Food Safety Report for August 2009

Centre for Food Safety

Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

October 2009

食物環境衞生署
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

食物安全中心
Centre for Food Safety

Introduction

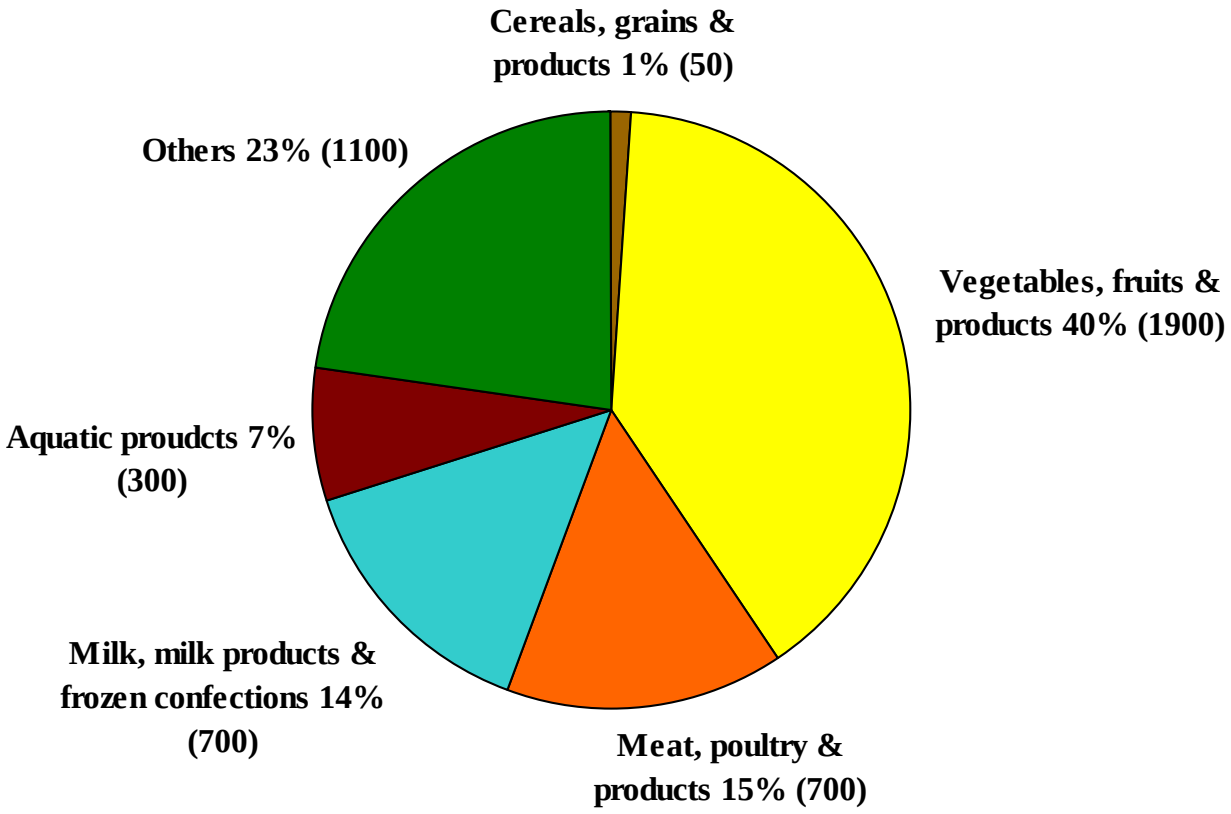
- The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) adopts the three-tier food surveillance approach, i.e., routine food surveillance, targeted food surveillance and seasonal food surveillance to collect samples at import, wholesale and retail levels for chemical and microbiological tests.

- CFS releases the “Food Safety Report” every month so as to allow the public to obtain the latest food safety information more timely. Besides, CFS has released the results of a seasonal project on “Mooncake” recently.

- This presentation gives an account of the food surveillance sample analyses that were completed in August 2009.

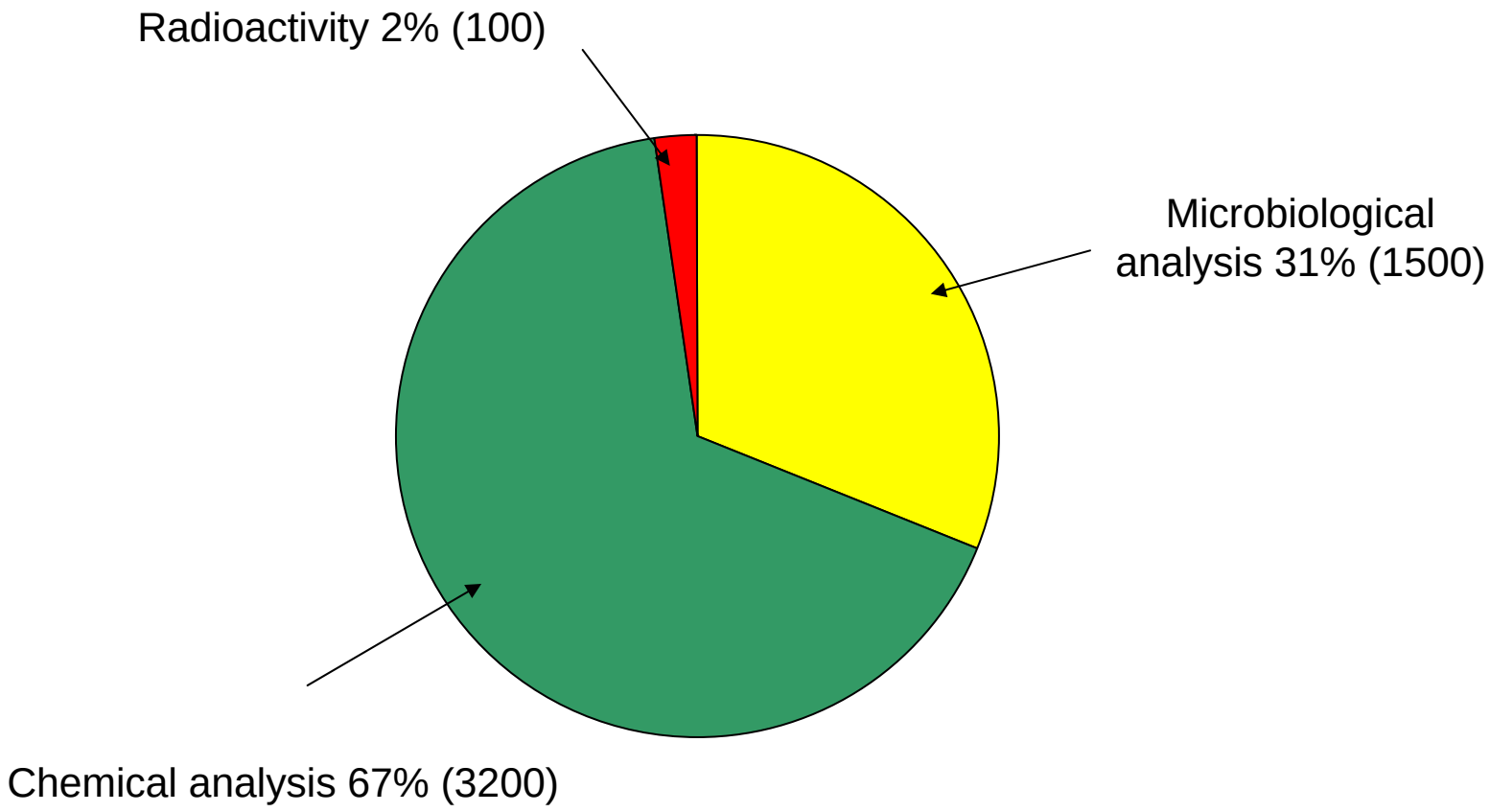
Types of food tested

- About 4800 food samples of various food groups were tested.



N.B.: Figures may not add up to total due to rounding.

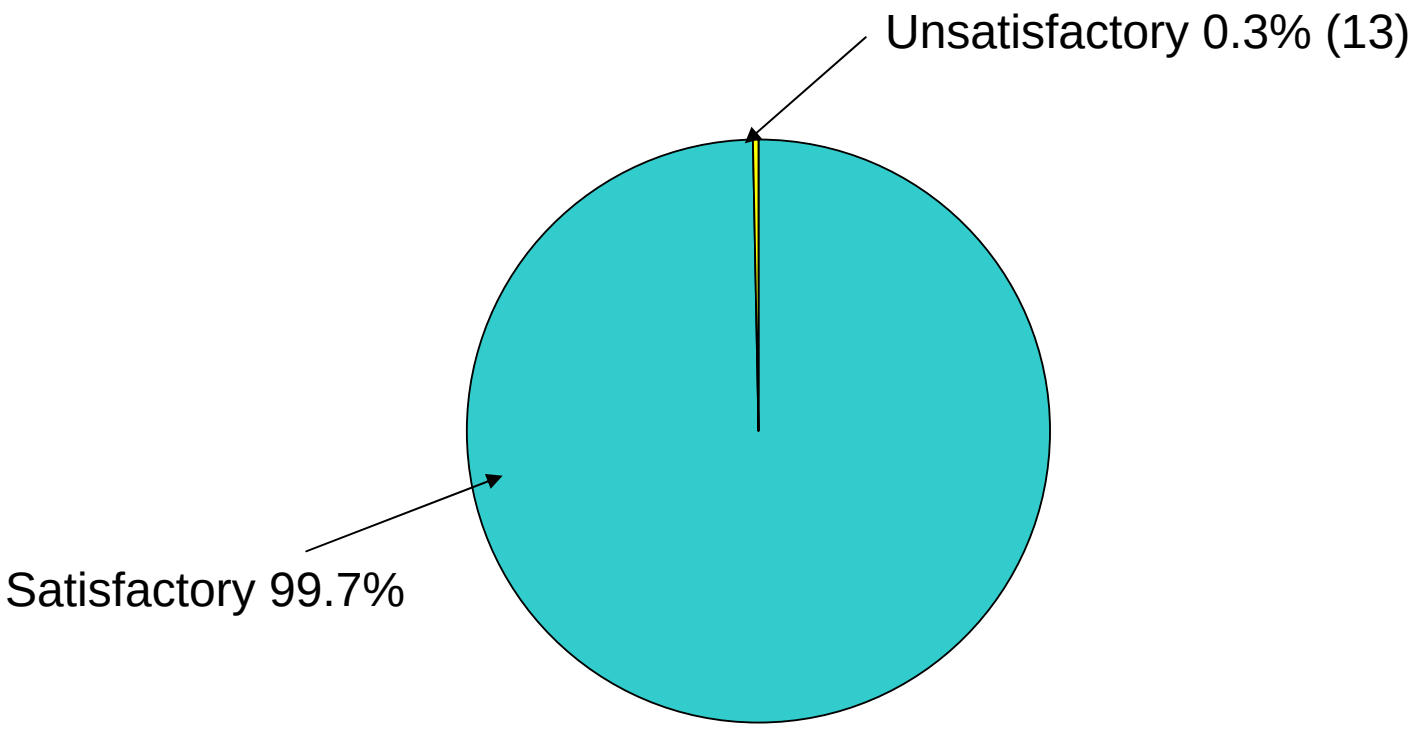
Types of testing



N.B.: Figures in brackets are rounded

Overall results

- Total 13 unsatisfactory samples. The overall satisfactory rate was 99.7%.



Unsatisfactory samples

- 13 unsatisfactory food samples are as follows:

Food Group	*No. of Samples Tested*	*No. of Unsatisfactory Samples*
Vegetables, fruits & products	1900	1
Meat, poultry & products	700	6
Aquatic products	300	3
Milk, milk products & frozen confections	700	0
Cereal, grains and products	50	0
Others	1100	3
Total	***4800***	***13***

N.B.: Figures may not add up to total due to rounding.

1. Vegetables, fruits & products

- About 1900 samples were collected. They included fresh vegetables, fruits and legumes, preserved vegetables and pickled fruits, dried vegetables and ready-to-eat vegetables, etc.
- Analyses included:
  - Microbiological tests
  - Chemical tests such as:
    - Pesticides (e.g., methamidophos, isocarbophos, DDT, HCH)
    - Preservatives (included sulphur dioxide, sorbic acid and benzoic acid)
    - Metallic contamination
    - Colouring matters



- Overall satisfactory rate was 99.9 %, with 1 unsatisfactory sample in this report.

1. Vegetables, fruits & products (Cont'd)

Pesticides

- 1 unsatisfactory sample:

Sample	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
Chinese lettuce	Methamidophos	2.4 ppm [1]

[1] The detected level is low. It is unlikely to pose adverse effect on consumers upon consumption of the concerned sample.

1. Vegetables, fruits & products (Cont'd)

Other tests

- The remaining samples for other tests (e.g., pathogens, metallic contamination, preservatives and colouring matters) were satisfactory.

2. Meat, poultry & products

- About 700 samples were collected. They included fresh, chilled and frozen pork, beef and poultry, ready-to-eat dishes of meat and poultry served at food premises, the meat and poultry made products such as sausage and ham, etc.

- Analyses included :
  - Microbiological tests
  - Chemical tests (e.g. preservatives, veterinary drug residues and colouring matters, etc)

- Overall satisfactory rate was 99.2%, with 6 unsatisfactory samples in this report.





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2. Meat, poultry & products (Cont'd)

Preservatives

- 5 unsatisfactory samples:

Sample	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
Fresh beef	Sulphur dioxide	36-390 ppm (1)

(1) Sulphur dioxide is not permitted in fresh (including chilled and frozen) meat. On the other hand, it is permitted in foods such as pickled fruits and juices. It is of low toxicity and should not pose significant health effect on consumers. For individuals who are allergic to this preservative, there may be symptoms of breathing difficulty, headache and nausea. Since it is water soluble, most of it can be removed through washing and cooking.

2. Meat, poultry & products (Cont'd)

Pathogens

- 1 unsatisfactory sample:

Sample	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
Ready-to-eat wined chicken	*Salmonella*	Detected (1)

(1) *Salmonella* may cause gastrointestinal upset such as vomiting, abdominal pain and diarrhoea.

2. Meat, poultry & products (Cont'd)

Other tests

- Samples for other tests (e.g., veterinary drug residues and colouring matters) were satisfactory.

3. Aquatic products

- About 300 samples were collected. They generally cover fish, shellfish, shrimp/prawn, crab, squid and their products.

- Analyses included:
  - Microbiological tests (pathogens)
  - Chemical tests (e.g. veterinary drug residues, biotoxins, metallic contamination and preservatives)

- Overall satisfactory rate was 99.1 %, with 3 unsatisfactory samples in this report.




3. Aquatic products (Cont'd)

Veterinary drug residues

- 3 unsatisfactory samples:

Sample	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
1 frozen shrimp	AOZ	0.0022 ppm (1)
1 chilled thread fin	AOZ	0.0071 ppm (1)
1 chilled thread fin	Malachite green	0.046 ppm (2)

(1) The detected levels were low. They are unlikely to pose adverse effects on consumers upon normal consumption.

(2) Not permitted in food. The detected level was low. It is unlikely to pose adverse effects on consumers upon normal consumption.

3. Aquatic products (Cont'd)

Other tests

- Samples for other tests (e.g., metallic contamination, pathogens, preservatives and biotoxins) were satisfactory.

4. Milk, milk products & frozen confections

- About 700 samples were tested. They included ice-cream, cheese, milk and milk products, etc.

- Analyses included:
  - Microbiological tests (total bacterial count, pathogens, e.g., *Salmonella* and *Listeria*)
  - Chemical tests (melamine, colouring matters and sweeteners)

- All samples were satisfactory.

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5. Cereal, grains and products

- About 50 samples which generally cover rice/noodles, flour, bread and breakfast cereal, etc.
- Analyses included microbiological and chemical tests such as:
  - pesticides
  - colouring matters
- All samples were satisfactory.




6. Other food commodities

- About 1100 samples were collected. Overall satisfactory rate was 99.7%, with 3 unsatisfactory samples in this report.
- Types of food included:

Mixed dishes ❑ Pathogens & colouring matters	Condiments and sauces ❑ Colouring matters & sweeteners
Dim Sum ❑ Pathogens & preservatives	Snacks ❑ Colouring matters
Beverages ❑ Preservatives & colouring matters	Eggs and egg products ❑ Colouring matters
Sushi and sashimi ❑ Microbiological examination	Others
Sugar and sweets ❑ Colouring matters	

6. Other food commodities (Cont'd)

Chemical analysis

- 1 unsatisfactory sample:

Sample	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
Chili sauce	Red 2G (Colouring matter)	Detected (1)

(1) Not permitted in food.

6. Other food commodities (Cont'd)

Microbiological analysis

- 2 unsatisfactory samples:

Sample	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
1 "Poon Choi"	*Bacillus cereus*	2.5×10^6 / g (1)
1 soup vermicelli with pork satay	*Bacillus cereus*	8.1×10^5 / g (1)

(1) *Bacillus cereus* may cause gastrointestinal upset such as vomiting, abdominal pain and diarrhoea.

Follow-up actions

- Trace source of food items in question
- Request vendors to stop sale and dispose of incriminated food items
- Issue warning letters to concerned vendors
- Take follow-up samples for analysis
- Take prosecution actions if there is sufficient evidence

Summary

- Most exceedances or breaches in this report were not serious.
- Summer is the peak season of food poisoning. The trade should always follow the “5 Keys to Food Safety” to prevent foodborne disease.
  - Choose - Choose safe raw materials
  - Clean - Keep hands and utensils clean
  - Separate - Separate raw and cooked food
  - Cook - Cook thoroughly
  - Safe Temperature - Keep food at safe temperature
- The food trade should comply with the legal requirements and follow “good manufacturing practice” (GMP). They should use permitted food additives only in an appropriate manner.
- The consumers should patronize reliable premises for buying food. They should maintain balanced diet to minimize food risk.