

Food Safety Report for August 2010

Centre for Food Safety
Food and Environmental
Hygiene Department



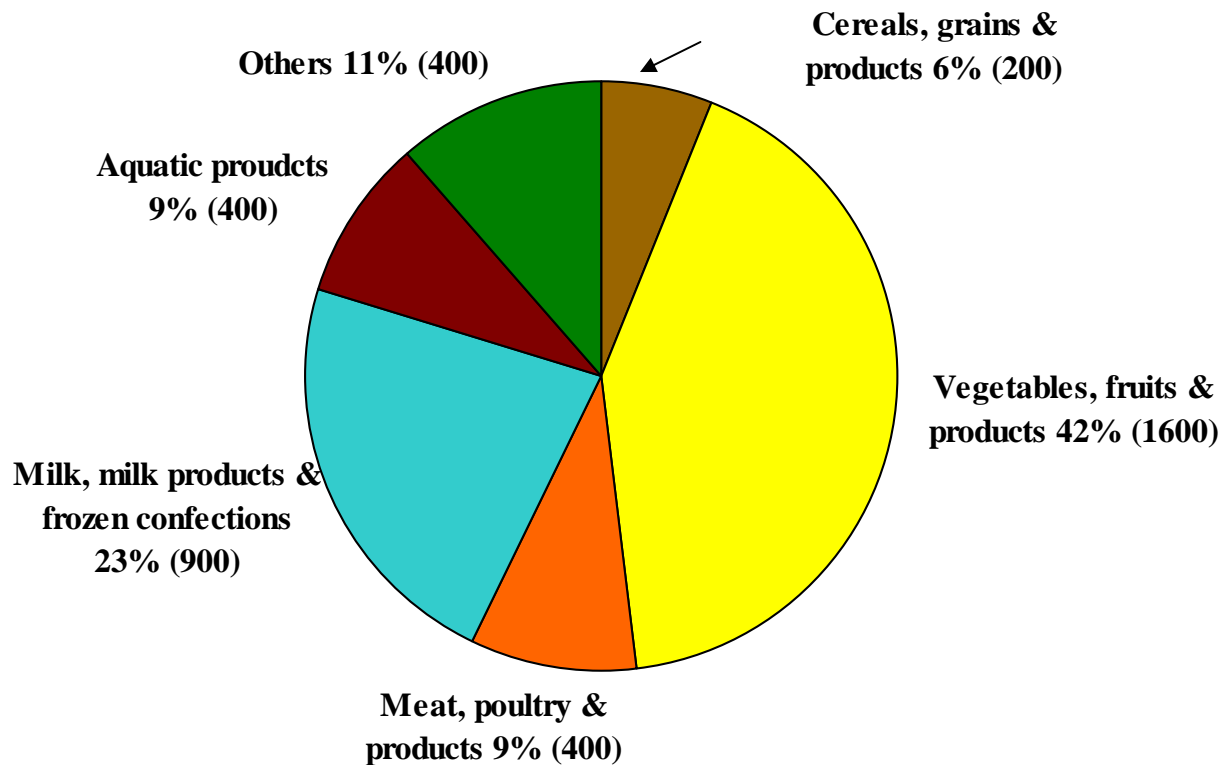
September 2010

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 1 Seasonal and 1 Targeted Food Surveillance projects recently:
 - “Mooncakes”
 - “Sulphur Dioxide in Meat (2nd Phase)”
- This presentation gives an account of the food surveillance sample analyses that were completed in August 2010.

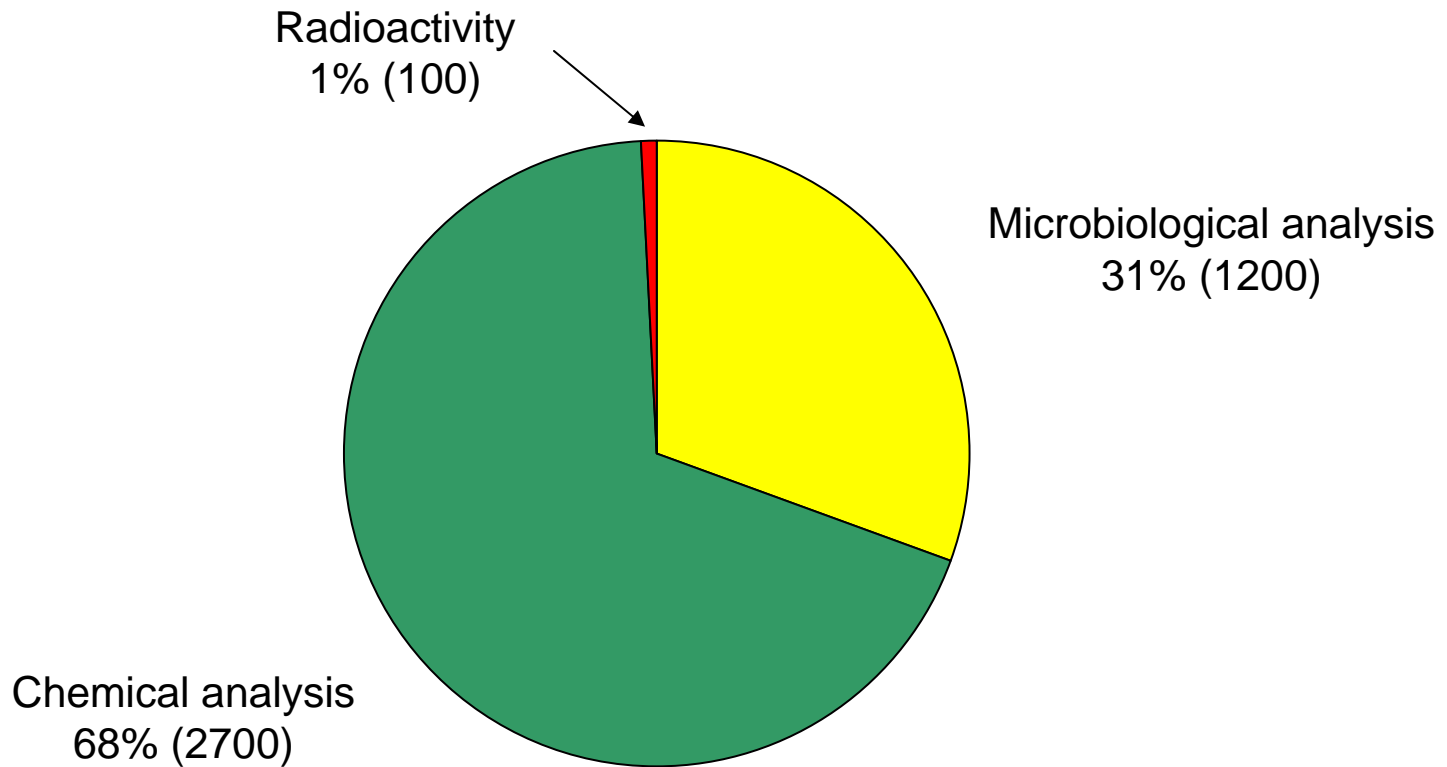
Types of food tested

- About 3900 food samples of various food groups were tested.



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

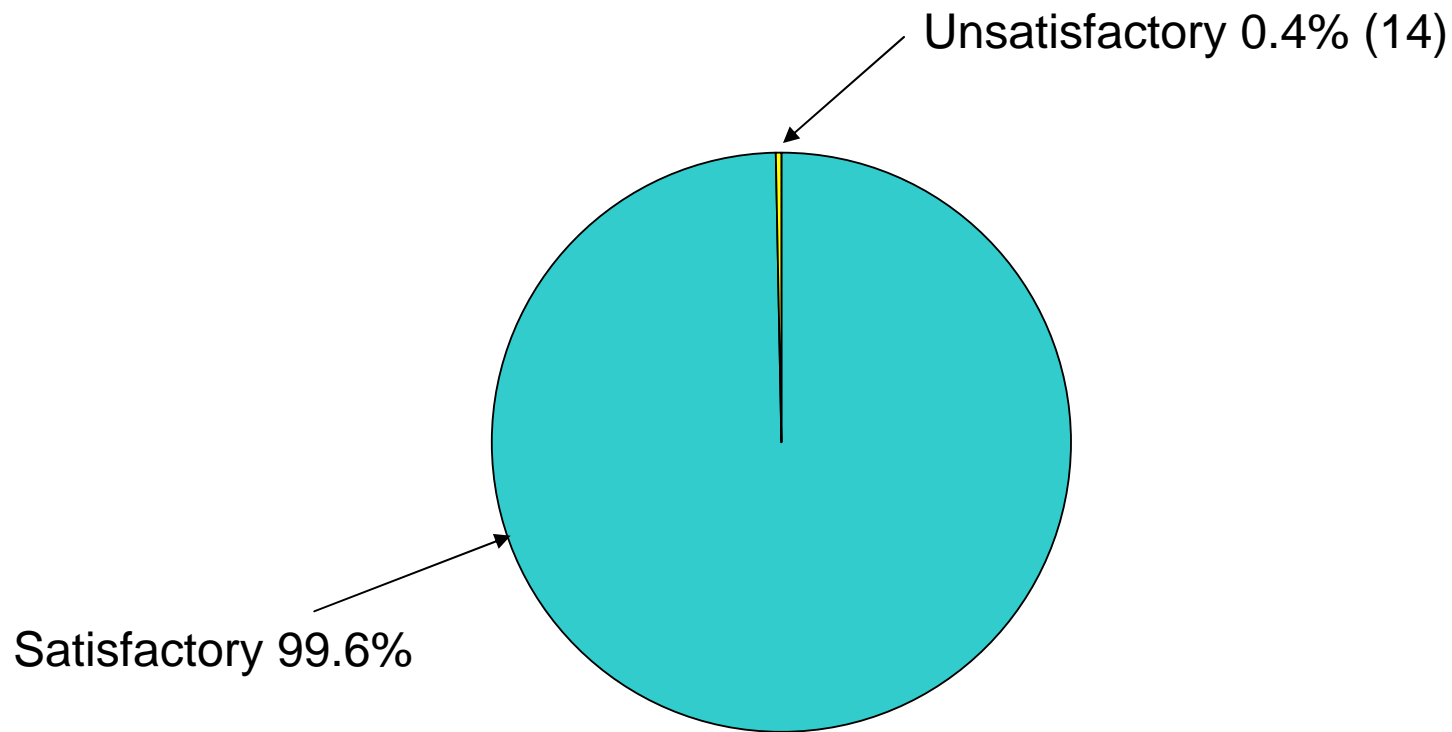
Types of testing



N.B.: Figures in brackets are rounded

Overall results

- Total 14 unsatisfactory samples. The overall satisfactory rate was 99.6%.



Unsatisfactory samples

- 14 unsatisfactory food samples included 5 previously announced results. The remaining 9 unsatisfactory samples are as follows:

Food Group	No. of Samples Tested	No. of Unsatisfactory Samples
Vegetables, fruits & products	1600	0
Meat, poultry & products	400	1
Aquatic products	400	6
Milk, milk products & frozen confections	900	0
Cereal, grains & products	200	0
Others	400	2
Total	3900	9

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, isocarbophos and HCH)
- Colouring matters
- Metallic contamination

- All samples 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)
- Overall satisfactory rate was 98.3%, with 1 unsatisfactory sample in this report.



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

Preservatives

- Except for the previously announced 5 samples of fresh beef, all samples were satisfactory.

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

Veterinary drug residues

- 1 unsatisfactory sample:

Sample	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
Frozen suckling pig	Chlortetracycline	0.55 ppm ⁽¹⁾

(1) The level exceeds the legal limit. However, based on the detected level, it is unlikely to pose adverse health effect upon normal consumption.

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

Other tests

- Samples for other tests (e.g. pathogens and colouring matters) 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, colouring matters, metallic contamination, biotoxins and veterinary drug residues)
- Overall satisfactory rate was 98.3%, with 6 unsatisfactory samples in this report.



3. Aquatic products (Cont'd)

Metallic contamination

- 4 unsatisfactory samples:

Sample	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
Frozen Cod Fillet	Mercury	1.00 ppm ⁽¹⁾
Frozen red shrimp	Mercury	0.78 ppm ⁽¹⁾
Fresh fan scallop	Cadmium	2.59 ppm ⁽²⁾
Fresh spanner crab	Cadmium	4.87 ppm ⁽²⁾

- (1) The detected levels exceeded legal limit. Occasional consumption will not cause adverse health effects, but consumption on a long-term basis may affect the nervous system.
- (2) The detected level exceeded legal limit. It is unlikely to pose adverse health effects upon normal consumption, but consumption on a long-term basis may affect the kidney.

3. Aquatic products (Cont'd)

Veterinary drug residues

- 2 unsatisfactory samples:

Sample	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
Chilled pomfret (Fish)	AOZ	0.0012 ppm ⁽¹⁾
Chilled grey mullet (Fish)	Malachite green	0.082 ppm ⁽²⁾

- (1) The detected level was unlikely to pose adverse health effects upon normal consumption.
- (2) Not permitted in food, but the detected level was unlikely to pose adverse health effects upon normal consumption.

3. Aquatic products (Cont'd)

Other tests

- The remaining samples for other tests (e.g. pathogens, preservatives, colouring matters and biotoxins) were satisfactory.

4. Milk, milk products & frozen confections

- About 900 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)
- All samples were satisfactory.



5. Cereal, grains and products

- About 200 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 400 food samples were collected. Types included:

Mixed dishes <ul style="list-style-type: none">Pathogens, preservatives & colouring matters	Condiments and sauces <ul style="list-style-type: none">Preservatives, colouring matters & sweeteners
Dim Sum <ul style="list-style-type: none">Preservatives & colouring matters	Snack <ul style="list-style-type: none">Preservatives & colouring matters
Beverages <ul style="list-style-type: none">Preservatives, colouring matters, sweeteners & metallic contamination	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">Preservatives, colouring matters, sweeteners & metallic contamination	

- Overall satisfactory rate was 99.5%, with 2 unsatisfactory samples in this report.

6. Other food commodities (Cont'd)

Microbiological tests

- 1 unsatisfactory sample:

Sample	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
Fried vermicelli, Singapore style	<i>Bacillus cereus</i> (Pathogen)	4.2 x 10 ⁵ /g ⁽¹⁾

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

6. Other food commodities (Cont'd)

Chemical tests

- 1 unsatisfactory sample:

Sample	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
Belachan prawn flavoured paste	Sulphur dioxide (preservative)	13.5 ppm ⁽¹⁾

- (1) Sulphur dioxide is not permitted in that kind of food. 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 effects on consumers. For individuals who are allergic to sulphur dioxide, they may have symptoms of breathing difficulty, headache and nausea.

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.
- For those samples detected with pathogens, they indicated that the food processing was unhygienic. The food trade 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

Advice to consumers

- Should patronize licensed restaurants and reliable retailers.
- Take a balanced diet so as to avoid excessive exposure to food additives from a small range of food items.
- 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.