

FDA, EFSA sign food safety science pact

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The U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the European Food Safety Authority have signed the first U.S.-European agreement to assess food safety risks.

Officials said the pact is the first formal international cooperation agreement the EFSA has signed and the first formal step in cooperation between the two organizations.

"Food safety knows no national boundaries and the food chain is today truly a global one," said Catherine Geslain-Laneelle, EFSA's executive director. "We need to work with the best scientific minds from across the world and extend scientific co-operation to assess food safety risks and protect consumers even more. Sharing data and knowledge across our two organizations is an important first step in achieving this goal."

Dr. Andrew C. von Eschenbach, the FDA's commissioner, said scientific cooperation is vital for the success of the FDA's mission.

The agreement signed Monday is designed to facilitate sharing of confidential scientific and other information between the two agencies, such as methodologies to ensure that food is safe. The agreement ensures protection of such confidential information under the applicable legal frameworks in both the United States and the European Union.

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