

Food Safety Report for August 2014

Centre for Food Safety
Food and Environmental
Hygiene Department



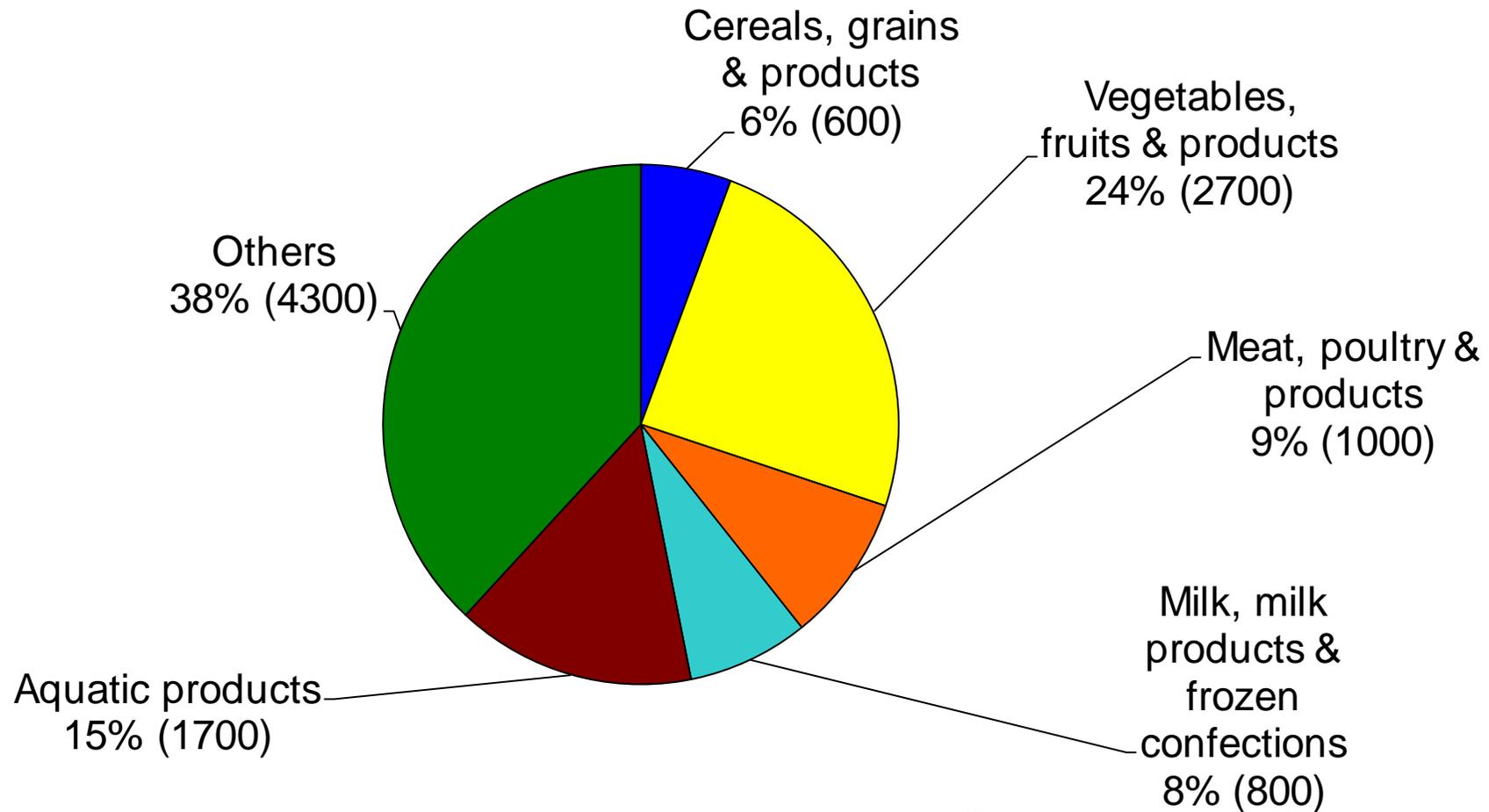
September 2014

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 2014.

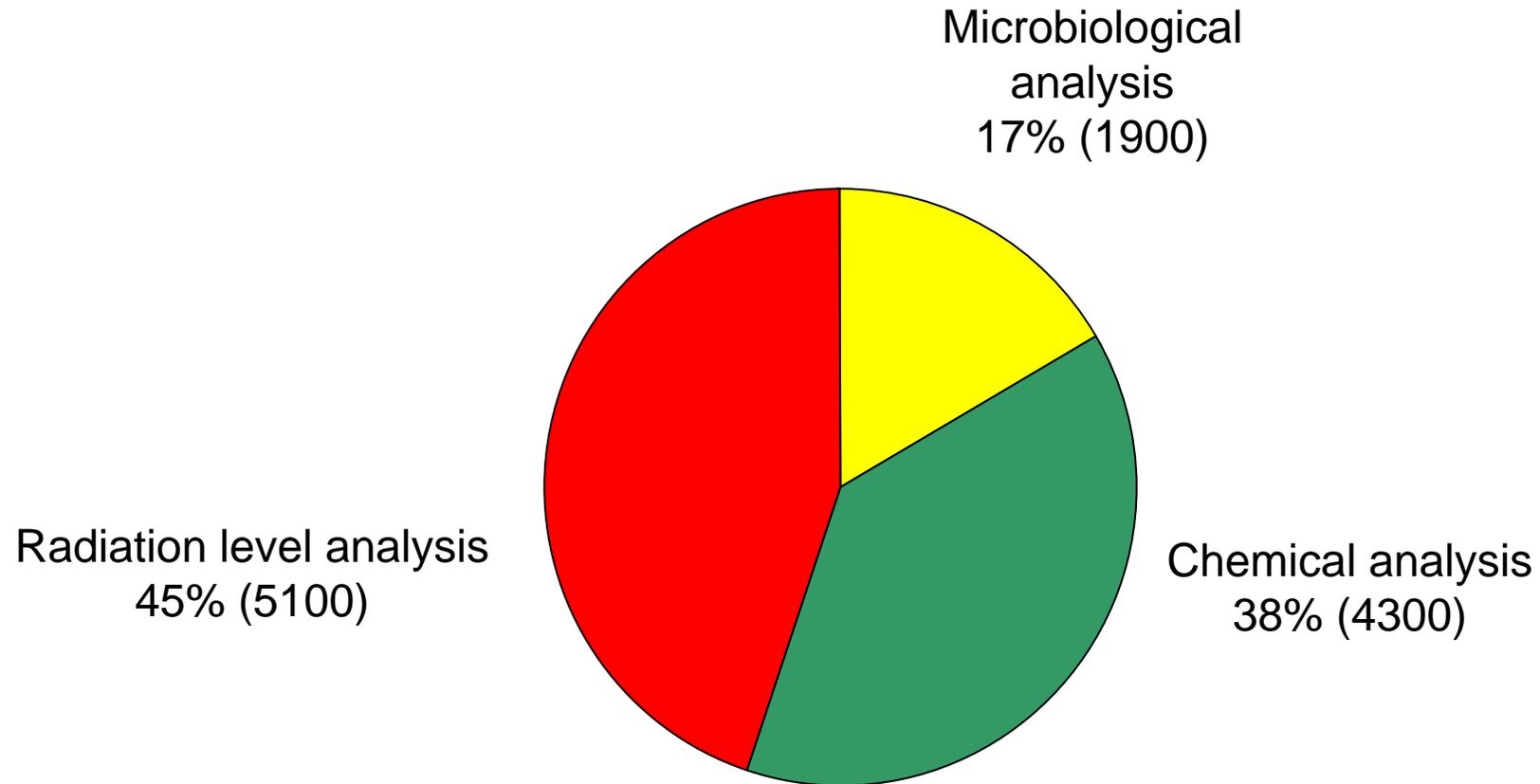
Types of food tested

- About 11200 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.

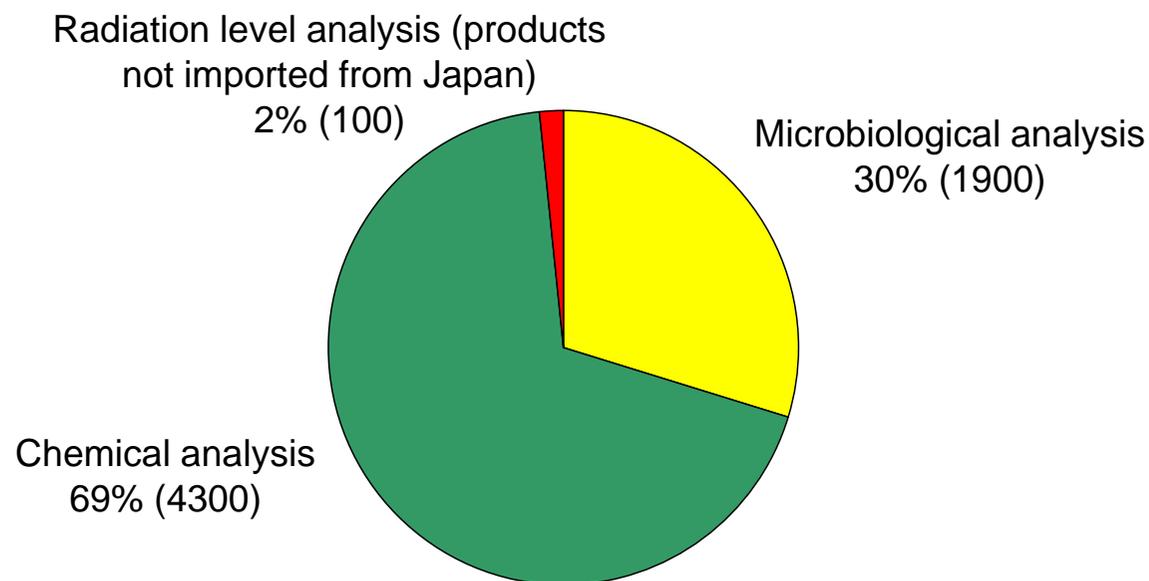
Types of testing



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Types of testing (Cont'd)

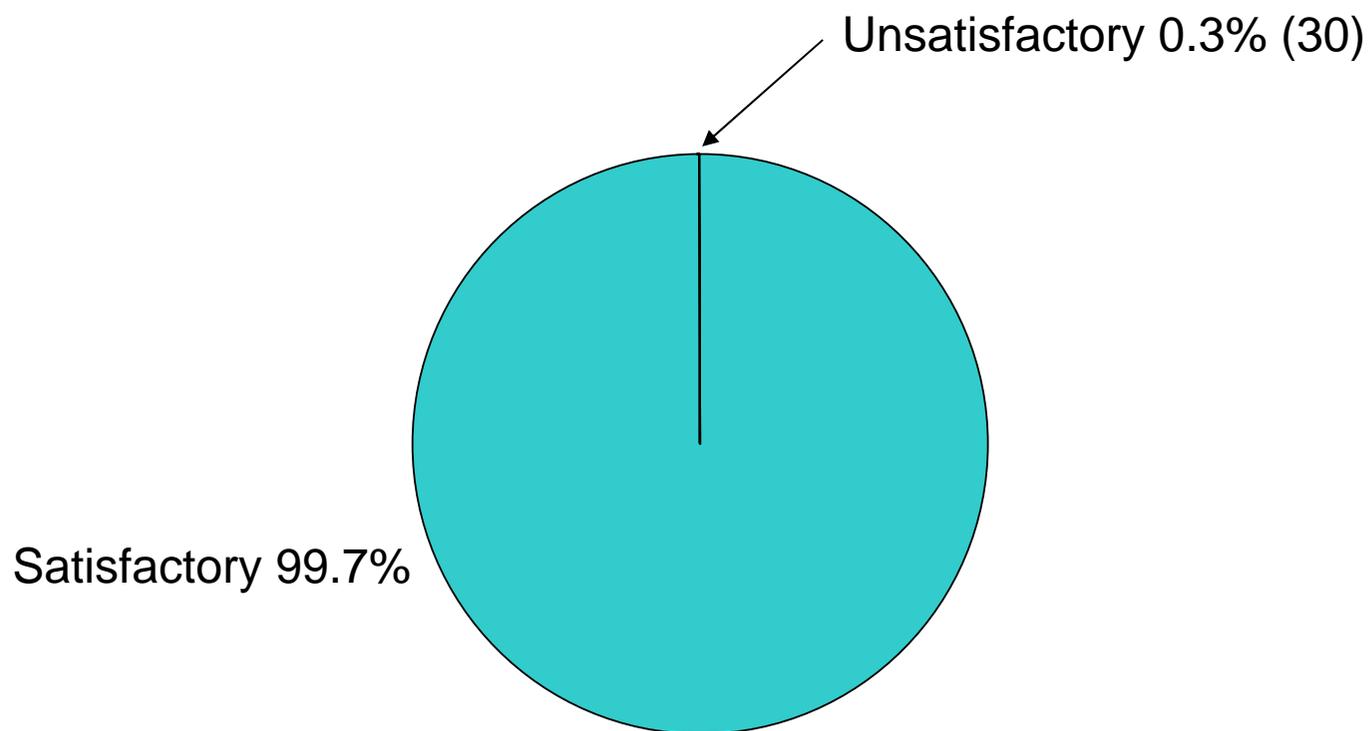
- In response to the Fukushima nuclear power plant incident in Japan, CFS has stepped up surveillance of imported Japanese food for testing of radiation level from mid-March 2011. In August 2014, all the radiation level test results of about 5000 samples were satisfactory.
- Except that, types of testing for the remaining food surveillance samples are distributed as follows:



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

Overall results

- There were 30 unsatisfactory samples. Overall satisfactory rate was 99.7%.



Unsatisfactory samples

Food Group	No. of Samples Tested	No. of Unsatisfactory Samples
Vegetables, fruits & products	2700	3
Meat, poultry & products	1000	2
Aquatic & related products	1700	4
Milk, milk products & frozen confections	800	17
Cereal, grains & products	600	0
Others	4300	4
Total	11200	30

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)
 - Metallic contamination
 - Preservatives
 - Radiation level tests
- Overall satisfactory rate was 99.9%. Other than 2 white string pods samples with levels of pesticide residues exceeded the legal limits and announced earlier in August, and a prepackaged preserved fruit sample with undeclared colouring matter and announced earlier in September, remaining samples were all satisfactory.



2. Meat, poultry & products

- About 1000 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 99.8%. Other than 2 fresh pork samples which were found to contain sulphur dioxide and announced earlier in August, remaining samples were all satisfactory.



3. Aquatic and related products

- About 1700 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 99.8%. Other than a fish fibers sample containing excessive mercury and a shrimp sashimi sample contaminated with pathogen announced earlier in August, two frozen sardine samples were also unsatisfactory.



3. Aquatic and related products (Cont'd)

Biotoxin

- 2 unsatisfactory sample:

Sample	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
Frozen Dried Sardine	Histamine	800ppm – 880ppm ⁽¹⁾

(1) The level exceeded the action level of 200 ppm set by the Codex Alimentarius Commission. Histamine can cause food poisoning. Symptoms include burning sensation around the mouth, facial flushing, sweating, nausea and headache. Symptoms usually begin within a few minutes to several hours following the ingestion of fish that contain high levels of histamine. But these symptoms will normally disappear in 12 hours.

Other tests

- Samples for other tests were satisfactory.

4. Milk, milk products & frozen confections

- About 800 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 98%. Other than 11 milk samples with composition not complied with the legal requirements, a milk product sample and 5 frozen confection samples with failed hygiene indicators and were announced earlier in August, remaining samples were all satisfactory.



5. Cereal, grains and products

- About 600 samples included rice/noodles, flour, bread and breakfast cereal.
- Analysis included:
 - Microbiological tests
 - Chemical tests (e.g. preservatives, pesticides and metallic contamination)
 - Radiation level tests
- All samples were satisfactory.



6. Other food commodities

- About 4300 food samples were collected. Types included:

Mixed dishes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pathogens and preservatives 	Condiments and sauces <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preservatives and colouring matters
Dim Sum <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pathogens and preservatives 	Snack <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pathogens, anti-oxidants and colouring matters
Beverages <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Microbiological tests, preservatives and colouring matters 	Eggs and egg products <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Colouring matters and melamine
Sushi and sashimi <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Microbiological tests 	Others <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plasticisers, preservatives and colouring matters, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons
Sugar and sweets <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preservatives, colouring matters and metallic contamination 	

- Overall satisfactory rate was 99.9%. Except for 4 beverage samples which were found to contain pathogen and announced earlier in August, remaining samples were satisfactory.

Follow-up actions

- Warned the trade concerned of the test results and instructed the trade concerned to stop sale of and to recall the incriminated food item.
- Traced source of food items in question.
- Take follow-up samples for analysis.
- Prosecution action will also be taken.

Advice for trade and consumers

- Certain fish, including those of the Scombroid family like tuna, mackerel, sardine and anchovy, contains the amino acid histidine naturally. When the fish are improperly stored, particularly soon after catch, certain bacteria will convert histidine present into histamine. Consumption of such fish may cause food poisoning as cooking cannot destroy histamine.
- Should store fish, especially fish of the Scombroid family, at four degree Celsius or below for chilled fish and -18 degree Celsius or below for frozen fish to prevent spoilage.

Advice for trade and consumers

- The trade should ensure that their food is fit for consumption and meet legal requirements.
 - According to the Food Safety Ordinance (the Ordinance), the trade shall keep transaction records of the business to which it has supplied the food and the business from which it has acquired the food. The Ordinance also requires the trade to present such transaction records for inspection by the Director of the Food and Environmental Hygiene (DFEH) in a specified period of time (as short as 24 hours) and when necessary (such as in major food incident).
 - A registered food importer/ food distributor must provide the information of its contact person and an emergency telephone hotline to enable the CFS to established immediate contact when necessary. Besides, according to the Ordinance, a registered food importer/ food distributor has to give written notice to DFEH of any change in the information provided in his application for registration or renewal of registration, within 30 days after the change occurs.
- Consumers should patronize reliable premises for buying food. They should also maintain balanced diet to minimize food risk.