



The cover illustration shows a simplified model of *Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*), a bacterium that is commonly found in the intestines of humans and animals – see page 8 for details. Although most strains of *E. coli* are harmless, some can cause serious food poisoning, such as the enterohaemorrhagic *E. coli* (EHEC) strain. In 2011 this strain killed 50 people in Germany alone.

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A SPECIAL KIND OF NOAH'S ARK

A plethora of different microorganisms living inside us affect our health. Page 8

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TWO BIF TRUSTEES HONOURED

Two members of BIF's Board of Trustees have received prestigious awards. Page 37

FELLOWSHIPS The Board of Trustees of the Boehringer Ingelheim Fonds includes six renowned scientists, the speaker of the Board of Managing Directors of the company Boehringer Ingelheim and, as a permanent guest, a representative of the German Research Foundation (DFG). Their expert judgment characterizes the work of our foundation. The trustees meet three times a year to decide on the allocation of fellowships. In November 2011, they met in Lisbon, Portugal, to discuss the 39 applications selected from the 182 submissions to the secretariat. The limited funding available meant that a number of excellent applications had to be turned down. In the end, 15 applications were approved and 14 fellowships were taken up.

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THE FOUNDATION The Boehringer Ingelheim Fonds (BIF) is a public foundation – an independent, non-profit institution for the exclusive and direct promotion of basic research in biomedicine. The foundation pays particular attention to fostering junior scientists. From the start it has provided its fellowship holders with more than just monthly bank transfers: seminars, events and personal support have nurtured the development of a worldwide network of current and former fellows.

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