The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) today signed the first U.S./European agreement in the area of assessing food safety risk. This is the first formal international cooperation agreement EFSA has signed and the first formal step in cooperation between the two bodies.

“I am delighted to be signing this agreement today with the FDA. Food safety knows no national boundaries and the food chain is today truly a global one,” said Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle, 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.”

“As a science-based and science-led agency, FDA recognizes that scientific cooperation is vital for the success of its mission, which is to provide the best possible health protection for the public,” said Andrew C. von Eschenbach, M.D., Commissioner, Food and Drugs. “I welcome this opportunity for scientific exchanges with our European colleagues exchanges that will be focused on ensuring the safety and wholesomeness of food, a major area of responsibility of our agency.”

Today’s agreement is designed to facilitate the sharing of confidential scientific and other information between EFSA and the FDA, such as methodologies to ensure that food is safe. A formal agreement ensures appropriate protection of such confidential information under the applicable legal frameworks in both the United States and the European Union. Informal cooperation and dialogue have already been established between the two bodies; this agreement will enable these to be formalized and extended.