

2008 Food Safety Report No. 6

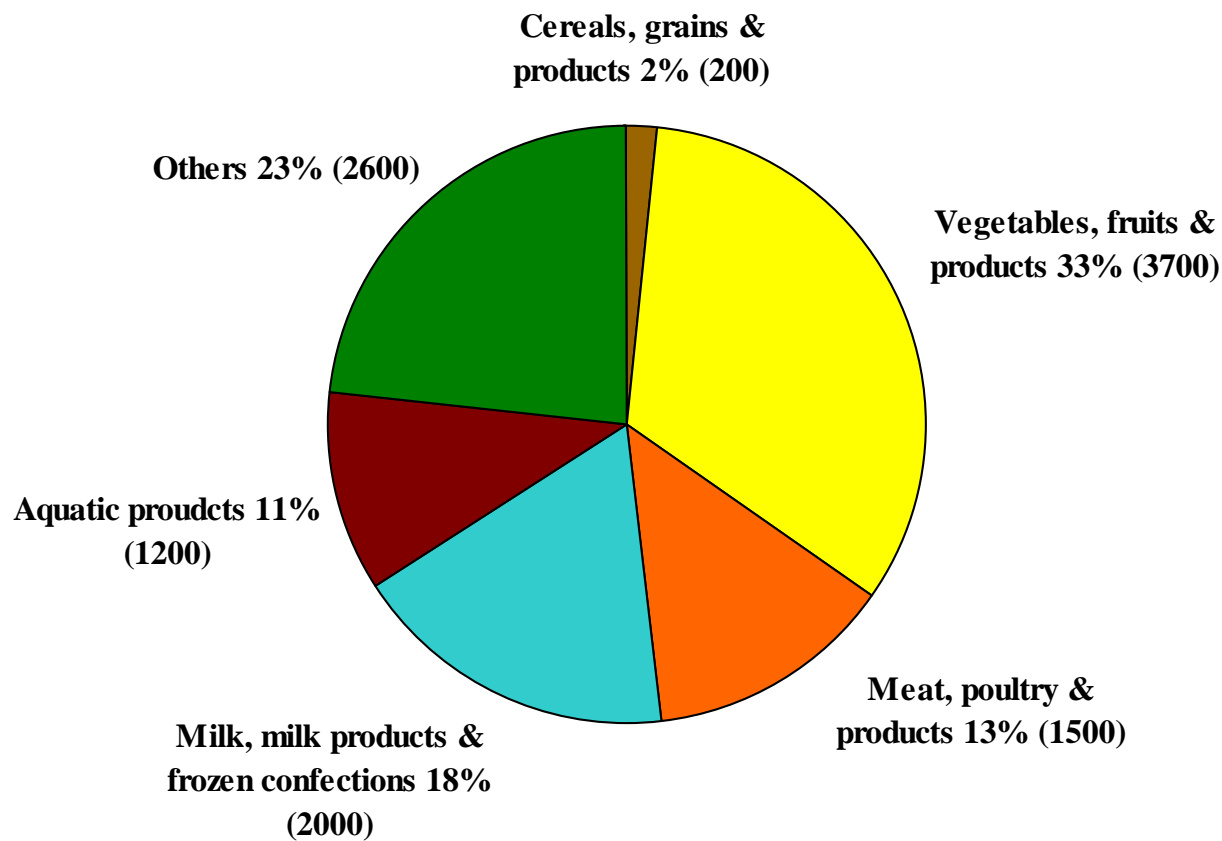
Centre for Food Safety

Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

February 2009

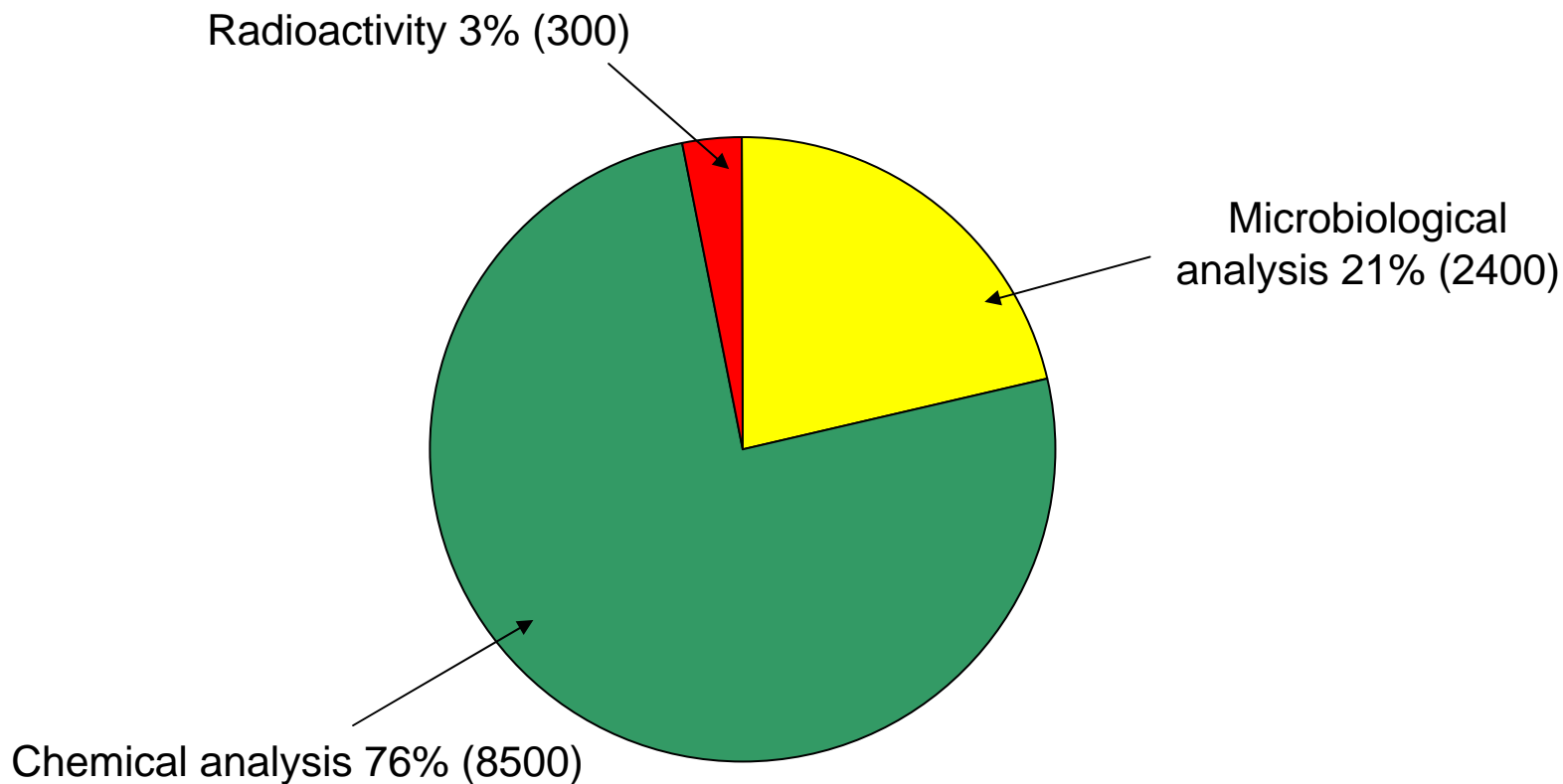
Types of food tested

- During November and December 2008, tests on about 11200 food samples of various food groups were completed.



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

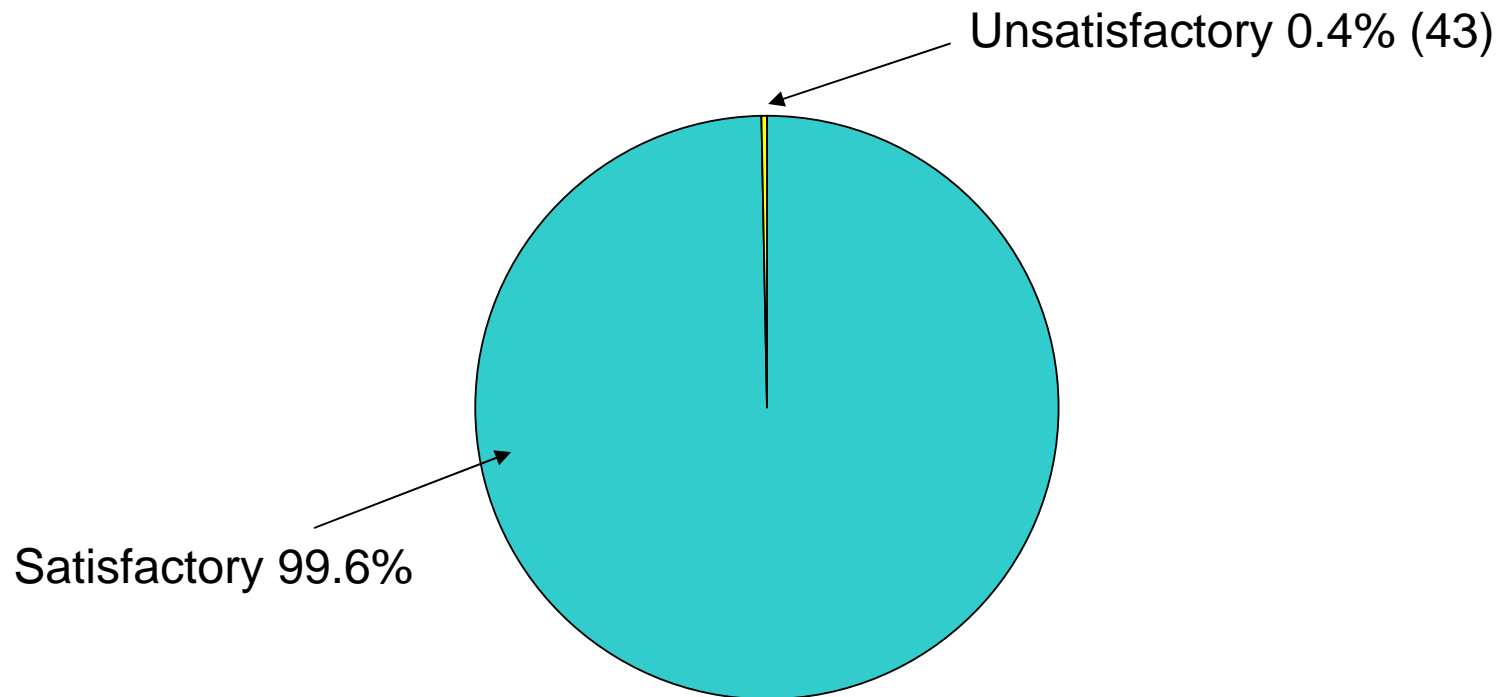
Types of testing



N.B.: Figures in brackets are rounded

Overall results

- Overall satisfactory rate was 99.6%.
- Total 43 unsatisfactory samples.



Unsatisfactory samples

- 43 unsatisfactory food samples included 22 previously announced results. The remaining 21 unsatisfactory samples are as follows:

Food Group	<i>No. of Samples Tested</i>	<i>No. of Unsatisfactory Samples</i>
Vegetables, fruits & products	3700	6
Meat, poultry & products	1500	7
Aquatic products	1200	7
Milk, milk products & frozen confections	2000	0
Cereal, grains and products	200	0
Others	2600	1
<i>Total</i>	<i>11200</i>	<i>21</i>

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

1. Vegetables, fruits & products

- About 3700 samples were tested. Overall satisfactory rate was 99.8%, with 6 unsatisfactory samples in this report.
- Analysis included:
 - Microbiological tests
 - Chemical tests
 - > 100 types of 4 major groups of pesticides
 - organo-chlorine (e.g., DDT, HCH)
 - organo-phosphorous (e.g., methamidophos, isocarbophos)
 - N-methlycarbamates (e.g., carbofuran)
 - pyrethroids
 - Metallic contamination (included cadmium, arsenic and lead)
 - Preservatives (included sulphur dioxide, sorbic acid and benzoic acid)
 - Colouring matters

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

Metallic contamination

- 5 unsatisfactory samples:

Sample	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
2 Chinese spinach, 1 Chinese white cabbage, 1 Chinese flowering cabbage & 1 baby spinach	Cadmium	0.17-0.26 ppm ⁽¹⁾

⁽¹⁾ The levels exceeded legal limit but upon normal consumption, it is unlikely to pose adverse effect on consumers. Thorough washing and soaking of vegetables will remove some cadmium attached on their surfaces.

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

Pesticide residues

- 1 unsatisfactory sample:

Sample	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
1 Chinese parsley	Isocarbophos	5.1 ppm ⁽¹⁾

⁽¹⁾ The level is low and should not pose significant health effect on consumers.

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

Preservatives

- All samples tested for preservatives were satisfactory.

Colouring matters

- All samples tested for colouring matters were satisfactory.

2. Meat, poultry & products

- About 1500 samples were tested. Overall satisfactory rate was 98.3%, with 7 unsatisfactory samples in this report.
- Analysis included :
 - Microbiological tests
 - Chemical tests (e.g. preservatives, veterinary drug residues, melamine and colouring matters, etc)

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

Preservatives

- Besides the 19 previously announced fresh beef samples found to contain sulphur dioxide, there were 4 unsatisfactory samples:

Sample	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
2 pork wiener	Sorbic acid	1000 - 1400 ppm ⁽¹⁾
2 fresh beef	Sulphur dioxide	12 - 1900 ppm ⁽²⁾

⁽¹⁾ A commonly used preservative but is not permitted in this kind of food. It is of low toxicity and should not pose significant health effect on consumers.

⁽²⁾ One of the beef samples is a follow up sample.

Sulphur dioxide is a permitted preservative in foods such as preserved fruits. It is of low toxicity and should not pose significant health effect on consumers. However, it is not permitted in fresh (including chilled and frozen) meat. Since it is water soluble, most of it can be removed through washing and cooking.

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

Pathogens

- 2 unsatisfactory samples:

Sample	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
2 marinated chicken gizzard	<i>Salmonella</i>	Detected ⁽¹⁾

⁽¹⁾ One of the chicken gizzard samples is a follow up sample.

Salmonella may cause gastrointestinal upset such as abdominal pain, diarrhoea and vomiting.

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

Veterinary drug residues

- 1 unsatisfactory sample:

Sample	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
Frozen suckling pig	Oxytetracycline	1.1 ppm ⁽¹⁾

⁽¹⁾ The whole affected batch of products had been returned to the place of origin. None of them has entered the local market.

Level exceeded legal limit. However, based on the detected level, it is unlikely to pose adverse effect on consumers upon normal consumption.

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

Colouring matters

- All samples tested for colouring matters were satisfactory.

3. Aquatic products

- About 1200 samples were tested. Overall satisfactory rate was 99.4%, with 7 unsatisfactory samples in this report.
- Analysis included:
 - Microbiological tests
 - Chemical tests (e.g. metallic contamination, veterinary drug residues, biotoxins and melamine)

3. Aquatic products (Cont'd)

Metallic contamination

- There were 6 unsatisfactory samples:

Sample	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
3 ling fillets & 3 black cod fishes	Mercury	0.9 – 1.6 ppm ⁽¹⁾

⁽¹⁾ The detected levels exceeded legal limit. Occasional consumption would not cause adverse health effect, but consumption on a long-term basis could exceed safety level.

3. Aquatic products (Cont'd)

Veterinary drug residues

- 1 unsatisfactory sample:

Sample	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
1 deep-fried minced fish	Malachite green	0.0035 ppm ⁽¹⁾

⁽¹⁾ The minced fish sample is a follow up sample.

Prohibited substance but the detected level is low. It is unlikely to pose adverse effect on consumers upon normal consumption.

3. Aquatic products (Cont'd)

Pathogens

- All samples tested for pathogens were satisfactory.

Biotoxins

- All samples tested for biotoxins were satisfactory.

4. Milk, milk products & frozen confections

- About 2000 samples were tested including ice-cream, cheese, milk and milk products, etc.
- Analysis included:
 - Microbiological tests (total bacterial count, pathogens, e.g., *Salmonella* and *Listeria*)
 - Chemical tests (melamine, colouring matters, sweeteners)
- All samples were satisfactory.

5. Cereal, grains and products

- About 200 samples including rice/noodles, flour, bread and breakfast cereal, etc.
- Analysis included microbiological and chemical tests such as:
 - metallic contamination
 - preservatives
 - pesticide residues
- All samples were satisfactory.

6. Other food commodities

- About 2600 samples were tested. Overall satisfactory rate was 99.8%, with 1 unsatisfactory sample in this report.
- Types of food included:

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

6. Other food commodities (Cont'd)

Chemical analysis

- Besides the egg sample unsatisfactory for melamine, there was 1 unsatisfactory sample:

Sample	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
Dietary supplement	Stevioside (sweetener)	Detected ⁽¹⁾

⁽¹⁾ Not permitted in food. It is of low toxicity and should not pose adverse effect on consumers.

Microbiological analysis

- Except for the 2 previously announced unsatisfactory samples of “poon choi”, all other samples for microbiological analysis were satisfactory.

Follow-up actions

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