Food Safety Report for July 2011

Centre for Food Safety
Food and Environmental
Hygiene Department

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食物環境衞生署
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

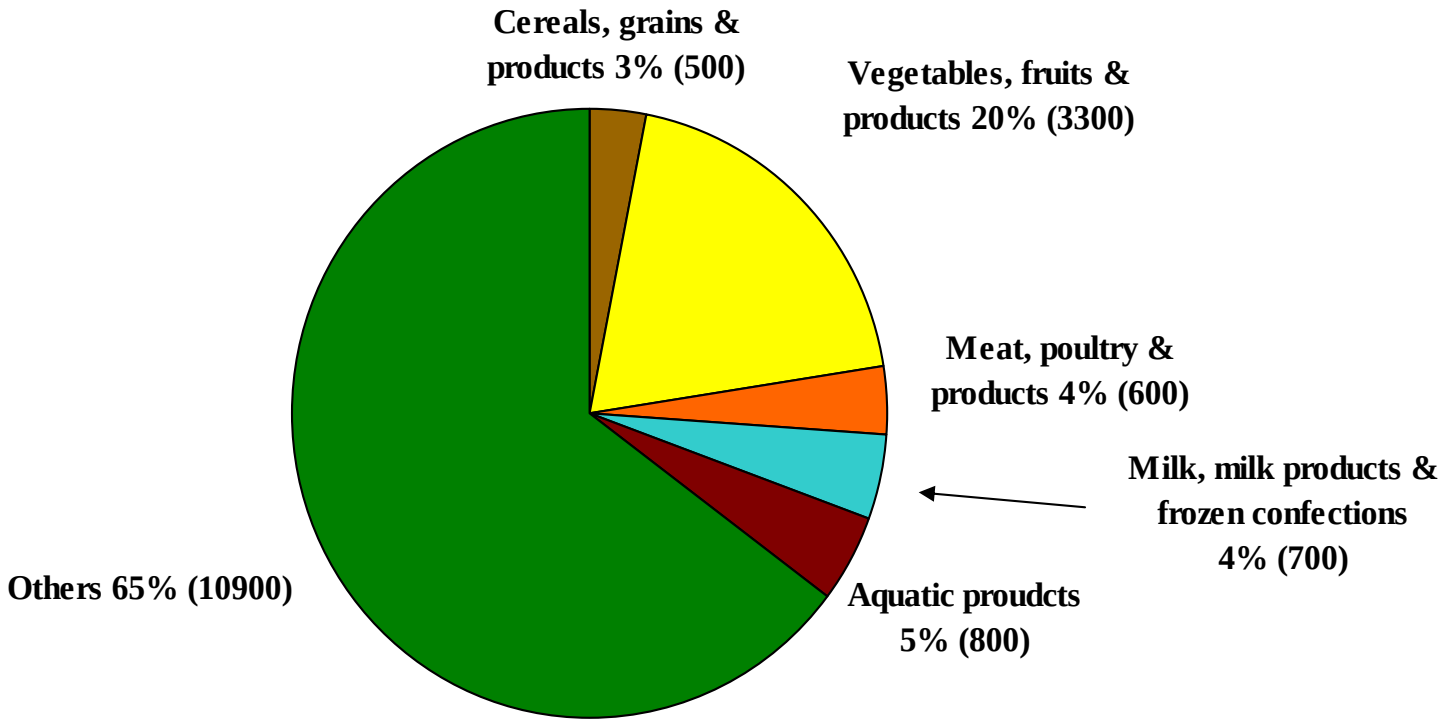
食物安全中心
Centre for Food Safety

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 microbiological, chemical and radiological tests.
- The CFS releases the "Food Safety Report" every month so as to allow the public to obtain the latest food safety information timely. Besides, the CFS has released the results of the following 2 food surveillance projects recently:
  - "Mooncakes"
  - "Formaldehyde in noodlefish"
- This presentation gives an account of the food surveillance sample result analyses in July 2011.

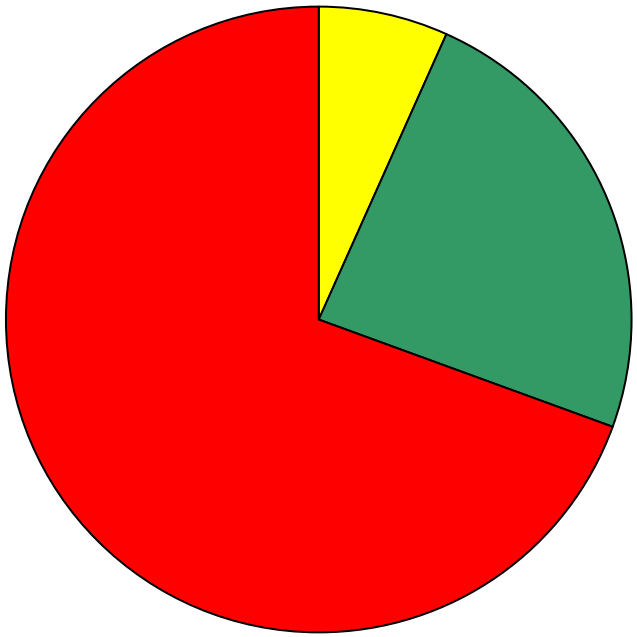
Types of food tested

- About 16800 food samples of various food groups were tested.



N.B.: Figures in brackets are rounded. Figures may not add up to total due to rounding.

Types of testing

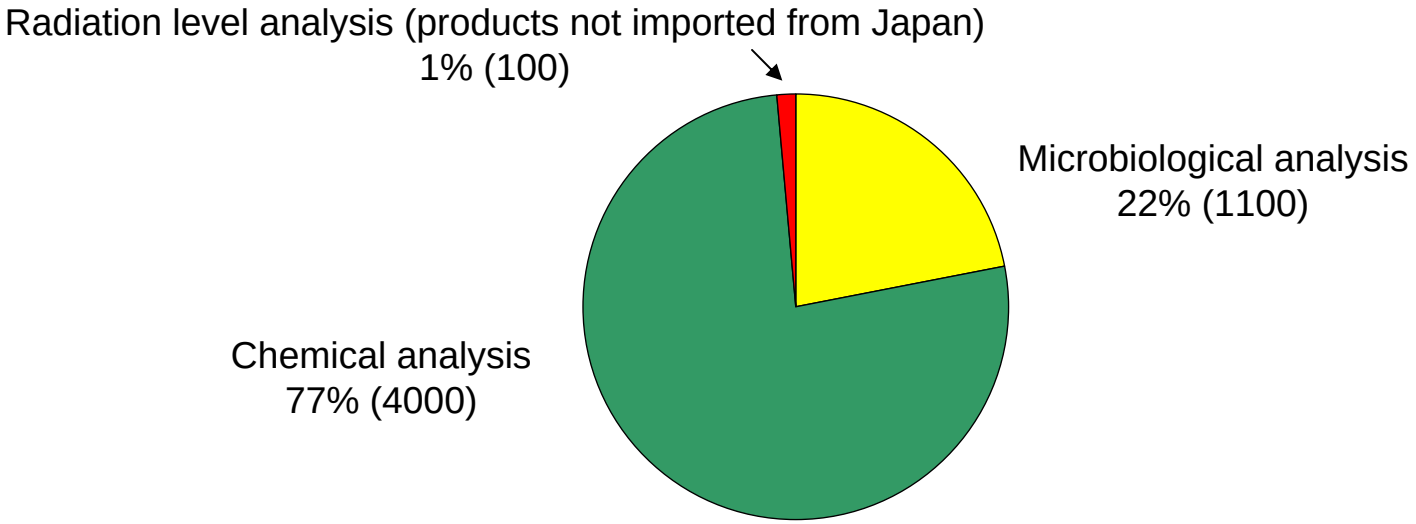


N.B.: Figures in brackets are rounded. Figures may not add up to total due to rounding.

Types of testing (Cont'd)

- In view of an incident involving a nuclear power plant in Japan after an earthquake, the CFS has stepped up surveillance of fresh produce imported from Japan for examination of radiation level from mid March. In July, all the radiation level test results of about 11500 samples were satisfactory.

- Except that, types of testing for the remaining food surveillance samples are distributed as follows:



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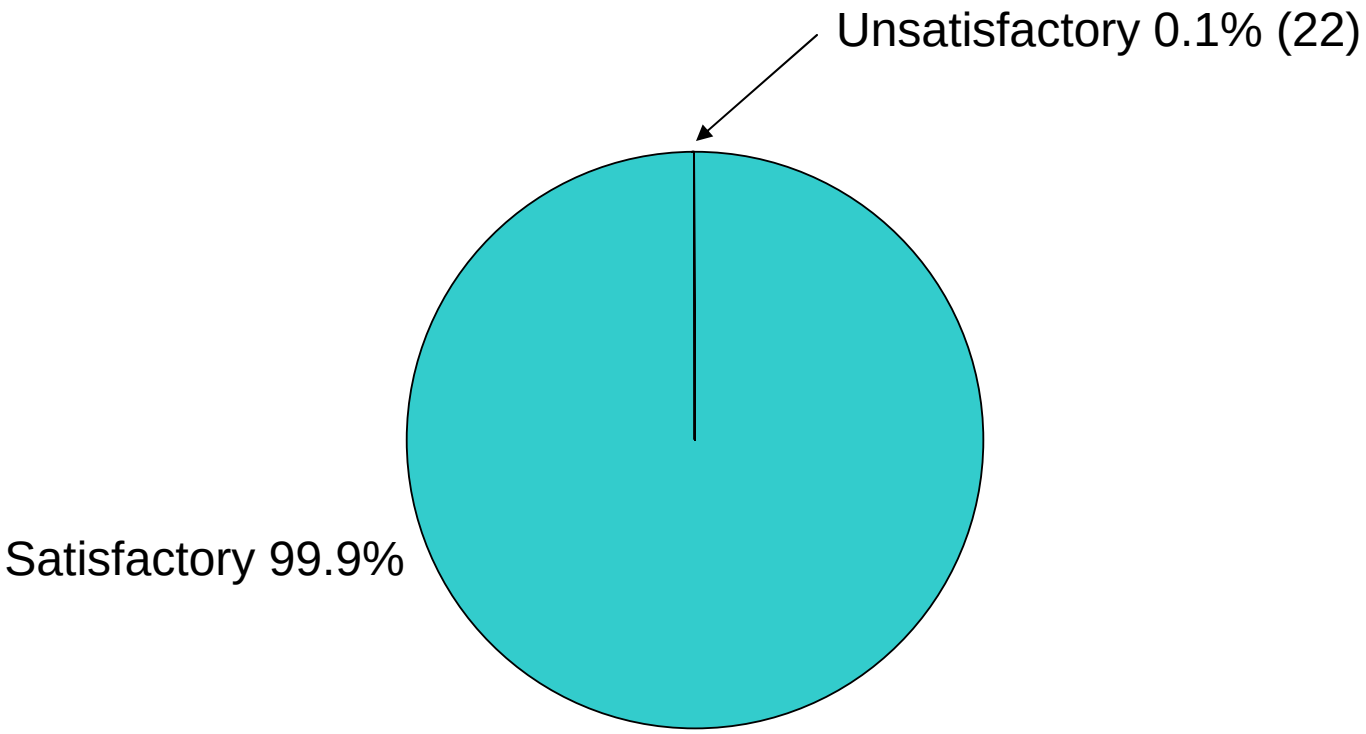
Overall results

- There were 22 unsatisfactory samples in total. Overall satisfactory rate was 99.9%.



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Unsatisfactory samples

- 22 unsatisfactory food samples included 12 previously announced results. The remaining 10 unsatisfactory samples are as follows:

Food Group	***No. of Samples Tested***	***No. of Unsatisfactory Samples***
Vegetables, fruits & products	3300	1
Meat, poultry & products	600	0
Aquatic products	800	2
Milk, milk products & frozen confections	700	0
Cereal, grains & products	500	0
Others	10900	7
Total	***16800***	***10***

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)
    - Metallic contamination
  - Radiation level tests

- Overall satisfactory rate was 99.9%. Except for the previously announced 2 unsatisfactory preserved bean curd samples [containing *Bacillus cereus*], there was 1 unsatisfactory sample in this report.

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

Pesticides

- 1 unsatisfactory sample:

Sample	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
Ceylon spinach	Endosulfan	8.51 ppm (1)

(1) Occasional consumption will not cause adverse health effect, but consumption on a long-term basis may affect the kidneys.

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

Other tests

- The remaining samples for other tests (e.g. pathogens and metallic contamination) 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 and veterinary drug residues)
  - Radiation level tests

- All samples were satisfactory.





3. Aquatic products

- About 800 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)
  - Radiation level tests

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




3. Aquatic products (Cont'd)

Metallic contamination

- 2 unsatisfactory samples:

Sample	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
2 Frozen tuna fish samples	Mercury	0.71 and 0.93 ppm (1)

(1) The detected levels exceeded legal limit. Occasional consumption will not cause adverse health effect, but consumption on a long-term basis may affect the nervous system.

3. Aquatic products (Cont'd)

Other tests

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

4. Milk, milk products & frozen confections

- About 700 samples included ice-cream, cheese, milk and milk products.

- Analysis included:
  - Microbiological tests (total bacterial count and pathogens , e.g. *Salmonella* and *Listeria monocytogenes*)
  - Chemical tests (e.g. melamine, preservatives, colouring matters, sweeteners and veterinary drug residues)
  - Radiation level tests

- All samples were satisfactory.




5. Cereal, grains and products

- About 500 samples included rice/noodles, flour, bread and breakfast cereal.
- Analysis included:
  - Microbiological tests
  - Chemical tests (e.g. preservatives, colouring matters and metallic contamination)
  - Radiation level tests
- All samples were satisfactory.




6. Other food commodities

- About 10900 food samples were collected. Types included:

Mixed dishes ▫ Pathogens and preservatives	Condiments and sauces ▫ Preservatives and colouring matters
Dim Sum ▫ Pathogens and preservatives	Snack ▫ Pathogens and colouring matters
Beverages ▫ Preservatives and metallic contamination	Eggs and egg products ▫ Colouring matters and melamine
Sushi and sashimi ▫ Microbiological tests	Others
Sugar and sweets ▫ Preservatives, colouring matters and metallic contamination	

- Overall satisfactory rate was 99.8%, with 7 unsatisfactory samples in this report.

6. Other food commodities (Cont'd)

Microbiological analysis

- 1 unsatisfactory sample:

Samples	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
Spinach with preserved bean curd	*Bacillus cereus*	2.6×10^6/g (1)

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

6. Other food commodities (Cont'd)

Preservatives

- 6 unsatisfactory samples:

Sample	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
Mung bean dessert with QQ pills	Boric acid	530 ppm (1)
2 Fried fritter samples	Boric acid	560 and 630 ppm (1)
Chili sauce	Benzoic acid	2000 ppm (2)
Curry paste	Benzoic acid	2600 ppm (2)
Oyster sauce	Benzoic acid	3100 ppm (2)

(1) Not permitted in food, but the detected levels were unlikely to pose adverse health effects upon normal consumption.

(2) The detected levels exceeded legal limits, but they are of low toxicity and will not cause adverse health effects.

Test results of plasticisers

- In view of the plasticiser contamination incident in Taiwan, samples of Taiwan food and drinks have been collected from the local market to test for di(2-ethylhexyl)phthalate (DEHP), di-isononyl phthalate (DINP), and di-butyl phthalate (DBP).

- In July 2011, 240 samples finished the test. In which, results for 10 samples were unsatisfactory and all have been announced.

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 and consumers

- 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.
- Consumers should patronize licensed restaurants and reliable retailers. They should 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.