

# Food Safety Report for September 2010

Centre for Food Safety  
Food and Environmental  
Hygiene Department



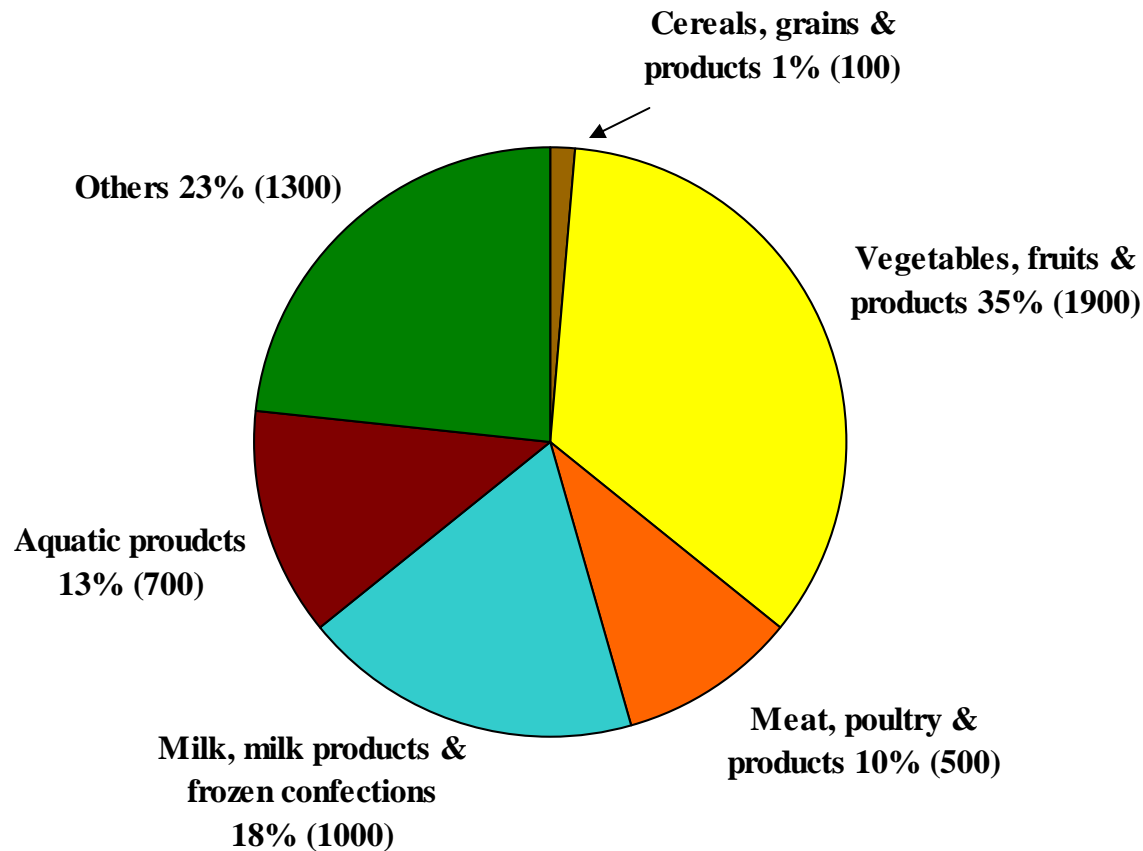
October 2010

# 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 Targeted Food Surveillance projects recently:
  - “Formaldehyde in Noodlefish”
  - “Microbiological Quality of Chinese Cold Dishes”
  - “Microbiological Quality of Bottled Water”
- This presentation gives an account of the food surveillance sample analyses that were completed in September 2010.

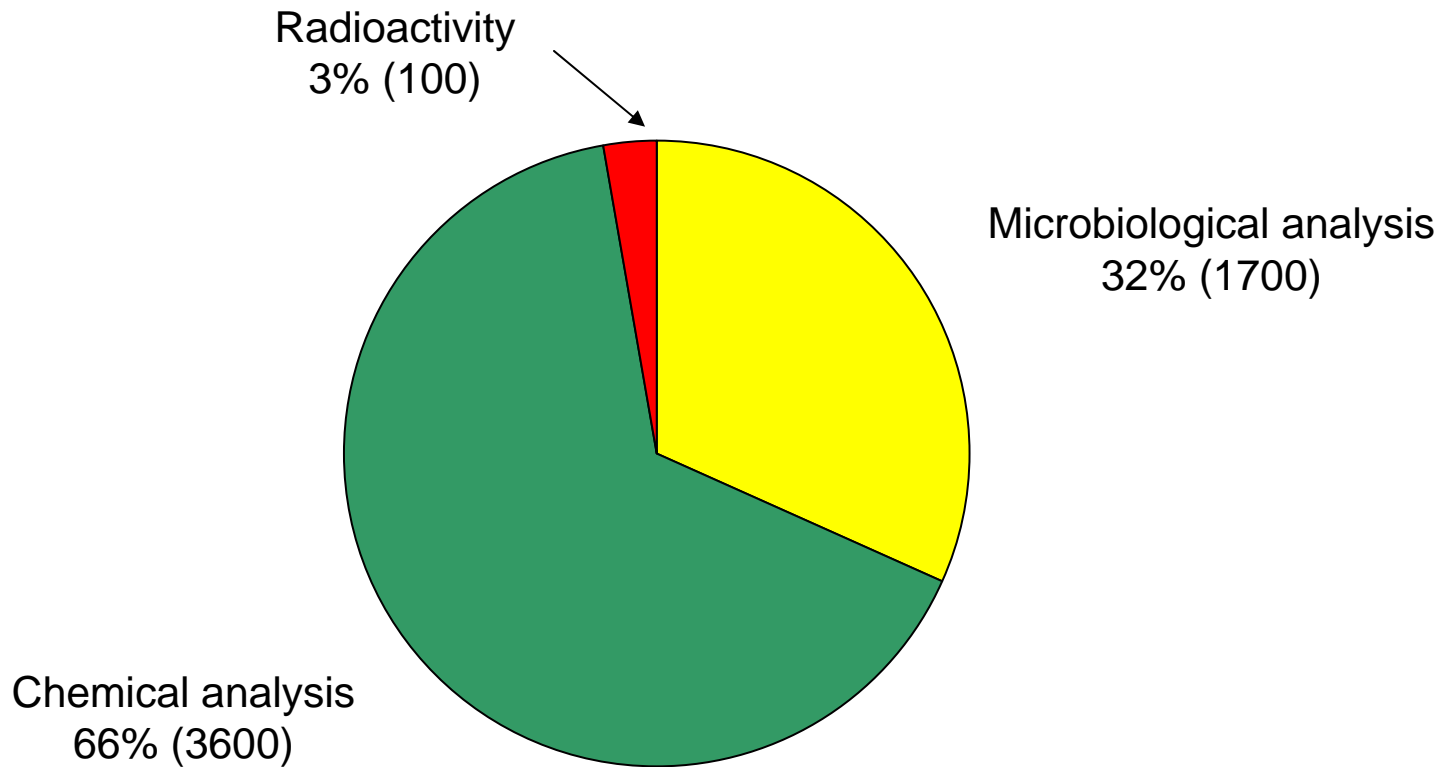
# Types of food tested

- About 5500 food samples of various food groups were tested.



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

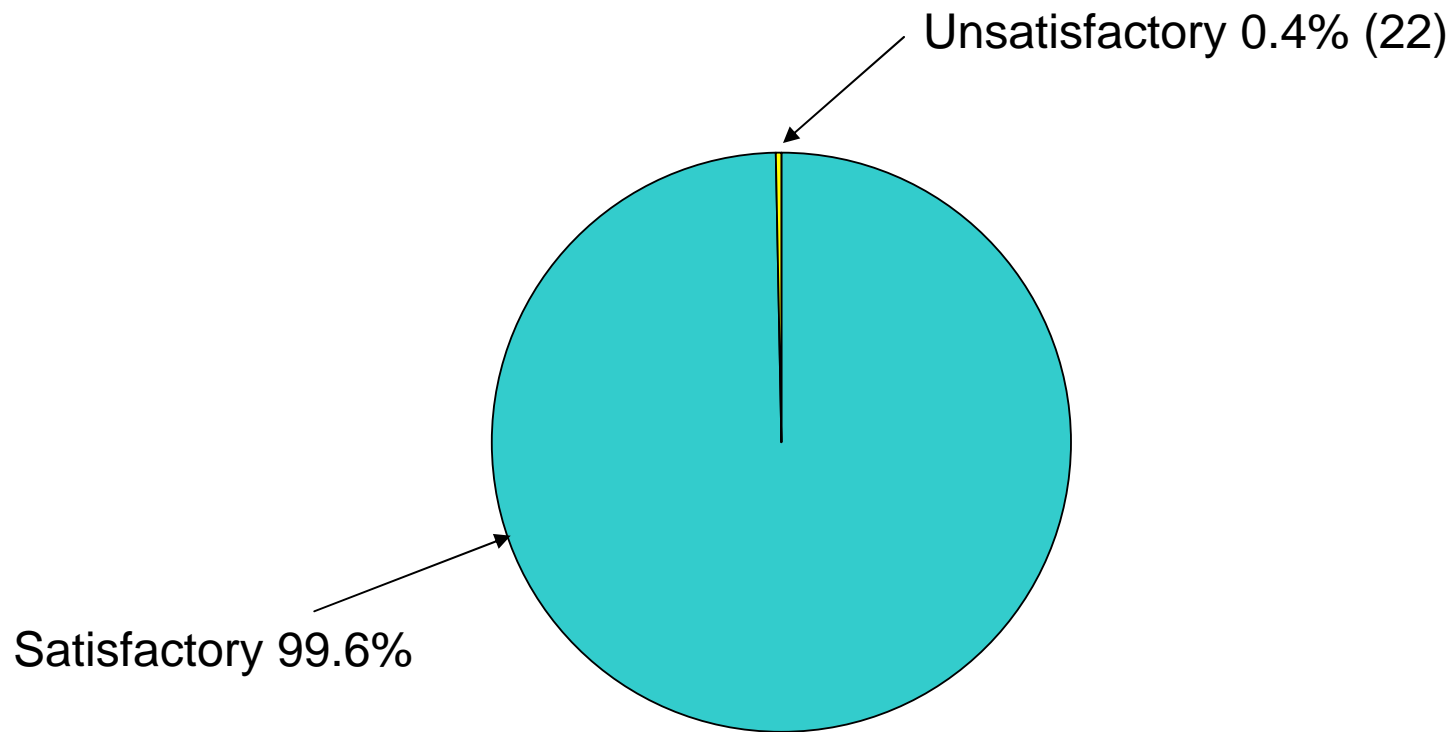
# Types of testing



N.B.: Figures in brackets are rounded

# Overall results

- Total 22 unsatisfactory samples. The overall satisfactory rate was 99.6%.



# Unsatisfactory samples

- 22 unsatisfactory food samples included 1 previously announced result. The remaining 21 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>	1900	2
<b>Meat, poultry &amp; products</b>	500	1
<b>Aquatic products</b>	700	6
<b>Milk, milk products &amp; frozen confections</b>	1000	9
<b>Cereal, grains &amp; products</b>	100	0
<b>Others</b>	1300	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>5500</b>	<b>21</b>

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

# 1. Vegetables, fruits & products

- About 1900 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 99.9%, with 2 unsatisfactory samples in this report.



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

## Metallic contamination

- 2 unsatisfactory samples:

Sample	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
Chili pepper	Cadmium	0.25 ppm <sup>(1)</sup>
Fresh shiitake mushroom	Cadmium	0.28 ppm <sup>(1)*</sup>

(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 fresh shiitake mushroom with the same level of cadmium may affect the kidneys.



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

## Other tests

- The remaining samples for other tests (e.g. pathogens, pesticides, preservatives 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 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 99.8%, with 1 unsatisfactory sample in this report.



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

### Veterinary drug residues

- 1 unsatisfactory sample:

Sample	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
Chilled chicken	Enrofloxacin	0.289 ppm <sup>(1)</sup>

(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, preservatives and colouring matters) were satisfactory.

# 3. Aquatic products

- About 700 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 99.1%, with 6 unsatisfactory samples in this report.



# 3. Aquatic products (Cont'd)

## Preservatives

- Except for the previously announced 1 sample of noodlefish, all samples were satisfactory.

### 3. Aquatic products (Cont'd)

#### Metallic contamination

- 3 unsatisfactory samples:

Sample	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
Swordfish sashimi	Mercury	0.99 ppm <sup>(1)</sup>
Fresh fan scallop	Cadmium	3.02 ppm <sup>(2)</sup>
Fresh spanner crab	Cadmium	4.2 ppm <sup>(2)</sup>

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

# 3. Aquatic products (Cont'd)

## Veterinary drug residues

- 3 unsatisfactory samples:

Sample	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
3 fish samples collected in an operation (Including white amur bream, freshwater grouper and bass)	Malachite green	0.0055-0.19 ppm <sup>(1)</sup>

<sup>(1)</sup> Not permitted in food, but the detected levels were 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, colouring matters and biotoxins) 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, preservatives, colouring matters and sweeteners)
- Overall satisfactory rate was 99.1%, with 9 unsatisfactory samples in this report.



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

## Microbiological examination

- 9 unsatisfactory samples:

Sample	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
*A batch of 4 strawberry cream based bars	Total bacterial count	51000-65000/g <sup>(1)</sup>
*A batch of 5 banana cream based bars	Total bacterial count	140000-190000/g <sup>(1)</sup>

<sup>(1)</sup> Total bacterial count and coliform organisms are hygienic indicators. The detected levels exceeded the legal limit.

\* The samples were collected at import level. Remaining stock of the consignments did not 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 and sweeteners) 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 1300 food samples were collected. Types included:

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

- Overall satisfactory rate was 99.8%, with 3 unsatisfactory samples in this report.

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

### Microbiological tests

- 3 unsatisfactory samples:

Sample	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
1 Fresh pear juice	<i>Staphylococcus aureus</i> (Pathogen)	920/ml <sup>(1)</sup>
2 Japanese cheese cakes	<i>Bacillus cereus</i> (Pathogen)	750000/g & 770000/g <sup>(1)</sup>

<sup>(1)</sup> *Staphylococcus aureus* and *Bacillus cereus* may cause gastrointestinal upset such as vomiting, 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.



# 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 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 the trade (Cont'd)

- 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

- 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.