Food Safety Report for August 2012

Centre for Food Safety
Food and Environmental
Hygiene Department

September 2012

食物環境衞生署
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

食物安全中心
Centre for Food Safety

Introduction

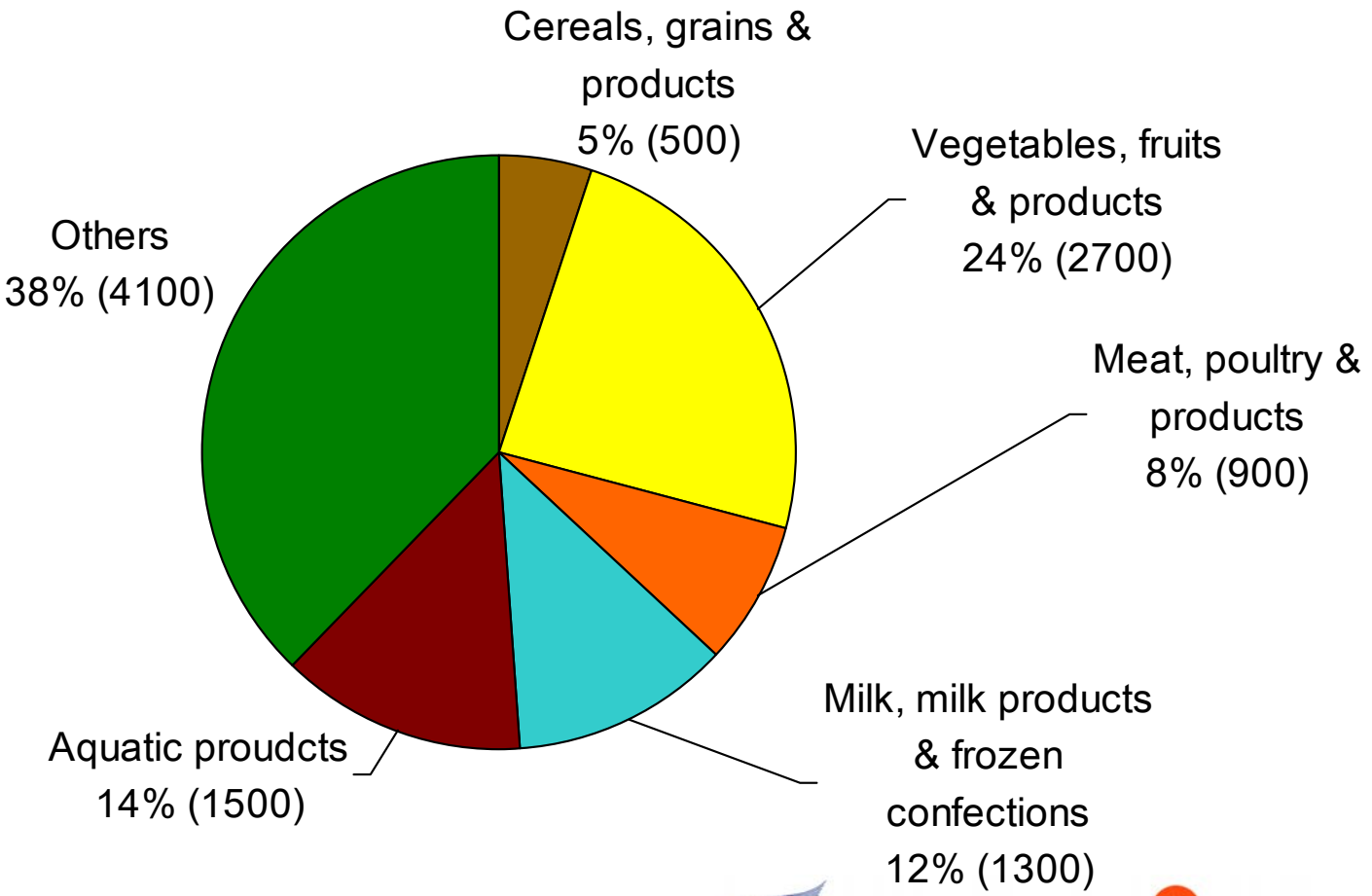
- The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) adopts the three-tier food surveillance approach, i.e. routine food surveillance, targeted food surveillance and seasonal food surveillance to collect samples at import, wholesale and retail levels for microbiological, chemical and radiological tests.

- CFS releases the “Food Safety Report” every month so as to allow the public to obtain the latest food safety information timely.

- This presentation gives an account of the food surveillance sample result analyses in August 2012.

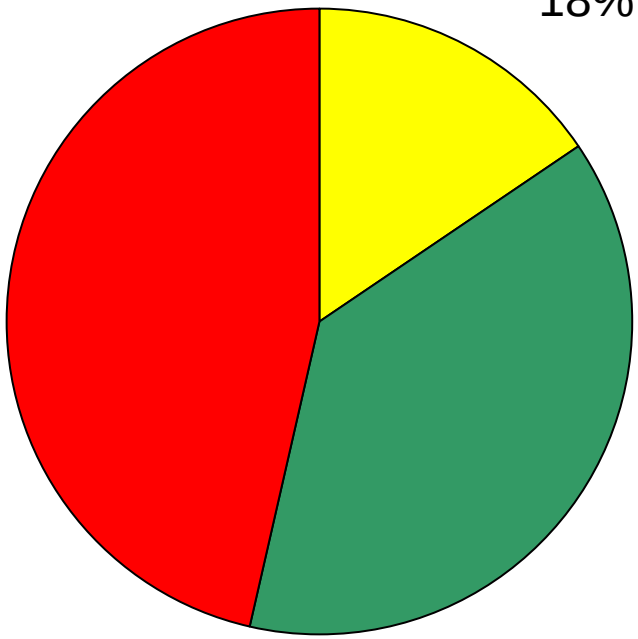
Types of food tested

- About 11000 food samples of various food groups were tested.



N.B.: Figures in brackets are rounded and may not add up to total due to rounding.

Types of testing



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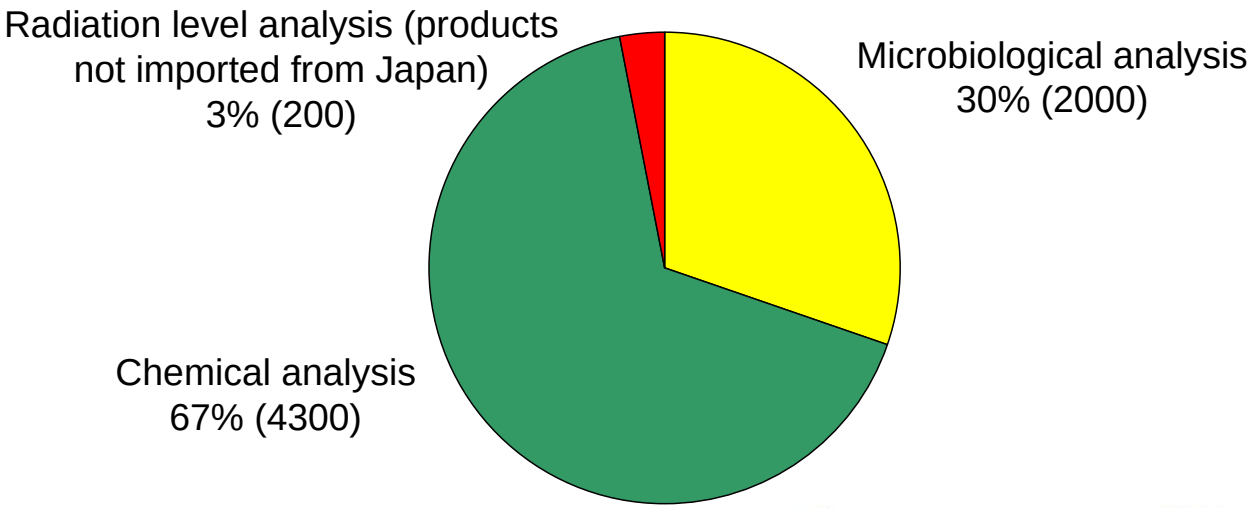
Types of testing (Cont'd)

- In response to the Fukushima nuclear power plant incident in Japan, CFS has stepped up surveillance of imported Japanese food for testing of radiation level from mid-March 2011. In August 2012, all the radiation level test results of about 4600 samples were satisfactory.

- Except that, types of testing for the remaining food surveillance samples are distributed as follows:



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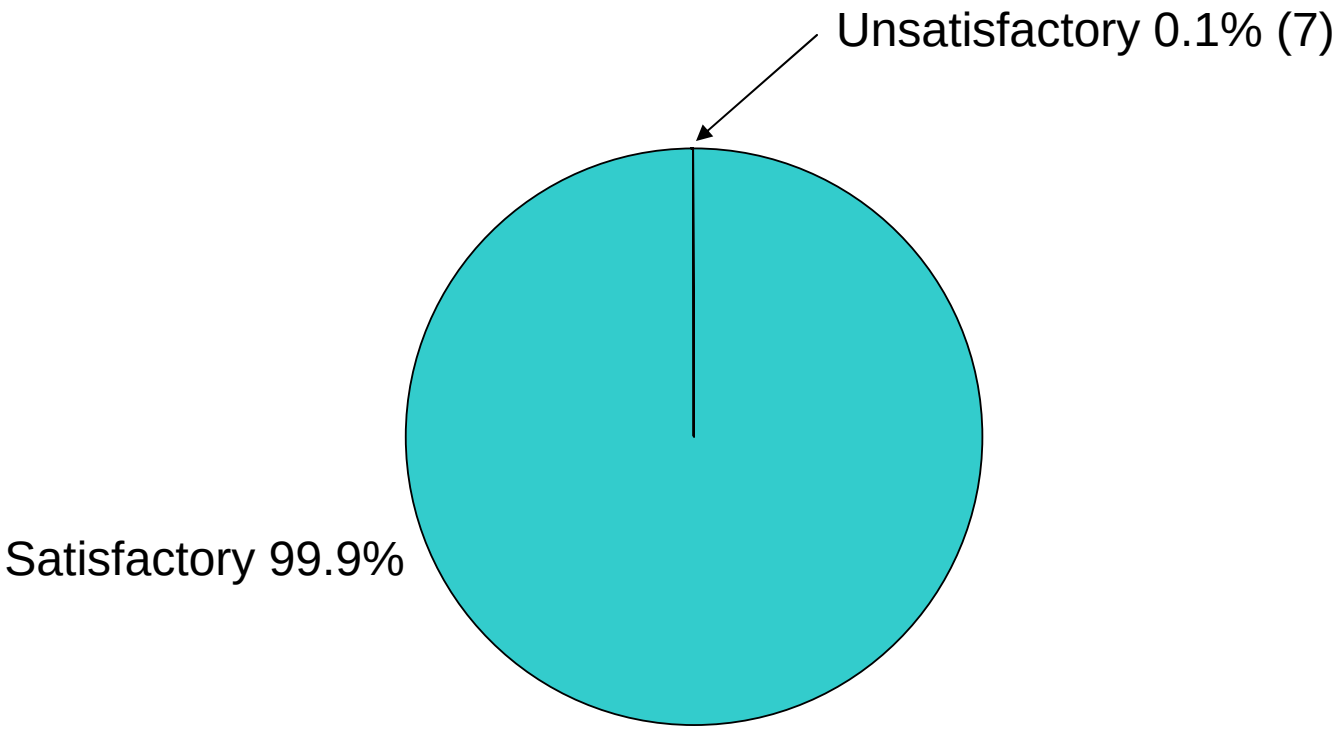
Overall results

- There were 7 unsatisfactory samples. Overall satisfactory rate was 99.9%.



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Unsatisfactory samples

- 7 unsatisfactory food samples included 1 previously announced result. The remaining 6unsatisfactory samples are as follows :

Food Group	*No. of Samples Tested*	*No. of Unsatisfactory Samples*
Vegetables, fruits & products	**2700**	**1**
Meat, poultry & products	**900**	**0**
Aquatic products	**1500**	**4**
Milk, milk products & frozen confections	**1300**	**1**
Cereal, grains & products	**500**	**0**
Others	**4100**	**0**
Total	**11000**	**6**

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

1. Vegetables, fruits & products

- About 2700 samples were collected. They included various kinds of fresh vegetables, fruits and legumes, preserved vegetables and pickled fruits, dried vegetables and ready-to-eat vegetables.



- Analysis included:
  - Microbiological tests
  - Chemical tests such as:
    - Pesticides (e.g. methamidophos, isocarbophos, DDT, HCH)
    - Metallic contamination
    - Preservatives
  - Radiation level tests

- Overall satisfactory rate was 99.96%, with 1 unsatisfactory sample in this report.

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

Preservatives:

- 1 unsatisfactory sample:

Sample	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
Longan	Sulphur dioxide	240 ppm (1)

(1) Exceeded the maximum legal limit of 50 ppm. It is of low toxicity and it is unlikely that it would pose any adverse health effect to consumers upon normal consumption. However, for individuals who are allergic to this preservative, there may be symptoms of breathing difficulty, headache and nausea.

Other tests

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

2. Meat, poultry & products

- About 900 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 Chinese preserved meat, sausage and ham.
- Analysis included:
  - Microbiological tests
  - Chemical tests (e.g. preservatives, veterinary drug residues and colouring matters)
  - Radiation level tests
- Overall satisfactory rate was 99.9%. Other than the 1 drunken chicken sample found to contain Salmonella announced earlier, remained samples for other tests were all satisfactory.





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3. Aquatic products

- About 1500 samples were collected. They generally covered fish, shellfish, shrimp/prawn, crab, squid and their products.

- Analysis included:
  - Microbiological tests
  - Chemical tests (e.g. preservatives, metallic contamination, toxins and veterinary drug residues)
  - Radiation level tests

- Overall satisfactory rate was 99.7%, with 4 unsatisfactory sample in this report.




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3. Aquatic products (Cont'd)

Chemical test

- 4 unsatisfactory samples:

Sample	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
1 swordfish sashimi	Mercury	1.17 ppm *(1)
1 frozen swordfish	Mercury	1.08 ppm *(1)
1 frozen shark fin edge	Mercury	1.03 ppm *(1)
1 frozen ling fish fillet	Mercury	1.38 ppm *(2)

* The level exceeded the legal limit (0.5 ppm).

- Upon normal consumption, it is unlikely to pose adverse health effect on consumers.
- Occasional consumption will not cause adverse health effect, but consumption on a long-term basis may affect the nervous system.

Other tests

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

4. Milk, milk products & frozen confections

- About 1300 samples were tested. They included ice-cream, cheese, milk and milk products.

- Analysis included:
  - Microbiological tests (total bacterial count, pathogens e.g. Salmonella and Staphylococcus aureus)
  - Chemical tests (e.g. melamine, preservatives, veterinary drug residues and colouring matters)
  - Radiation level tests

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




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4. Milk, milk products & frozen confections (Cont'd)

Preservatives:

- 1 unsatisfactory sample:

Sample	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
1 cheese	Sodium nitrite	24 ppm (1)

(1) Exceeded the upper legal limit of 10 ppm. Upon normal consumption, it is unlikely to pose adverse health effect on consumers.

Other tests

- Samples for other tests (e.g. pathogens, melamine, veterinary drugs and colouring matters) were satisfactory.

5. Cereal, grains and products

- About 500 samples included rice/noodles, flour, bread and breakfast cereal.

- Analysis included:
  - Microbiological tests
  - Chemical tests (e.g. preservatives, pathogens)
  - Radiation level tests

- All samples were satisfactory.




6. Other food commodities

- About 4100 food samples were collected. Types included:

Mixed dishes ▫ Pathogens and preservatives	Condiments and sauces ▫ Preservatives and colouring matters
Dim Sum ▫ Pathogens , preservatives and colouring matters	Snack ▫ Pathogens and colouring matters
Beverages ▫ Preservatives, colouring matters and metallic contamination	Eggs and egg products ▫ Colouring matters and melamine
Sushi and sashimi ▫ Microbiological tests	Others ▫ Plasticisers
Sugar and sweets ▫ Preservatives, colouring matters and metallic contamination	

- All samples were satisfactory.

Follow-up actions

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

Advice for trade

- Follow “good manufacturing practice” (GMP) and use permitted food additives in an appropriate manner.
- Maintain a good recording system in accordance with the Food Safety Ordinance to allow source tracing if needed.

Advice for consumers

- Purchase longan from reliable market stalls, fresh provision shops and food premises. Wash longan thoroughly and gently rub them under running water before eating. Avoid biting the husk of longan.

- Fish contain many essential nutrients, such as omega-3 fatty acids and high quality proteins. Moderate consumption of a variety of fish is recommended. Pregnant women, women planning pregnancy and young children are the susceptible groups being affected by mercury. When choosing food, they should avoid eating large predatory fish.

- Babies below 6 months of age should avoid processed food, like cheese and cured meats, with nitrates added as food additives

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