

Food Safety Report for October 2009

Centre for Food Safety
**Food and Environmental
Hygiene Department**



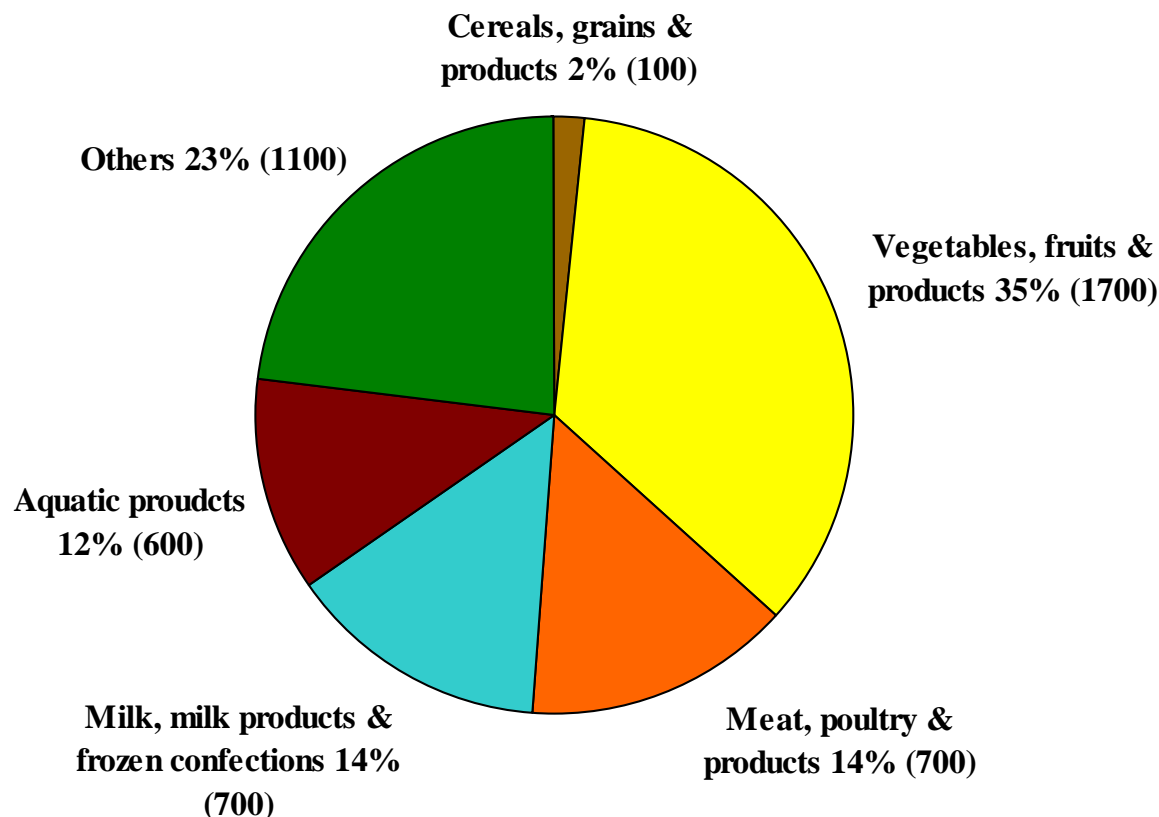
November 2009

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 food surveillance project on “Hairy Crabs” and a targeted food surveillance project on “Nitrate and Nitrite in Meat, Meat Products and Cheese” recently.
- This presentation gives an account of the food surveillance sample analyses that were completed in October 2009.

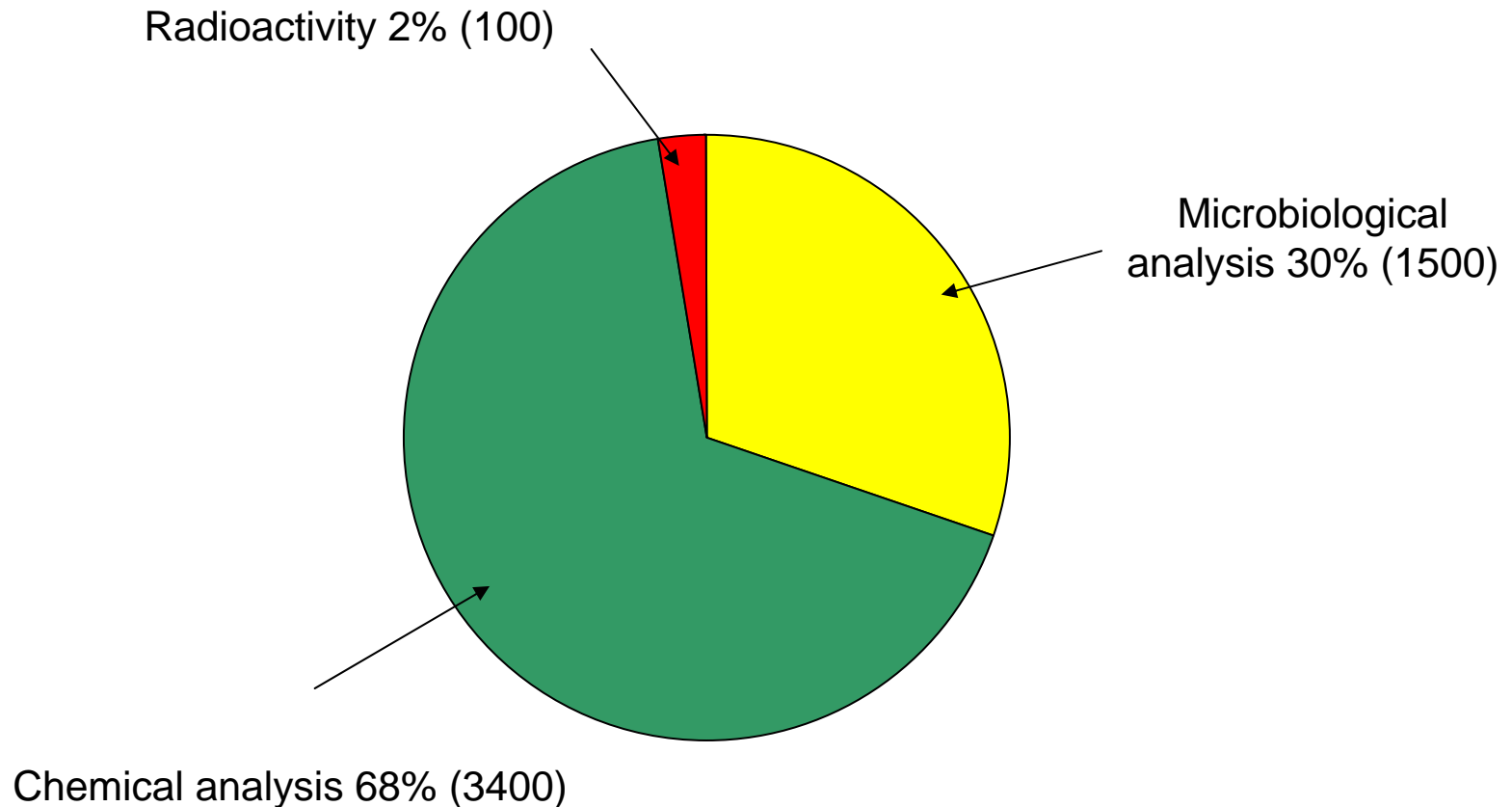
Types of food tested

- About 4900 food samples of various food groups were tested.



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

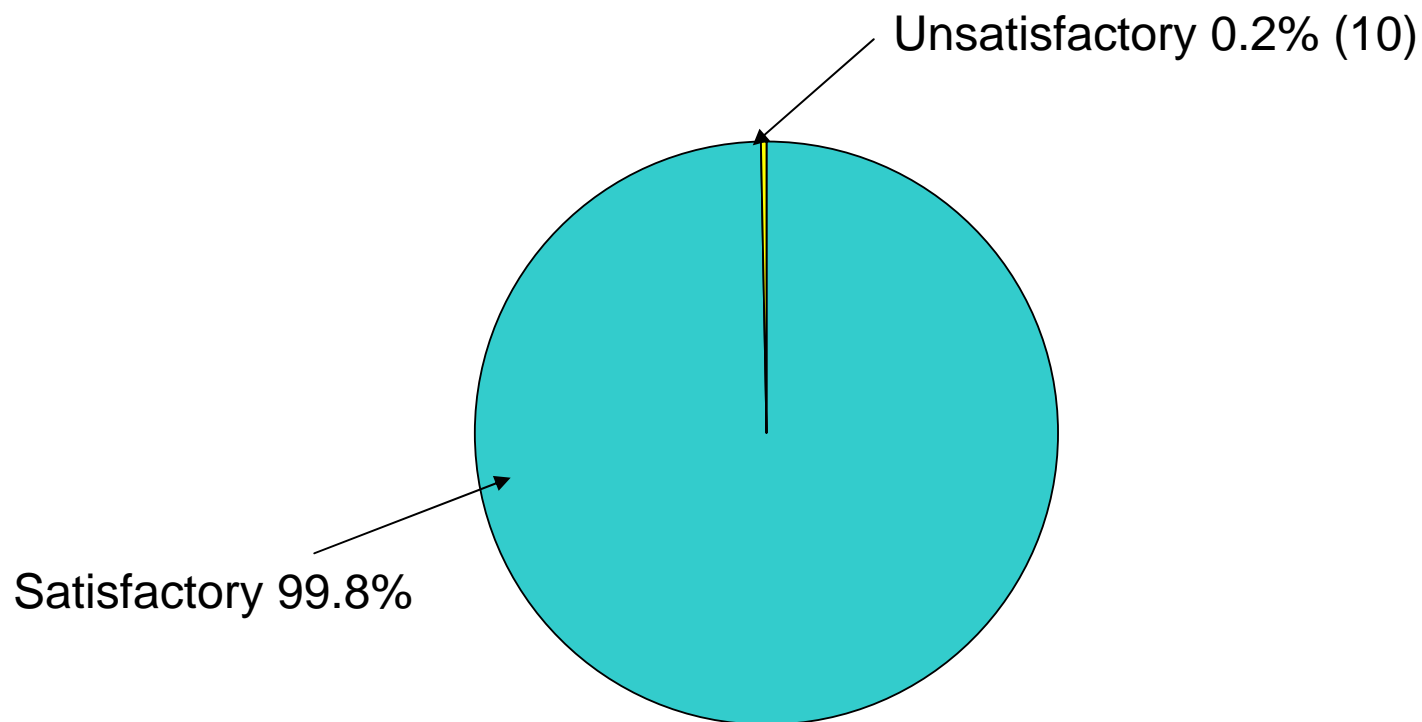
Types of testing



N.B.: Figures in brackets are rounded

Overall results

- There are 10 unsatisfactory samples. The overall satisfactory rate was 99.8%.



Unsatisfactory samples

- 10 unsatisfactory food samples included 1 previously announced result. The remaining 9 unsatisfactory samples are as follows:

Food Group	<i>No. of Samples Tested</i>	<i>No. of Unsatisfactory Samples</i>
Vegetables, fruits & products	1700	3
Meat, poultry & products	700	1
Aquatic products	600	3
Milk, milk products & frozen confections	700	0
Cereal, grains and products	100	0
Others	1100	2
<i>Total</i>	<i>4900</i>	<i>9</i>

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

1. Vegetables, fruits & products

- About 1700 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 99.8%, with 3 unsatisfactory samples in this report.



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

Metallic contamination

- There were 3 unsatisfactory samples:

Sample	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
Chinese Parsley	Cadmium	0.22 ppm ⁽¹⁾
Chinese Spinach	Cadmium	0.16 ppm ⁽¹⁾
Chinese Spinach	Cadmium	0.49 ppm ⁽²⁾

(1) The levels exceeded legal limit but they are unlikely to pose adverse effect on consumers.

(2) The level exceeded legal limit. Upon normal consumption, it is unlikely to pose significant health effect on consumers. Long term excessive consumption of Chinese spinach with the same level of cadmium can exceed safety level. Thorough washing and soaking of vegetables will remove some cadmium attached on their surfaces.

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

Other tests

- Samples for other tests (e.g. pathogens, pesticides, 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 99.7%, with 1 unsatisfactory sample in this report.



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

Preservatives

- Except for the 1 previously announced fresh beef sample found to contain sulphur dioxide, there was another unsatisfactory sample:

Sample	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
Shredded Pork Stick	Butylated hydroxytoluene (B.H.T.)	1600 ppm ⁽¹⁾

⁽¹⁾ A commonly used anti-oxidant in food but the detected level exceeded legal limit. Based on the detected level, it is unlikely to pose significant health effects on consumers.

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

Other tests

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

3. Aquatic products

- About 600 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 99.5 %, with 3 unsatisfactory samples in this report.



3. Aquatic products (Cont'd)

Metallic contamination

- There were 2 unsatisfactory samples:

Sample	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
Swordfish Sashimi	Mercury	0.98 ppm ⁽¹⁾
Fresh lobster	Cadmium	3.4 ppm ⁽²⁾

- (1) The detected level exceeded legal limit. Normal consumption will not cause adverse health effects to consumers, but long-term excessive consumption may exceed safety level.
- (2) Based on the detected level, long-term consumption of lobster with the same level of cadmium may affect the kidney.

3. Aquatic products (Cont'd)

Pathogens

- There was 1 unsatisfactory sample:

Sample	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
Lo Shui Cuttlefish	<i>Staphylococcus aureus</i>	1.3×10^4 / g ⁽¹⁾

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

3. Aquatic products (Cont'd)

Other tests

- Samples for other tests (e.g. veterinary drug residues, 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.



5. Cereal, grains and products

- About 100 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 99.8%, with 2 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
Rice Cracker with Peanut	Aflatoxin	0.025 ppm ⁽¹⁾

⁽¹⁾ Although there is a concern of the carcinogenic potential of aflatoxin, immediate health risk upon normal consumption at the level detected is unlikely.

6. Other food commodities (Cont'd)

Microbiological analysis

- 1 unsatisfactory sample:

Sample	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
Coconut Sweet Soup with Mango and Sago	<i>Salmonella</i>	Detected ⁽¹⁾

⁽¹⁾ *Salmonella* 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

Advices to trade and consumers

- 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.
- Food premises should always follow the “5 Keys to Food Safety” during food preparation 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

Advices to consumers

- As for some vegetables found to contain cadmium, the public is advised to soak and wash vegetables thoroughly before consumption to remove some cadmium attached on the surface.
- Consumers are advised to have moderate consumption of fish as it contains many essential nutrients, such as omega-3 fatty acids and high quality proteins. People should maintain a balanced diet and eat a variety of fish. 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.
- Patronize licensed restaurants and reliable retailers.