
Targeted Food Surveillance — Sudan dyes in eggs and egg products

Centre for Food Safety

Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

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Background

- Sudan dyes are synthetic chemical dyes for industrial use. According to law, Sudan dyes are not permitted colouring matters in food.
- Previously, there were reports of food incident related to eggs that were detected to contain Sudan dyes. The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) also detected Sudan dyes in some eggs and egg products in past food surveillance programme.
- In view of this, the CFS has conducted a targeted food surveillance regularly since 2008 to assess the presence of Sudan dyes in eggs and egg products.

Types of samples

- The CFS collected 200 samples from food factories, supermarkets, restaurants and bakeries etc. for testing of colouring matters, Sudan dyes from August to September this year.
- Samples included:
 - Eggs
 - Fried eggs, tea leaf chicken eggs, quail eggs and lo shui eggs
 - Egg products
 - Western cakes, egg tart, egg roll, egg noodles, salad dressings and mayonnaises, snacks, steamed egg custard bun and rice dumplings in bamboo leaf with duck egg yolk fillings and sticky rice wrapped in lotus leaf.

Overall result

- All sample results were satisfactory.



Advice for the trade

- All food for sale in Hong Kong must be fit for human consumption. Under the law, no food intended for sale for human consumption shall contain any added non-permitted colouring matters. The maximum penalty for conviction is a fine of \$50,000 and imprisonment for 6 months.
- Source materials from reliable suppliers. Ensure that ingredients used do not contain any non-permitted Sudan dyes.
- Adhere to Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) for manufacturing food products, and comply with the legal requirements when using food additives.

Advice for consumers

- Purchase food from reliable shops.
- Avoid choosing eggs and egg products which are of abnormally bright colour.
- Take a balanced diet so as to avoid excessive exposure to food additives from a small range of food items.