

Food Safety Report for May 2010

Centre for Food Safety
Food and Environmental
Hygiene Department



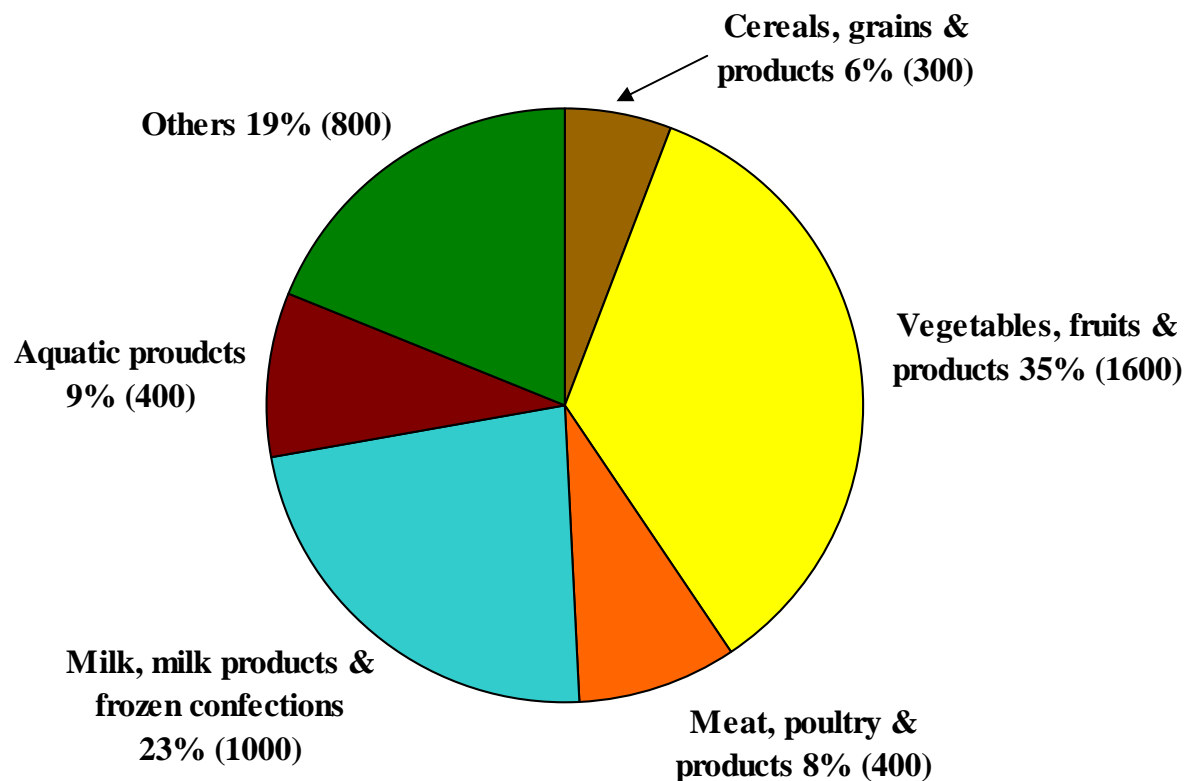
June 2010

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 Seasonal and Targeted Food Surveillance projects recently:
 - “Rice Dumplings”
 - “Microbiological quality of lunch boxes”
 - “Microbiological quality of prepackaged food that required reheating before consumption”
- This presentation gives an account of the food surveillance sample analyses that were completed in May 2010.

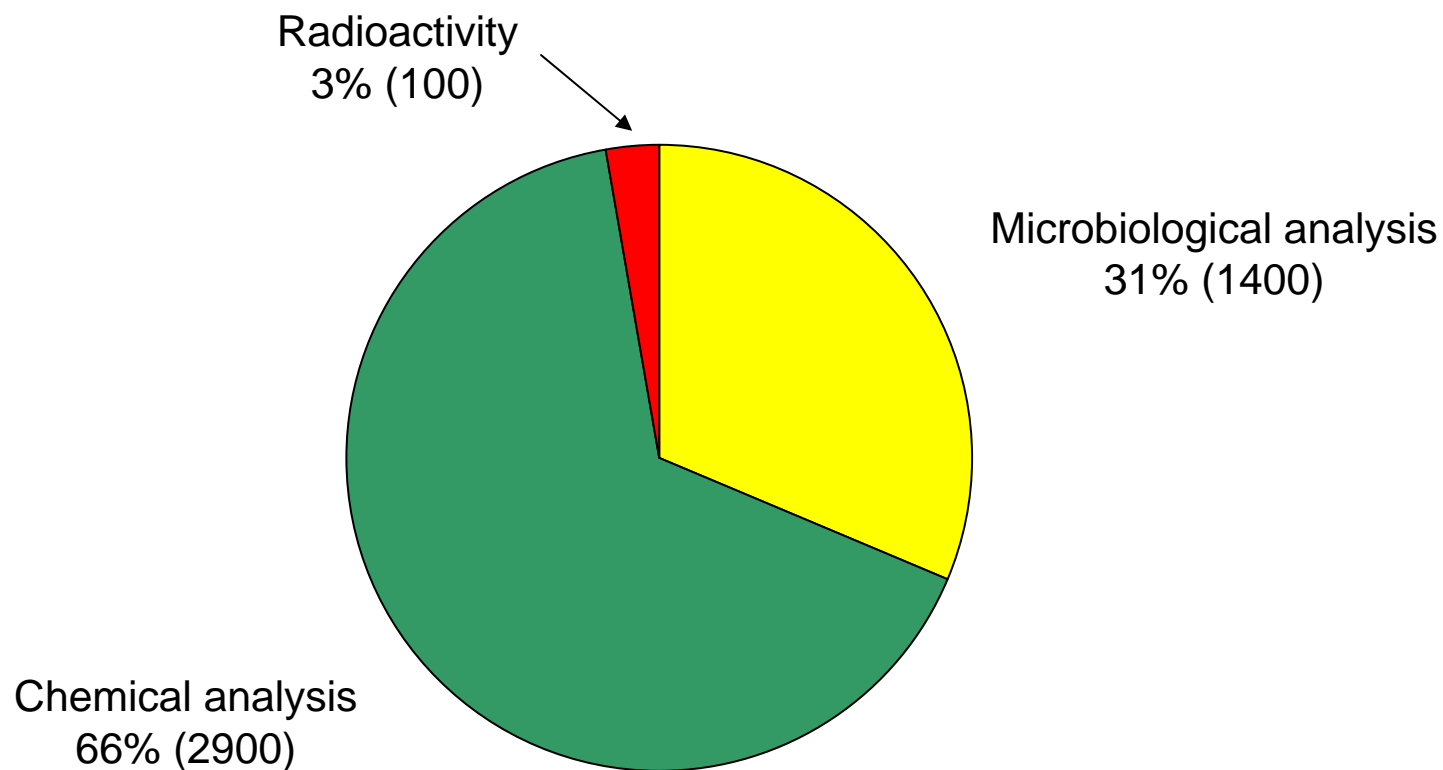
Types of food tested

- About 4500 food samples of various food groups were tested.



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

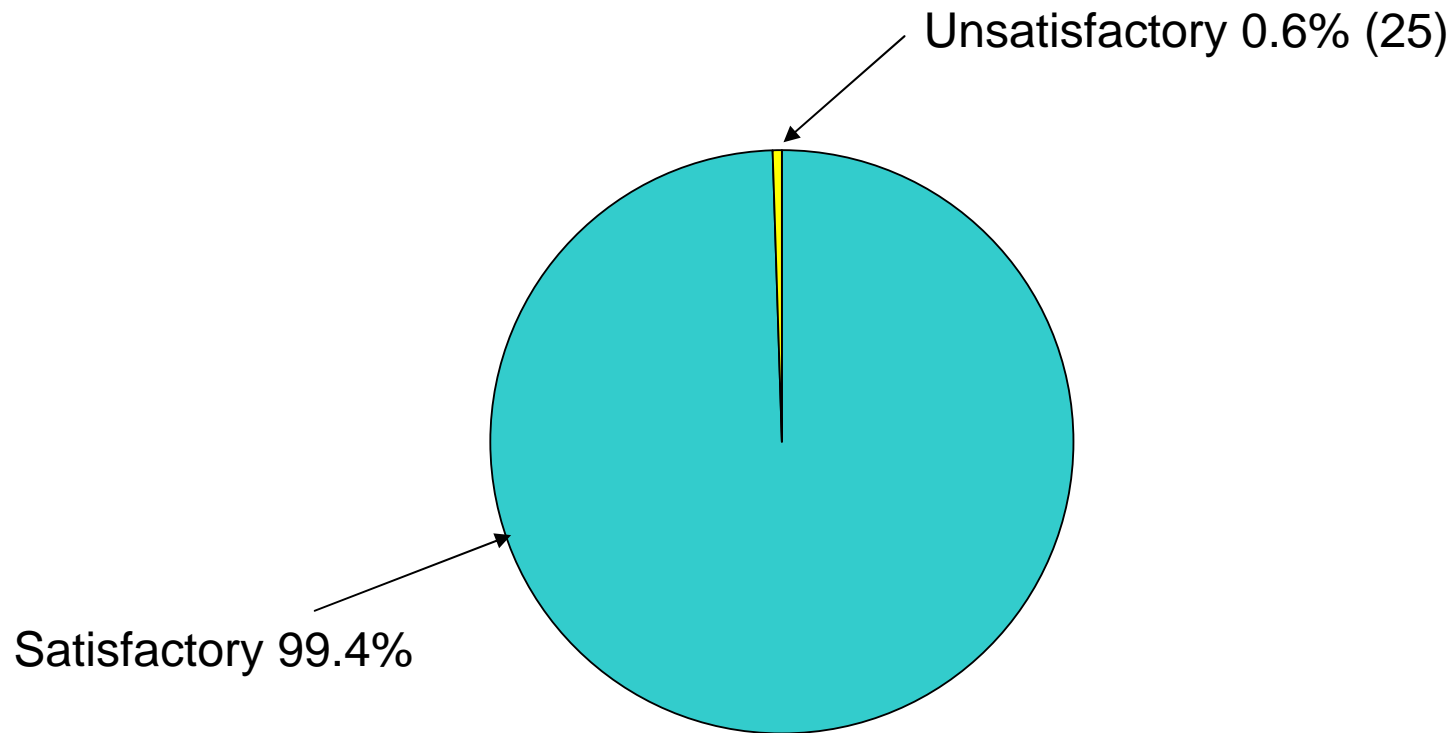
Types of testing



N.B.: Figures in brackets are rounded

Overall results

- Total 25 unsatisfactory samples. The overall satisfactory rate was 99.4%.



Unsatisfactory samples

- 25 unsatisfactory food samples included 2 previously announced results. The remaining 23 unsatisfactory samples are as follows:

Food Group	<i>No. of Samples Tested</i>	<i>No. of Unsatisfactory Samples</i>
Vegetables, fruits & products	1600	3
Meat, poultry & products	400	0
Aquatic products	400	5
Milk, milk products & frozen confections	1000	13
Cereal, grains & products	300	0
Others	800	2
<i>Total</i>	<i>4500</i>	<i>23</i>

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

1. Vegetables, fruits & products

- About 1600 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 (included methamidophos and isocarbophos)
 - Colouring matters
 - Metallic contamination
- Overall satisfactory rate was 99.8%, with 3 unsatisfactory samples in this report.



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

Metallic contamination

■ 3 unsatisfactory samples:

Sample	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
1 Watercress	Cadmium	0.14 ppm ⁽¹⁾
1 Spinach	Cadmium	0.65 ppm ^{(1)*}
1 Chives	Cadmium	0.26 ppm ⁽¹⁾

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

* Long term excessive consumption of Spinach 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. pathogens, pesticides and colouring matters) were satisfactory.

2. Meat, poultry & products

- About 400 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, veterinary drug residues and colouring matters)
- All samples were satisfactory.



3. Aquatic products

- About 400 samples were collected. They generally covered fish, shellfish, shrimp/prawn, crab, squid and their products.
- Analysis included:
 - Microbiological tests
 - Chemical tests (e.g. preservatives, metallic contamination, biotoxins and veterinary drug residues)
- Overall satisfactory rate was 98.2%. Except for the previously announced unsatisfactory samples of 1 mullet and 1 deep fried fish cake, there were 5 unsatisfactory samples in this report.



3. Aquatic products (Cont'd)

Preservatives

- 2 unsatisfactory samples:

Sample	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
2 Dried abalones	Sulphur dioxide	212 - 1307.4 ppm ⁽¹⁾

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

3. Aquatic products (Cont'd)

Metallic contamination

- 2 unsatisfactory samples:

Sample	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
1 Frozen blue fin tuna	Mercury	0.71 ppm ⁽¹⁾
1 Crab	Cadmium	2.51 ppm ⁽²⁾

- (1) The detected level exceeded legal limit. It is unlikely to pose significant health effect on consumers upon normal consumption. Long term excessive consumption of blue fin tuna with the same level of mercury may affect the nervous system.
- (2) The detected level exceeded legal limit. It is unlikely to pose significant health effect on consumers upon normal consumption. Long term excessive consumption of crab with the same level of cadmium may affect the kidney.

3. Aquatic products (Cont'd)

Biotoxins

- 1 unsatisfactory sample:

Sample	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
1 Fan scallop	Paralytic shellfish poisoning toxin	336 µg/100g ⁽¹⁾

(1) Paralytic shellfish poisoning toxin may cause neurological symptoms such as numbness of extremities and mouth

Veterinary drug residues

- Except for the previously announced unsatisfactory samples of 1 mullet and 1 deep fried fish cake, all samples tested for Veterinary drug residues were satisfactory.

3. Aquatic products (Cont'd)

Other tests

- The remaining samples for other tests (e.g. pathogens) were satisfactory.

4. Milk, milk products & frozen confections

- About 1000 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, colouring matters and sweeteners)
- Overall satisfactory rate was 98.7%, with 13 unsatisfactory samples in this report.



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

Microbiological examination

- 13 unsatisfactory samples:

Sample	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
*A batch of 4 thickened cream	Total bacterial count	40000-900000/g ⁽¹⁾
*A batch of 5 thickened light cream	Total bacterial count	190000-31000000/g ⁽¹⁾
*A batch of 3 pure cream	Total bacterial count	120000-510000/g ⁽¹⁾
1 Soft ice-cream	Coliform organisms	130/g ⁽¹⁾

⁽¹⁾ Total bacterial count and coliform organisms are hygienic indicators. 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, colouring matters and sweeteners) were satisfactory.

5. Cereal, grains and products

- About 300 samples included rice/noodles, flour, bread and breakfast cereal.
- Analysis included:
 - Microbiological tests
 - Chemical tests (e.g. preservatives, colouring matters and metallic contamination)
- All samples were satisfactory.



6. Other food commodities

- About 800 food samples were collected. Types included:

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

- Overall satisfactory rate was 99.8%, with 2 unsatisfactory samples in this report.

6. Other food commodities (Cont'd)

Chemical tests

- 2 unsatisfactory samples:

Samples	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
2 Steamed buns	Red 2G	Detected ⁽¹⁾

(1) Not permitted 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 trade

- Use permitted food additives only in an appropriate manner, follow “good manufacturing practice” (GMP) and comply with legal requirements.
- Retailers should source food from reliable suppliers. Maintain a good recording system to allow source tracing if needed.
- Importers should source frozen confections from reliable food manufacturer.
- Manufacturers should ensure that the process of producing frozen confections is hygienic, including proper disinfection of the equipment.

Advice to consumers

- Remove the viscera and gonads of shellfish before cooking, consume small amount of shellfish at any one meal, and avoid consuming the cooking liquid.
- 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.
- Fish contain many essential nutrients, such as omega-3 fatty acids and high quality proteins. Moderate consumption of a variety of fish is recommended. 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.
- The consumers should patronize reliable premises for buying food. They should maintain balanced diet to minimize food risk.