The central legal foundation for food legislation in Germany is the Food and Feed Code (Lebensmittel- und Futtermittelgesetzbuch), and the legislative responsibilities lie almost exclusively with the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture (BMEL) and its subordinate authorities. Infringement of food regulations can lead to measures under criminal law and consumer damage claims under civil law, whereby the final decision rests with the courts. Government measures with regard to food safety are generally based on scientific risk assessments.

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