Food Safety Report for September 2011

Centre for Food Safety
Food and Environmental
Hygiene Department

October 2011

食物環境衞生署
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

食物安全中心
Centre for Food Safety

Introduction

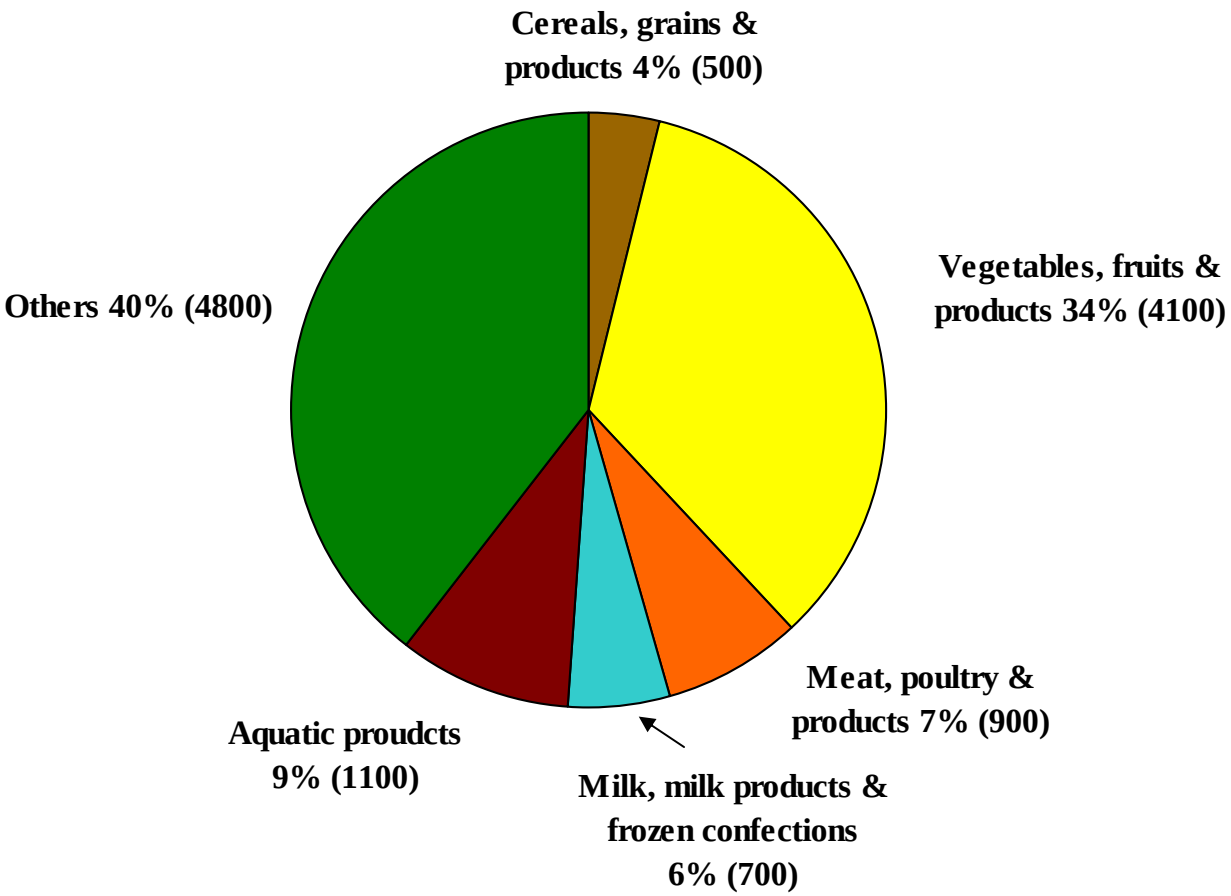
- The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) adopts the three-tier food surveillance approach, i.e. routine food surveillance, targeted food surveillance and seasonal food surveillance to collect samples at import, wholesale and retail levels for microbiological, chemical and radiological tests.

- 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 1 Targeted and 1 Seasonal Food Surveillance projects recently:
  - "Microbiological Quality of Bottled Water"
  - "Hairy crabs"

- This presentation gives an account of the food surveillance sample result analyses in September 2011.

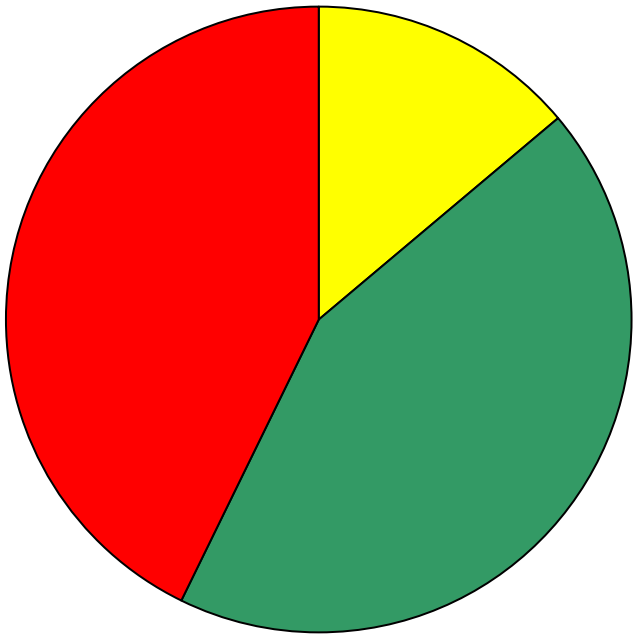
Types of food tested

- About 12000 food samples of various food groups were tested.



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

Types of testing

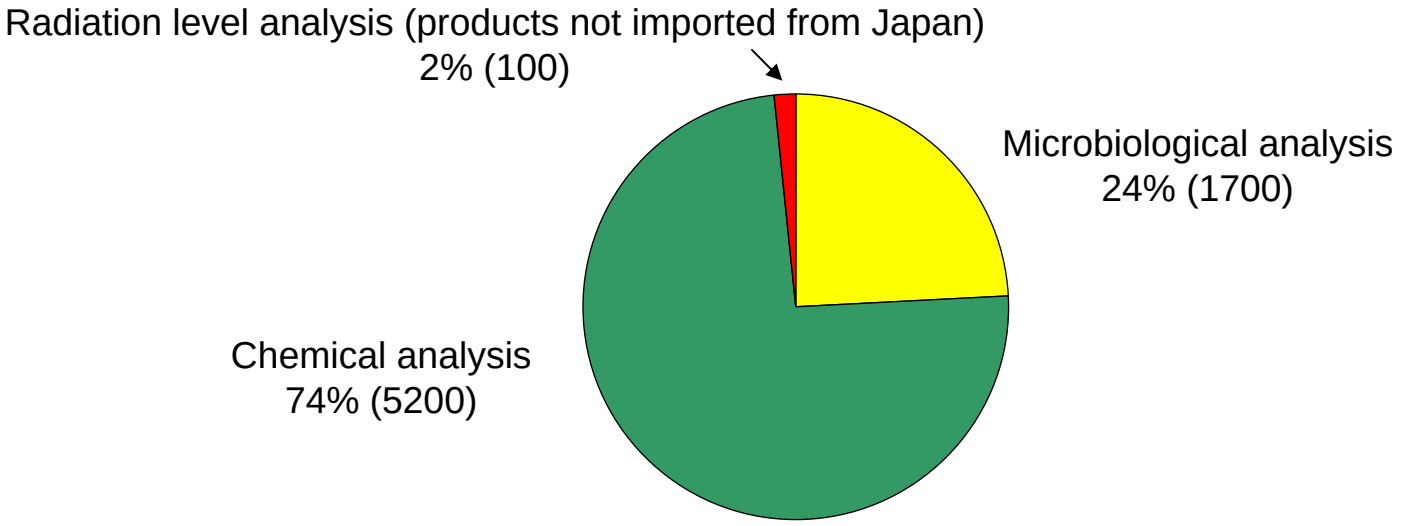


N.B.: Figures in brackets are rounded and may not add up to total due to rounding.

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 September, all the radiation level test results of about 5000 samples were satisfactory.

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



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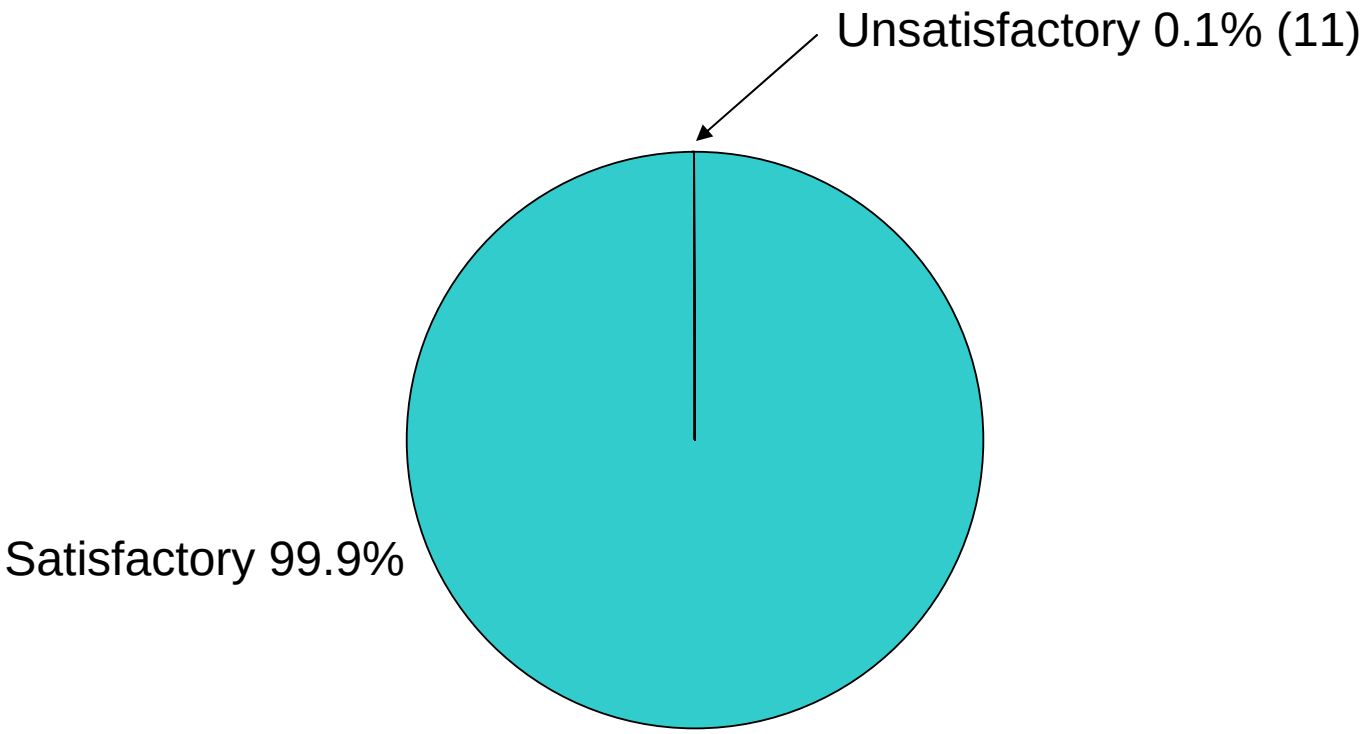
Overall results

- There were 11 unsatisfactory samples in total. Overall satisfactory rate was 99.9%.



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Unsatisfactory samples

- 11 unsatisfactory food samples included 1 previously announced result. The remaining 10 unsatisfactory samples are as follows:

Food Group	*No. of Samples Tested*	*No. of Unsatisfactory Samples*
Vegetables, fruits & products	4100	2
Meat, poultry & products	900	3
Aquatic products	1100	2
Milk, milk products & frozen confections	700	1
Cereal, grains & products	500	1
Others	4800	1
Total	***12000***	***10***

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

1. Vegetables, fruits & products

- About 4100 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
  - Radiation level tests

- Overall satisfactory rate was 99.9%. Except for the previously announced 1 unsatisfactory "vegetarian goose" sample [containing *Staphylococcus aureus*], there were 2 unsatisfactory samples in this report.

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

Preservatives

- 1 unsatisfactory sample:

Sample	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
Bamboo fungus	Sulphur Dioxide	2700 ppm (1)

(1) A commonly used preservative but the detected levels exceeded the legal limit (500 ppm). It is of low toxicity and will not pose adverse health effect to consumers. For individuals who are allergic to this preservative, there may be symptoms of breathing difficulty, headache and nausea. Since sulphur dioxide is water soluble, most of it can be removed through washing, soaking and cooking.

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

Metallic contamination

- 1 unsatisfactory sample:

Sample	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
Ceylon spinach	Cadmium	0.14 ppm (1)

(1) The level exceeded the legal limit (0.1 ppm). Upon normal consumption, it is unlikely to pose adverse health effect to consumers. Thorough washing and soaking of vegetables will remove cadmium attached on their surfaces.

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 900 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)
  - Radiation level tests

- Overall satisfactory rate was 99.7%, with 3 unsatisfactory samples in this report.





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

Pathogens

- 1 unsatisfactory sample:

Sample	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
Poached chicken	*Staphylococcus aureus*	480000/g (1)

(1) Intake of food with excessive amount of *Staphylococcus aureus* may cause gastrointestinal upset such as vomiting, abdominal pain and diarrhoea.

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

Preservatives

- 1 unsatisfactory sample:

Sample	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
Fresh beef	Sulphur dioxide	600 ppm (1)

(1) Sulphur dioxide is not permitted in fresh (including chilled and frozen) meat. It is of low toxicity and will not pose adverse health effect to consumers. For individuals who are allergic to this preservative, there may be symptoms of breathing difficulty, headache and nausea. Since sulphur dioxide is water soluble, most of it can be removed through washing, soaking and cooking.

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

Veterinary drug residues

- 1 unsatisfactory sample:

Sample	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
Frozen mutton	Chloramphenicol	0.0005 ppm (1)

(1) Not permitted in food. However, normal consumption of the product with the detected level was unlikely to pose adverse health effects.

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

Other tests

- Samples for other tests (e.g., colouring matters) were satisfactory.

3. Aquatic products

- About 1100 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, veterinary drug residues and colouring matters)
  - Radiation level tests

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




3. Aquatic products (Cont'd)

Veterinary drug residues

- 2 unsatisfactory samples:

Sample	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
Dried shrimp	Chloramphenicol	0.0008 ppm (1)
Steamed Grass carp	Malachite green	2.2 ppm (1)

(1) Not permitted in food. However, normal consumption of the product with the detected level was unlikely to pose adverse health effect.

3. Aquatic products (Cont'd)

Other tests

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

4. Milk, milk products & frozen confections

- About 700 samples were tested. They included ice-cream, cheese, milk and milk products.
- Analysis included:
  - Microbiological tests (total bacterial count, pathogens e.g. *Salmonella* and *Staphylococcus aureus*)
  - Chemical tests (e.g. melamine, veterinary drug residues, colouring matters and sweeteners)
- Overall satisfactory rate was 99.9%, with 1 unsatisfactory sample in this report.




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

Microbiological tests

- All samples were satisfactory for pathogens.
- 1 sample was unsatisfactory for hygienic indicator:

Sample	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
Milk beverage	Colony count	>10 (1)

(1) Colony count is a hygienic indicator. The detected quantity exceeded the legal limit (10). The affected batch of products were marked and sealed by the CFS. None of them have entered into the local market.

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

Other tests

- The remaining samples for other tests (e.g. melamine, veterinary drug residues, colouring matters and sweeteners) 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)
- Overall satisfactory rate was 99.8%, with 1 unsatisfactory sample in this report.




5. Cereal, grains and products (Cont'd)

Metallic contamination

- 1 unsatisfactory sample:

Sample	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
Rolled oats	Cadmium	0.16 ppm (1)

(1) The level exceeded the legal limit (0.1 ppm). Upon normal consumption, it is unlikely to pose adverse health effect to consumers.

5. Cereal, grains and products (Cont'd)

Other tests

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

6. Other food commodities

- About 4800 food samples were collected. Types included:

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

- Overall satisfactory rate was 99.9%, with 1 unsatisfactory sample in this report.

6. Other food commodities (Cont'd)

Microbiological analysis

- 1 unsatisfactory sample:

Samples	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
Vietnamese rice noodles with cattle tongue	*Bacillus cereus*	690000/g (1)

(1) *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.
- For those samples detected with pathogens, they indicated that the food processing was unhygienic. The 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.
- Should take a balanced diet so as to avoid excessive exposure to food additives from a small range of food items.