

# Food Safety Report for November 2010

Centre for Food Safety  
Food and Environmental  
Hygiene Department



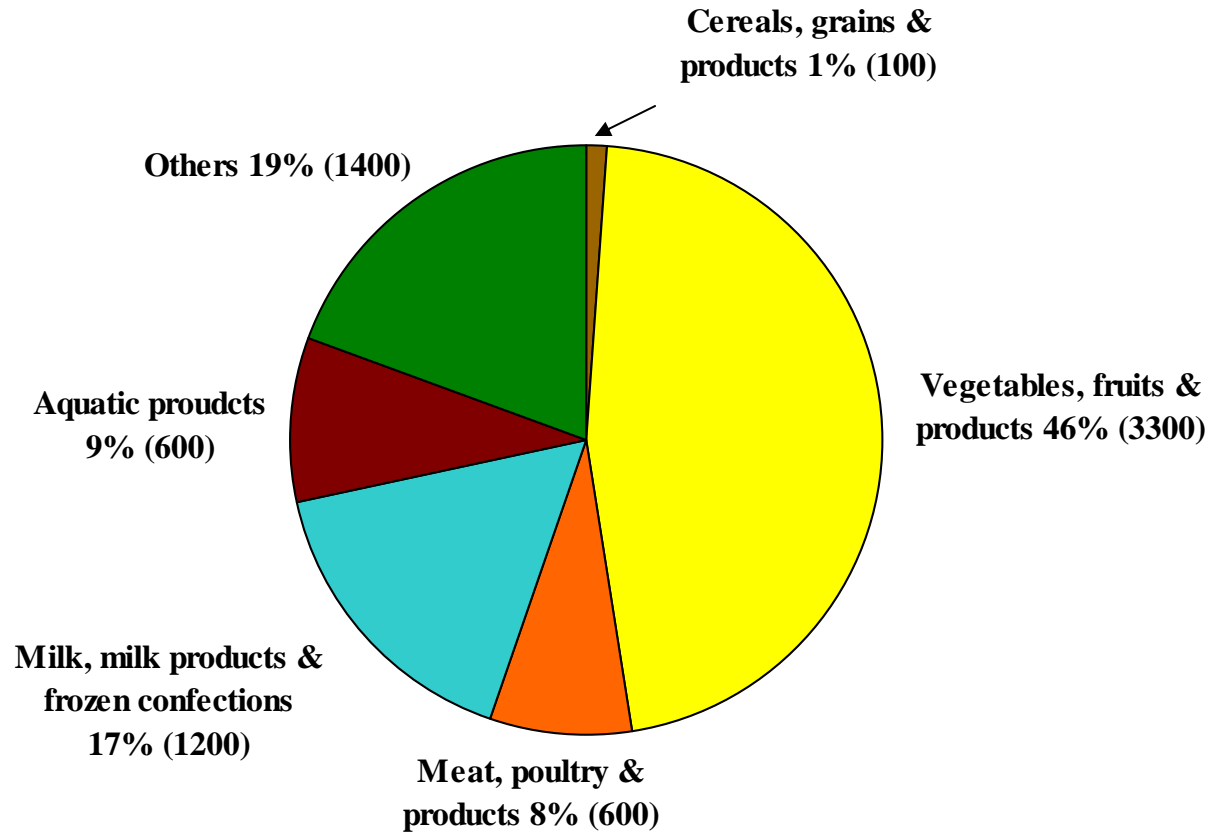
December 2010

# 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, the CFS has released the results of the following 3 food surveillance projects recently:
  - “Nitrate and nitrite in meat, meat products and cheese”
  - “Microbiological Quality of Poon Choi”
  - “Chinese Regional Cuisines (2nd Phase)”
- This presentation gives an account of the food surveillance sample analyses that were completed in November 2010.

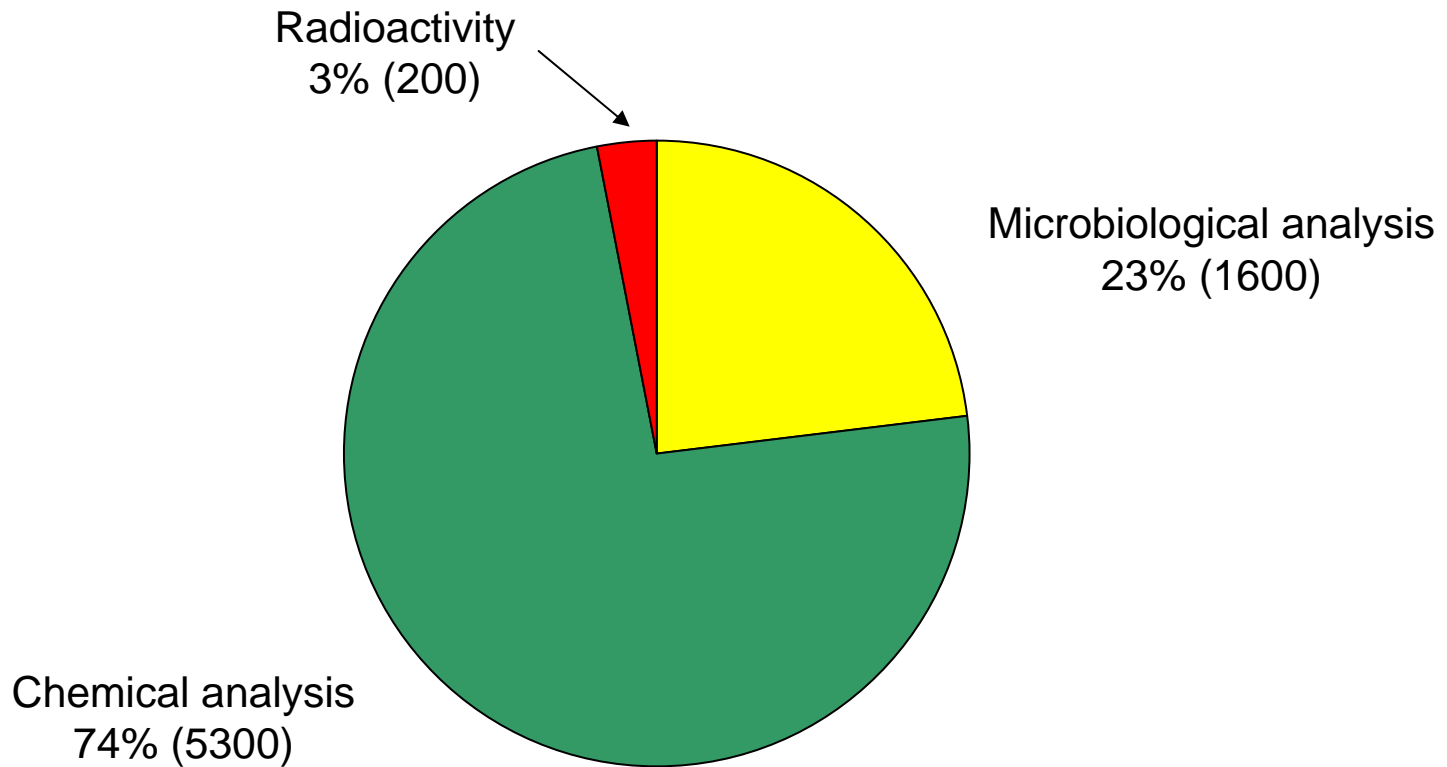
# Types of food tested

- About 7100 food samples of various food groups were tested.



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

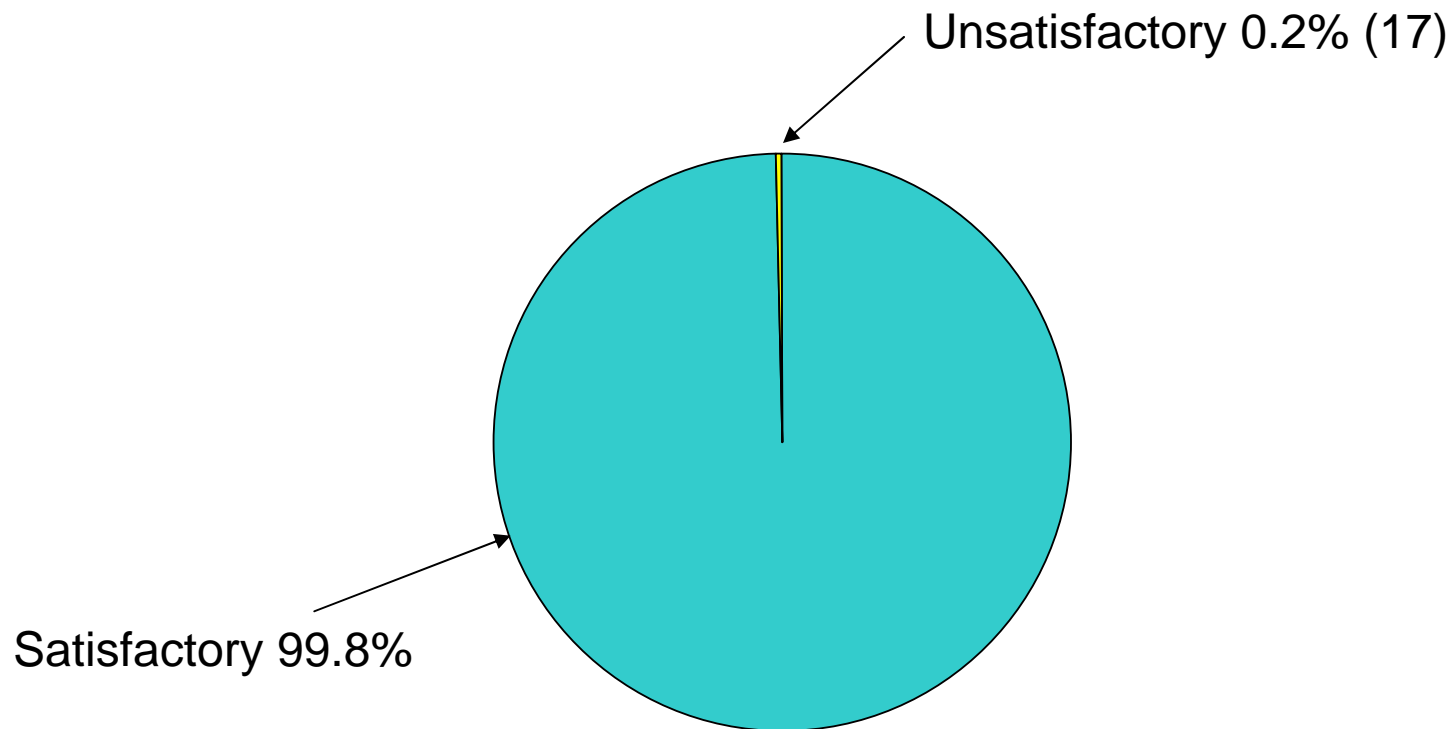
# Types of testing



N.B.: Figures in brackets are rounded

# Overall results

- There were 17 unsatisfactory samples in total. Overall satisfactory rate was 99.8%.



# Unsatisfactory samples

- 17 unsatisfactory food samples included 3 previously announced result. The remaining 14 unsatisfactory samples are as follows:

<b>Food Group</b>	<b>No. of Samples Tested</b>	<b>No. of Unsatisfactory Samples</b>
<b>Vegetables, fruits &amp; products</b>	3300	7
<b>Meat, poultry &amp; products</b>	600	1
<b>Aquatic products</b>	600	2
<b>Milk, milk products &amp; frozen confections</b>	1200	3
<b>Cereal, grains &amp; products</b>	100	0
<b>Others</b>	1400	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>7100</b>	<b>14</b>

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

# 1. Vegetables, fruits & products

- About 3300 samples were collected. They included various kinds of fresh vegetables, fruits and legumes, preserved vegetables and pickled fruits, dried vegetables and ready-to-eat vegetables.
- Analysis included:
  - Microbiological tests
  - Chemical tests such as:
    - Pesticides (e.g., methamidophos, isocarbophos, DDT, HCH)
    - Preservatives
    - Colouring matters
    - Metallic contamination
- Overall satisfactory rate was 99.8%, with 7 unsatisfactory samples in this report.



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

## Pathogen

- 1 unsatisfactory sample:

Sample	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
Curry vegetarian food	<i>Clostridium perfringens</i>	1.5 x 10 <sup>7</sup> /g <sup>(1)</sup>

<sup>(1)</sup> *Clostridium perfringens* may cause gastrointestinal upset such as vomiting, abdominal pain and diarrhoea.



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

## Preservative

- 2 unsatisfactory samples:

Sample	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
Pickled sweet ginger	Sulphur dioxide	197 ppm <sup>(1)</sup>
Dried grapes	Sulphur dioxide	3940 ppm <sup>(1)</sup>

- <sup>(1)</sup> The levels exceeded the legal limit. It is of low toxicity and will not cause adverse health effects upon normal consumption. For individuals who are allergic to this preservative, there may be symptoms of breathing difficulty, headache and nausea.

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

## Metallic contamination

- 4 unsatisfactory samples:

Sample	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
3 Chinese flowering cabbages	Cadmium	0.13-0.42* ppm <sup>(1)</sup>
Taro	Cadmium	0.17* ppm <sup>(1)</sup>

<sup>(1)</sup> The level exceeded the legal limit. However, it is unlikely to pose significant health effects upon normal consumption. Thorough washing and soaking of vegetables will remove some cadmium attached on their surfaces.

\* Long term excessive consumption of fresh Chinese flowering cabbages or Taro with the same levels of cadmium may affect the kidneys.

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

## Other tests

- The remaining samples for other tests (e.g. pesticides and colouring matters) were satisfactory.

## 2. Meat, poultry & products

- About 600 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 Chinese preserved meat, sausage and ham.
- Analysis included :
  - Microbiological tests
  - Chemical tests (e.g. preservatives, colouring matters and veterinary drug residues)
- Overall satisfactory rate was 99.8%, with 1 unsatisfactory sample in this report.



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

### Preservatives

- 1 unsatisfactory sample:

Sample	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
Fresh beef	Sulphur dioxide	37 ppm <sup>(1)</sup>

<sup>(1)</sup> Sulphur dioxide is not permitted in fresh (including chilled and frozen) meat. It is of low toxicity and will not cause adverse health effects upon normal consumption. For individuals who are allergic to this preservative, there may be symptoms of breathing difficulty, headache and nausea.

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

### Other tests

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

# 3. Aquatic products

- About 600 samples were collected. They generally covered fish, shellfish, shrimp/prawn, crab, squid and their products.
- Analysis included:
  - Microbiological tests
  - Chemical tests (e.g. preservatives, colouring matters, metallic contamination, biotoxins and veterinary drug residues)
- Overall satisfactory rate was 99.4%, with 2 unsatisfactory samples in this report.



# 3. Aquatic products (Cont'd)

## Pathogens

- Except for the previously announced 2 samples of smoked salmons, another 2 unsatisfactory samples:

Sample	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
2 Smoked salmons	Listeria monocytogenes	Detected <sup>(1)</sup>

<sup>(1)</sup> Listeria monocytogenes can cause symptoms such as diarrhoea and fever. While healthy individuals rarely develop symptoms, the effects on pregnant women, newborns, the elderly and people with lowered immunity could be severe and could include miscarriage and meningitis.



# 3. Aquatic products (Cont'd)

## Other tests

- The remaining samples for other tests (e.g. preservatives, colouring matters, metallic contamination, biotoxins and veterinary drug residues) were satisfactory.

## 4. Milk, milk products & frozen confections

- About 1200 samples were tested. They included ice-cream, cheese, milk and milk products.
- Analysis included:
  - Microbiological tests (total bacterial count and pathogens)
  - Chemical tests (e.g. melamine, preservatives, colouring matters, sweeteners and veterinary drug residues)
- Overall satisfactory rate was 99.7%, with 3 unsatisfactory samples in this report.



## 4. Milk, milk products & frozen confections (Cont'd)

### Microbiological examination

- 3 unsatisfactory samples:

Sample	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
* Thickened cream	Total bacterial count	$3.9 \times 10^7/\text{g}$ <sup>(1)</sup>
* Thickened light cream	Total bacterial count	$4.3 \times 10^7/\text{g}$ <sup>(1)</sup>
* Pure cream	Total bacterial count	48000/g <sup>(1)</sup>

<sup>(1)</sup> Total bacterial count is hygienic indicator. The detected levels exceeded the legal limit.

\* The samples were collected at import level. There was no stock remained to enter into the market.

# 4. Milk, milk products & frozen confections (Cont'd)

## Other tests

- The remaining samples for other tests (e.g. pathogens, melamine, preservatives, colouring matters, sweeteners and veterinary drug residues) were satisfactory.

# 5. Cereal, grains and products

- About 100 samples included rice/noodles, flour, bread and breakfast cereal.
- Analysis included:
  - Microbiological tests
  - Chemical tests (e.g. preservatives, sweeteners, colouring matters and metallic contamination)
- All samples were satisfactory.



## 6. Other food commodities

- About 1400 food samples were collected. Types included:

Mixed dishes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pathogens, preservatives &amp; colouring matters</li> </ul>	Condiments and sauces <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Preservatives, colouring matters &amp; sweeteners</li> </ul>
Dim Sum <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pathogens, preservatives &amp; colouring matters</li> </ul>	Snack <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pathogens, colouring matters &amp; sweeteners</li> </ul>
Beverages <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Preservatives, colouring matters, sweeteners &amp; metallic contamination</li> </ul>	Eggs and egg products <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Colouring matters &amp; melamine</li> </ul>
Sushi and sashimi <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Microbiological tests</li> </ul>	Others
Sugar and sweets <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Preservatives, colouring matters, sweeteners &amp; metallic contamination</li> </ul>	

- Overall satisfactory rate was 99.9%. Except for the previously announced sample of mandarin fish with pine nuts in sweet and sour sauce, there was 1 unsatisfactory sample in this report.

## 6. Other food commodities (Cont'd)

### Chemical tests

- 1 unsatisfactory sample:

Sample	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
Curry powder	Sudan I and IV (Colouring matter)	Detected <sup>(1)</sup>

<sup>(1)</sup> Not permitted to be used in food.

# 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 the trade

- Should comply with the legal requirements and follow “good manufacturing practice” (GMP). They should use permitted food additives only in an appropriate manner.
- Retailers should source food from reliable suppliers. Maintain a good recording system to allow source tracing if needed.
- Importers should source milk products from reliable food manufacturer. Manufacturers should ensure that the process of producing milk products is hygienic, including proper disinfection of the equipment. They should also pay attention to temperature control during transportation.

# Advice to consumers

- Fruit and vegetables are important components of a healthy diet as they are good sources of dietary fibre, vitamins and minerals. Vegetables should be soaked and washed thoroughly before consumption to remove some cadmium attached on the surface.
- Patronize licensed restaurants and reliable suppliers of food.
- Maintain a balanced diet to minimize risk.