Food Safety Report for September 2009

Centre for Food Safety

Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

October 2009

食物環境衞生署
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

食物安全中心
Centre for Food Safety

Introduction

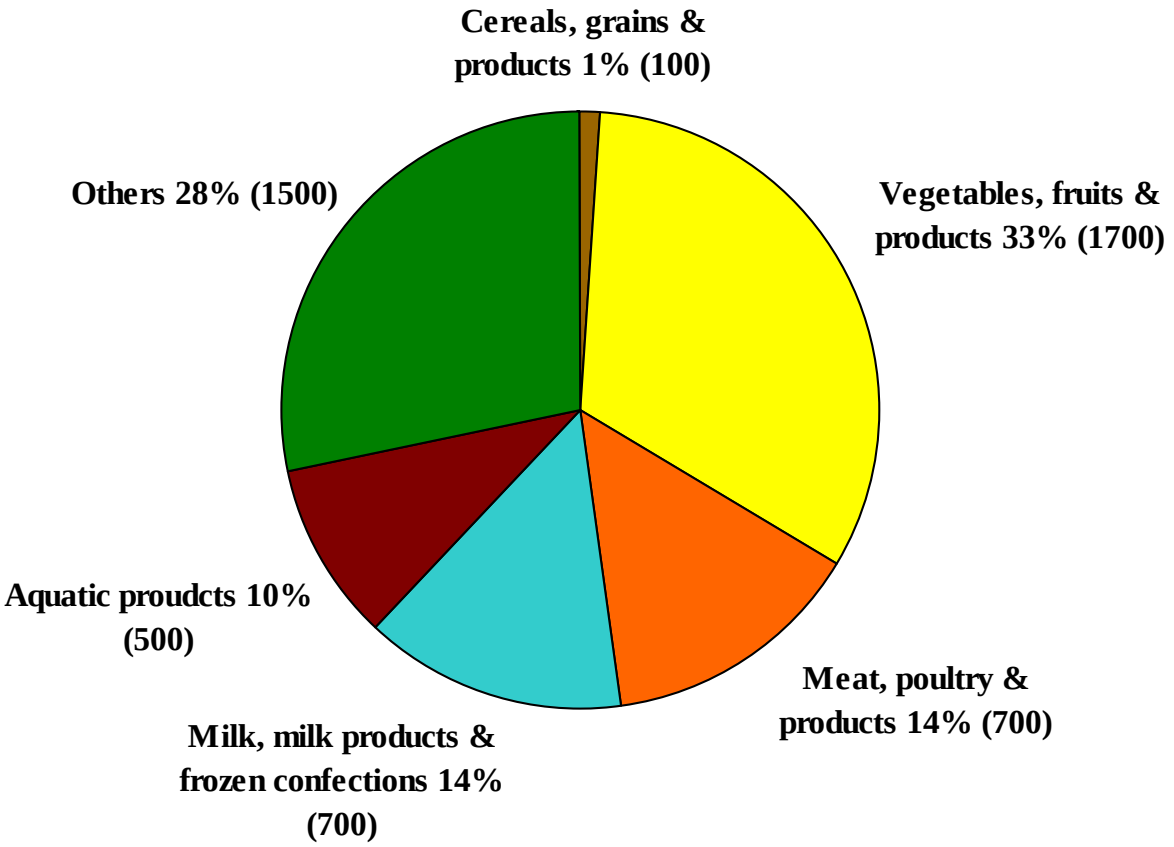
- The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) adopts the three-tier food surveillance approach, i.e., routine food surveillance, targeted food surveillance and seasonal food surveillance to collect samples at import, wholesale and retail levels for chemical and microbiological tests.

- 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 the following two targeted food surveillance projects recently.
  - “Microbiological quality of bottled water”
  - “Sulphur dioxide in meat”

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

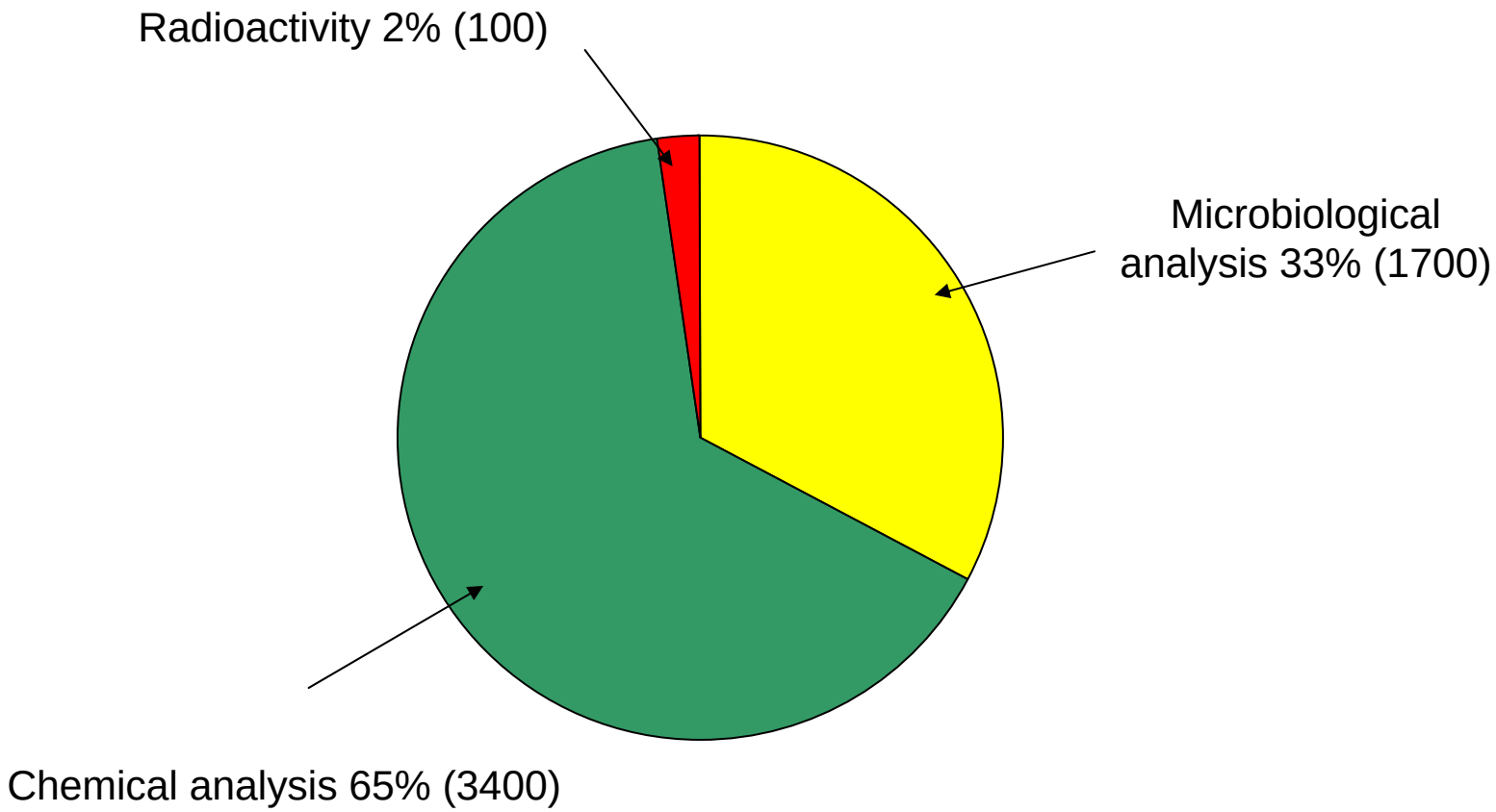
Types of food tested

- About 5300 food samples of various food groups were tested.



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

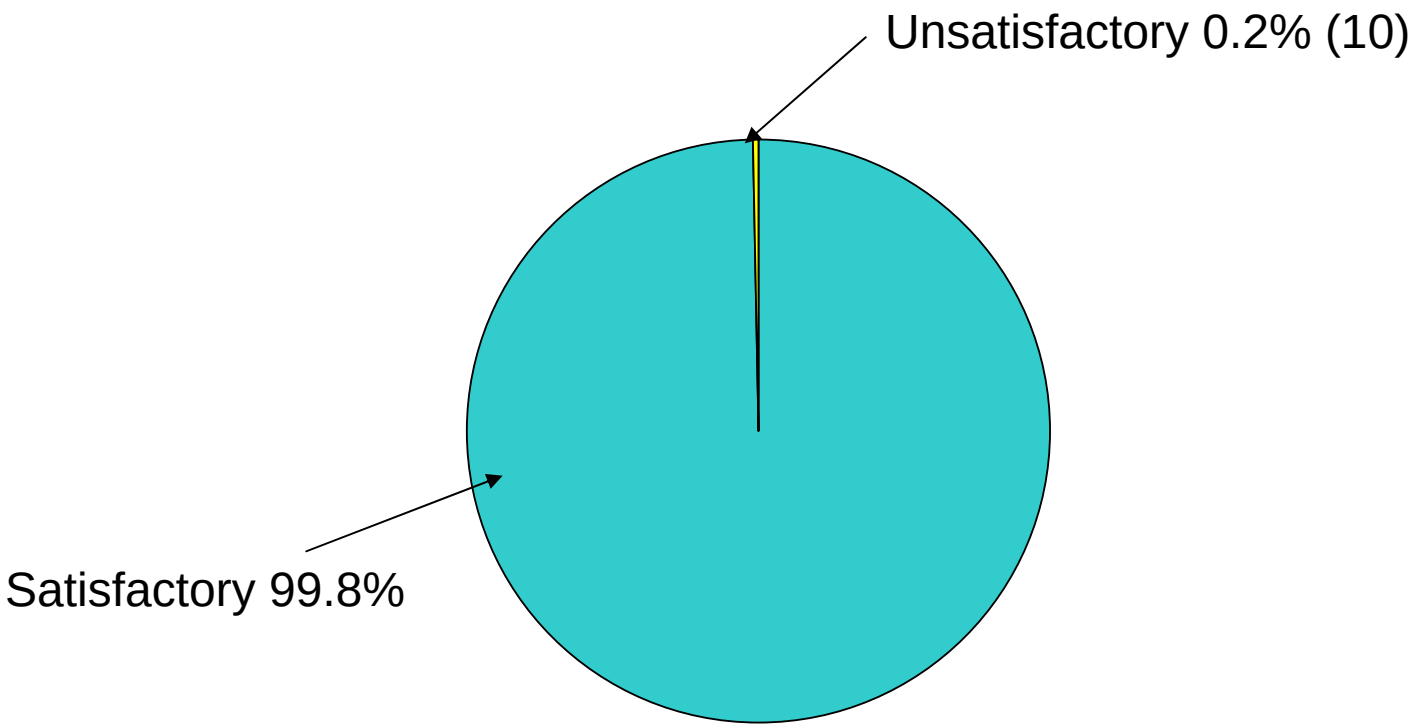
Types of testing



N.B.: Figures in brackets are rounded

Overall results

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



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Unsatisfactory samples

- 10 unsatisfactory food samples included 3 previously announced results. The remaining 7 unsatisfactory samples are as follows:

Food Group	*No. of Samples Tested*	*No. of Unsatisfactory Samples*
Vegetables, fruits & products	1700	0
Meat, poultry & products	700	1
Aquatic products	500	3
Milk, milk products & frozen confections	700	0
Cereal, grains and products	100	0
Others	1500	3
Total	***5300***	***7***

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
- All samples 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 99.5%, with 1 unsatisfactory sample in this report.





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

Preservatives

- Except for the 3 previously announced meat samples found to contain sulphur dioxide, there was another unsatisfactory sample:

Sample	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
Sausage	Sorbic acid	740 ppm (1)

(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. 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 500 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 99.4 %, with 3 unsatisfactory samples in this report.




3. Aquatic products (Cont'd)

Colouring matters

- There was 1 unsatisfactory sample:

Sample	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
Chilled yellow croaker	Tartrazine and Sunset Yellow FCF	Detected (1)

(1) Tartrazine and Sunset Yellow FCF are permitted colouring matters in food but is not allowed in chilled fish. It is of low toxicity and should not pose significant health effect on consumers.

3. Aquatic products (Cont'd)

Metallic contamination

- There were 2 unsatisfactory samples:

Sample	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
Orange roughy fillet	Mercury	0.78 ppm (1)
Fresh fan scallop	Cadmium	3.5 ppm (2)

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

(2) Based on the detected level, long-term consumption of scallop with the same level of cadmium may affect the kidney.

3. Aquatic products (Cont'd)

Other tests

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

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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.




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6. Other food commodities

- About 1500 samples were collected. Overall satisfactory rate was 99.8%, with 3 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
Oyster sauce	Formic acid (preservative)	990 ppm (1)
Dietary supplement	Stevioside (sweetener)	Detected (2)

(1) The detected level exceeded legal limit. Formic acid is of low toxicity and should not pose significant health effect on consumers.

(2) Not permitted in food. It is of low toxicity and should not pose significant health effect on consumers.

6. Other food commodities (Cont'd)

Microbiological analysis

- 1 unsatisfactory sample:

Sample	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
Fried radish cake	*Clostridium perfringens*	4.9×10^4 / g (1)

(1) *Clostridium perfringens* may cause gastrointestinal upset such as 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

- Most exceedances or breaches in this report were not serious.
- 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.
- Restaurants should always follow the "5 Keys to Food Safety" during food preparation to prevent foodborne disease.
- 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.
- Consumers should patronize reliable premises for buying food.