be discussed, including the safety of alternative proteins, emerging environmental contaminants affecting food supply, food contact materials and genetically modified food. The exchange will be rounded off with a joint symposium on 19 April 2024. The culmination of these concerted efforts marks the commencement of this collaborative venture between SFA and BfR in the realm of food safety science.

About the BfR

The German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR) is a scientifically independent institution within the portfolio of the Federal Ministry for Nutrition and Agriculture (BMEL). It advises the Federal Government and the German federal states ("Laender") on issues of food, chemical and product safety. The BfR conducts its own research on topics that are closely related to its assessment tasks.

About the SFA

The mission of the Singapore Food Agency (SFA) is to ensure and secure a supply of safe food. To safeguard Singapore's food security, SFA adopts a multi-pronged approach which includes diversifying food import sources and increasing local food production. To ensure that food in Singapore is safe for consumption, SFA has in place an integrated farm-to-fork food safety system which adopts a risk-based approach guided by science and aligned with international standards. As food safety and security is a joint responsibility, SFA provides an enabling environment that supports all stakeholders to play their part. For more information on SFA, visit www.sfa.gov.sg.

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

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