Food Safety Report for April 2009

Centre for Food Safety

Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

May 2009

食物環境衞生署
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

食物安全中心
Centre for Food Safety

Introduction

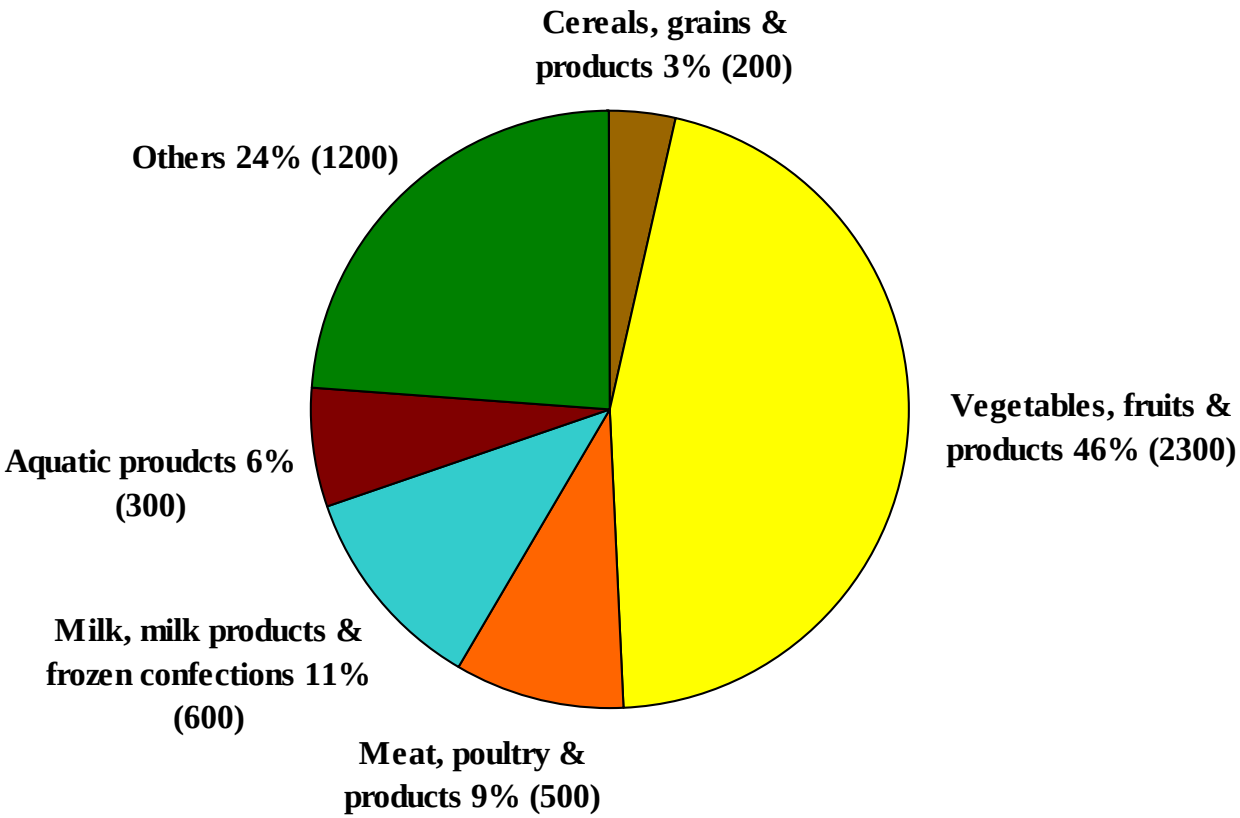
- The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) adopts the three-tier food surveillance approach, i.e., routine food surveillance, targeted food surveillance and seasonal food surveillance to collect samples at import, wholesale and retail levels for chemical and microbiological tests.

- The 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 recently completed seasonal food surveillance project on “Rice dumplings”.

- This presentation gives an account of the food surveillance sample analyses that were completed in April 2009.

Types of food tested

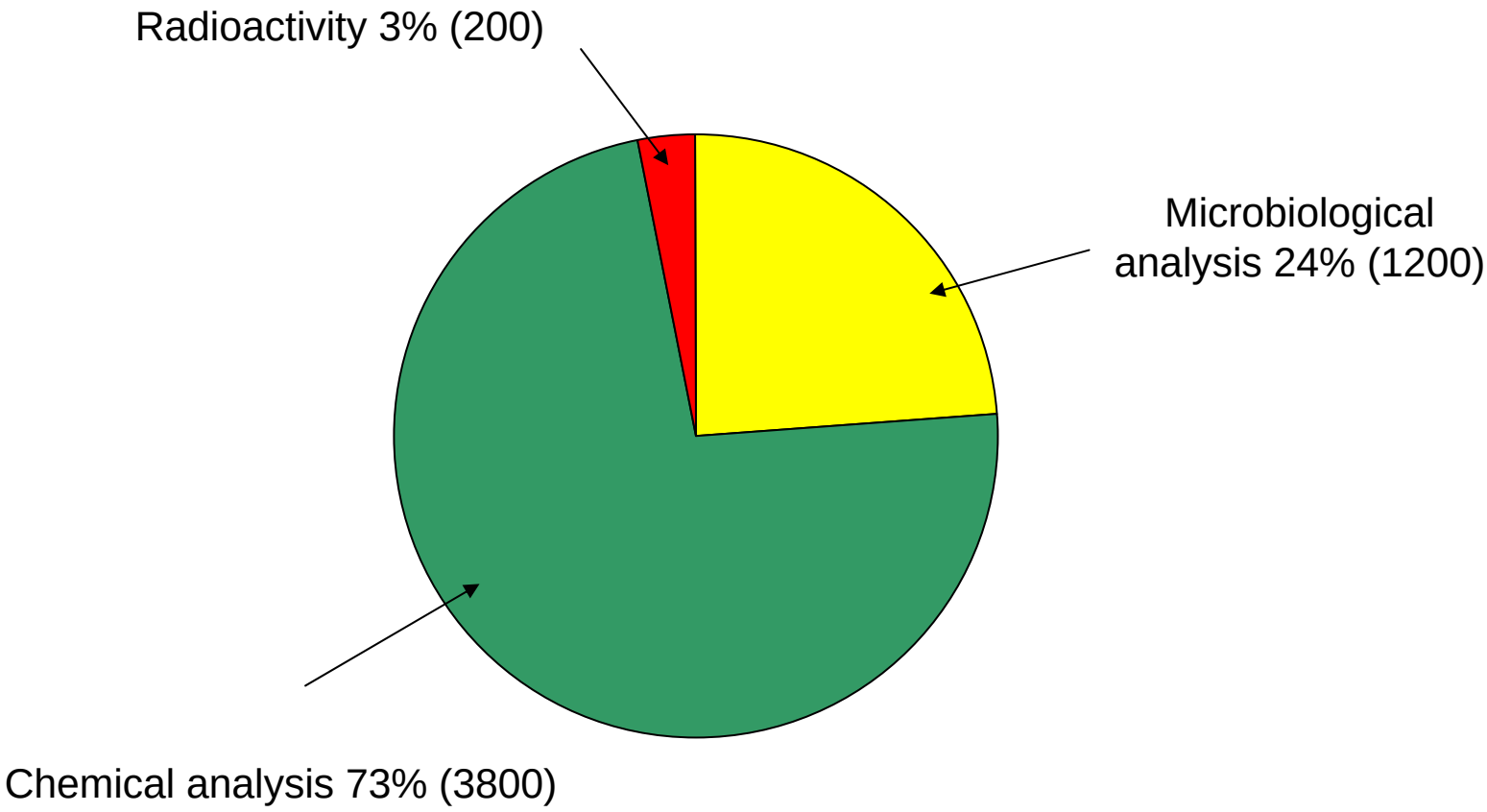
- About 5200 food samples of various food groups were tested.



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

食物環境衞生署
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department
食物安全中心
Centre for Food Safety

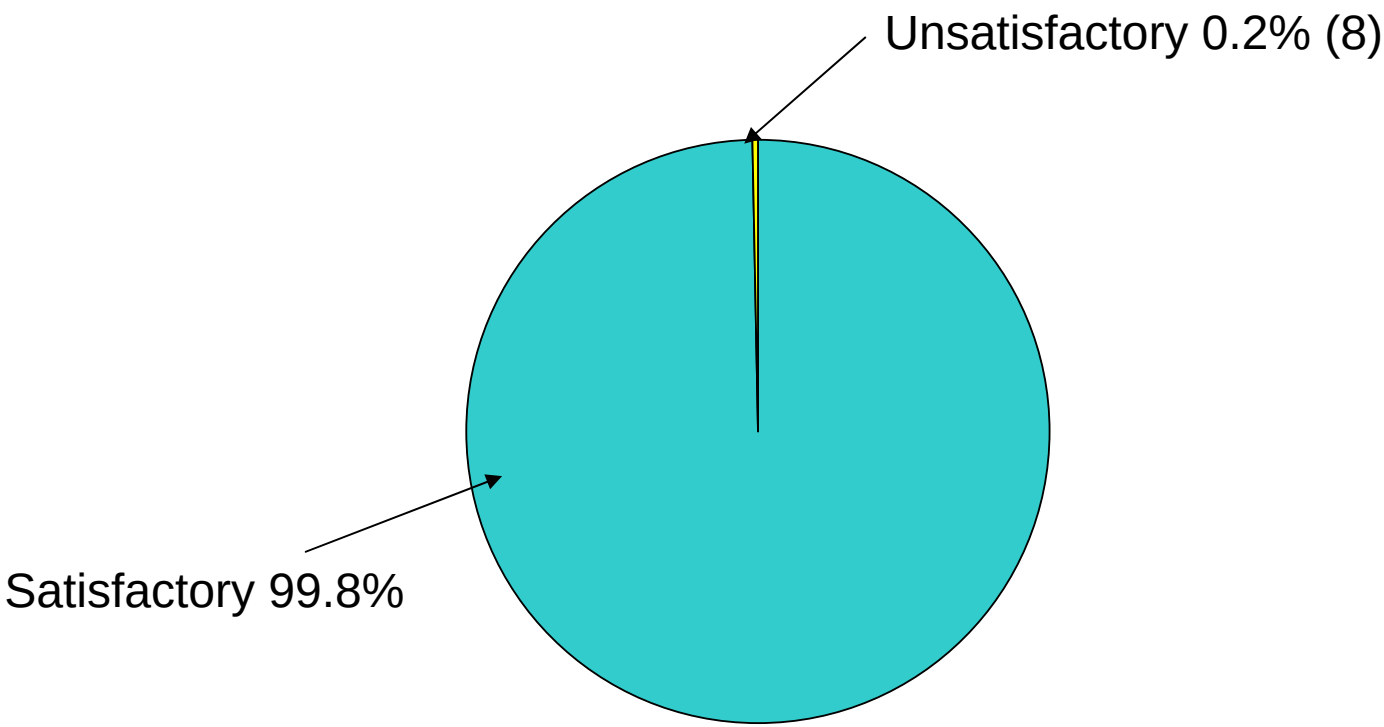
Types of testing



N.B.: Figures in brackets are rounded

Overall results

- Total 8 unsatisfactory samples. The overall satisfactory rate was 99.8%.



食物環境衞生署
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department
食物安全中心
Centre for Food Safety

Unsatisfactory samples

- 8 unsatisfactory samples are as follows:

Food Group	*No. of Samples Tested*	*No. of Unsatisfactory Samples*
Vegetables, fruits & products	2300	3
Meat, poultry & products	500	1
Aquatic products	300	1
Milk, milk products & frozen confections	600	0
Cereal, grains and products	200	1
Others	1200	2
Total	***5200***	***8***

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

1. Vegetables, fruits & products

- About 2300 samples were collected. They included fresh vegetables, fruits and legumes, preserved vegetables and pickled fruits, dried vegetables and ready-to-eat vegetables, etc.



- Analysis included:
  - Microbiological tests
  - Chemical tests such as:
    - Pesticides (e.g., methamidophos, isocarbophos, DDT, HCH)
    - Metallic contamination
    - Colouring matters
    - Preservatives (included sulphur dioxide, sorbic acid and benzoic acid)
- Overall satisfactory rate was 99.9%, with 3 unsatisfactory samples in this report.

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

Pesticide residues

- 1 unsatisfactory sample:

Sample	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
Leaf mustard	Pyridaben	6.8 ppm (1)

(1) Based on the detected level, occasional consumption would not cause adverse health effect, but consumption on a long-term basis could exceed safety level.

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

Preservatives

- 1 unsatisfactory sample:

Sample	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
Pickled plum	Sulphur dioxide	2900 ppm (1)

(1) The detected level exceeded the legal limits. Sulphur dioxide is of low toxicity and should not pose significant health effect on consumers. For individuals who are allergic to this preservative, they may have symptoms of breathing difficulty, headache and nausea.

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

Pathogens

- 1 unsatisfactory sample:

Sample	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
Fried water spinach with soybean curd sauce	*Bacillus cereus*	3.4×10^6 / g (1)

(1) B*acillus cereus* may cause gastrointestinal upset such as vomiting, abdominal pain and diarrhoea.

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

Other tests

- Samples for other tests (metallic contamination and colouring matters) were satisfactory.

2. Meat, poultry & products

- About 500 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.

- Analysis included :
  - Microbiological tests
  - Chemical tests (e.g. preservatives, veterinary drug residues and colouring matters, etc)

- Overall satisfactory rate was 99.8%, with 1 unsatisfactory sample in this report.





食物環境衞生署
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

食物安全中心
Centre for Food Safety

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

Preservatives

- 1 unsatisfactory sample:

Sample	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
Fresh pork	Sulphur dioxide	120 ppm (1)

(1) Sulphur dioxide is not permitted in fresh (including chilled and frozen) meat. On the other hand, it is permitted in foods such as pickled fruits and juices. It is of low toxicity and should not pose significant health effect on consumers. For individuals who are allergic to this preservative, there may be symptoms of breathing difficulty, headache and nausea. Since it is water soluble, most of it can be removed through washing and cooking.

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 300 samples were collected. They generally cover fish, shellfish, shrimp/prawn, crab, squid and their products.

- Analysis included:
  - Microbiological tests (norovirus, pathogens)
  - Chemical tests (e.g. veterinary drug residues, metallic contamination, biotoxins and preservatives)

- Overall satisfactory rate was 99.7 %, with 1 unsatisfactory sample in this report.




3. Aquatic products (Cont'd)

Microorganisms

- 1 unsatisfactory sample:

Sample	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
Chilled raw oyster	Norovirus nucleic acid	Detected (1)

(1) Norovirus may cause vomiting, diarrhoea, abdominal pain and fever.

3. Aquatic products (Cont'd)

Other tests

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

4. Milk, milk products & frozen confections

- About 600 samples were tested. They included 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.

食物環境衞生署
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

食物安全中心
Centre for Food Safety

5. Cereal, grains and products

- About 200 samples which generally cover rice/noodles, flour, bread and breakfast cereal, etc.

- Analysis included microbiological and chemical tests such as:
  - metallic contamination
  - preservatives
  - sweeteners
  - colouring matters

- Overall satisfactory rate was 99.4 %, with 1 unsatisfactory sample in this report.




5. Cereal, grains and products (Cont'd)

Sweetener

- 1 unsatisfactory sample:

Sample	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
Crab chips	Stevioside	Detected (1)

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

食物環境衞生署 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department
食物安全中心 Centre for Food Safety

5. Cereal, grains and products (Cont'd)

Other tests

- Samples for other tests (e.g., metallic contamination, preservatives and colouring matters) were satisfactory.

6. Other food commodities

- About 1200 samples were collected. Overall satisfactory rate was 99.8%, with 2 unsatisfactory sampled in this report.
- Types of food included:

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

6. Other food commodities (Cont'd)

Chemical analysis

- 1 unsatisfactory sample:

Sample	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
Nopal juice	Stevioside (sweetener)	Detected (1)
Cooked dumpling	Benzoic acid (preservative)	210 ppm (2)

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

(2) A commonly used preservative but the detected level exceeded legal limit. It is of low toxicity and should not pose significant health effect on consumers.

Microbiological analysis

- All samples were satisfactory.

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

Advice to food trade and consumers

- Of the test results announced in this report, the exceedances or breaches were not serious. The major problems involved the inappropriate use of preservatives and sweeteners as well as the detection of pathogens in food.

- The trade should comply with legal requirements and follow “good manufacturing practice” (GMP). They should use permitted food additives only in an appropriate manner.

- It is now summer and the risk of food poisoning will increase. The trade should always follow the “5 Keys to Food Safety” 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

Advice to food trade and consumers (Cont'd)

- The consumers should patronize reliable premises for buying food. They should maintain balanced diet to minimize food risk.

- Marine bivalves are high risk food that contain norovirus. Consumers should choose eating thoroughly cooked seafood to avoid food poisoning.