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Risk assessment of chemicals in food and feed: An international endeavour BfR organises conference of ILMERAC organisations

Whether in Germany, the USA or Singapore – risk assessment of chemicals in food and feed plays a crucial role in consumer health protection worldwide. But what are the different methods in this space? How can we achieve more coherence and global harmonisation for these methods?

The International Liaison Group on Methods for Risk Assessment of Chemicals in Food and Feed (ILMERAC) is looking into these questions and met under the chairmanship of the Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR) in Berlin on 2 December 2024. Around 50 representatives of member and observer organisations from all over the world took part in the conference to sharpen scientific priorities and plan future activities, among other things.

The 17th ILMERAC conference was characterised by the expansion of the network. The participating representatives voted in favour of including the Swiss Centre for Applied Human Toxicology (SCAHT) and the UK Food Safety Authority (FSA) in the network. In addition, the organisations developed new working groups in the areas of PFAS, mixture toxicity and evidence-based risk assessment and also decided to place the scientific focus on risk assessment methods in animal feed for 2025.

This was followed by contributions on the role of social science in risk assessment of chemicals in food and feed and on the use of new approach methodologies (NAMs) in risk assessment. The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) also made a proposal for a qualification system for NAMs in the food and feed sector as part of its NAMS4NANO project. This was followed by updates on other international projects such as the European Partnership for the Assessment of Risk from Chemicals (PARC).

ILMERAC is a network of over 30 governmental and intergovernmental organisations active in the field of food and feed safety worldwide. The network was founded in 2018 by EFSA. The aim of ILMERAC is to support the development of new methods for risk assessment of

chemicals in food and feed while improving the coherence and global harmonisation of the methods used for risk assessment. The network creates synergies between participating institutions and provides an exchange platform for new developments in the field of risk assessment of chemicals.

Since January 2024, the scientific secretariat has been chaired by the BfR, where it will initially run until 2026. Participating international organisations include the World Health Organisation (WHO), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO). However, national organisations such as the French Food Safety Authority (ANSES) and the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) are also active members of the network.

Further information on the BfR website on ILMERAC

International Liaison Group on Methods for Risk Assessment of Chemicals in Food and Feed (ILMERAC)

https://www.bfr.bund.de/en/international_liaison_group_on_methods_for_risk_assessment_of_chemicals_in_food_and_feed_ilmerac_-316908.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 (BMEL) 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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