Food Safety Report for January 2013

Centre for Food Safety
Food and Environmental
Hygiene Department

February 2013

食物環境衞生署
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

食物安全中心
Centre for Food Safety

Introduction

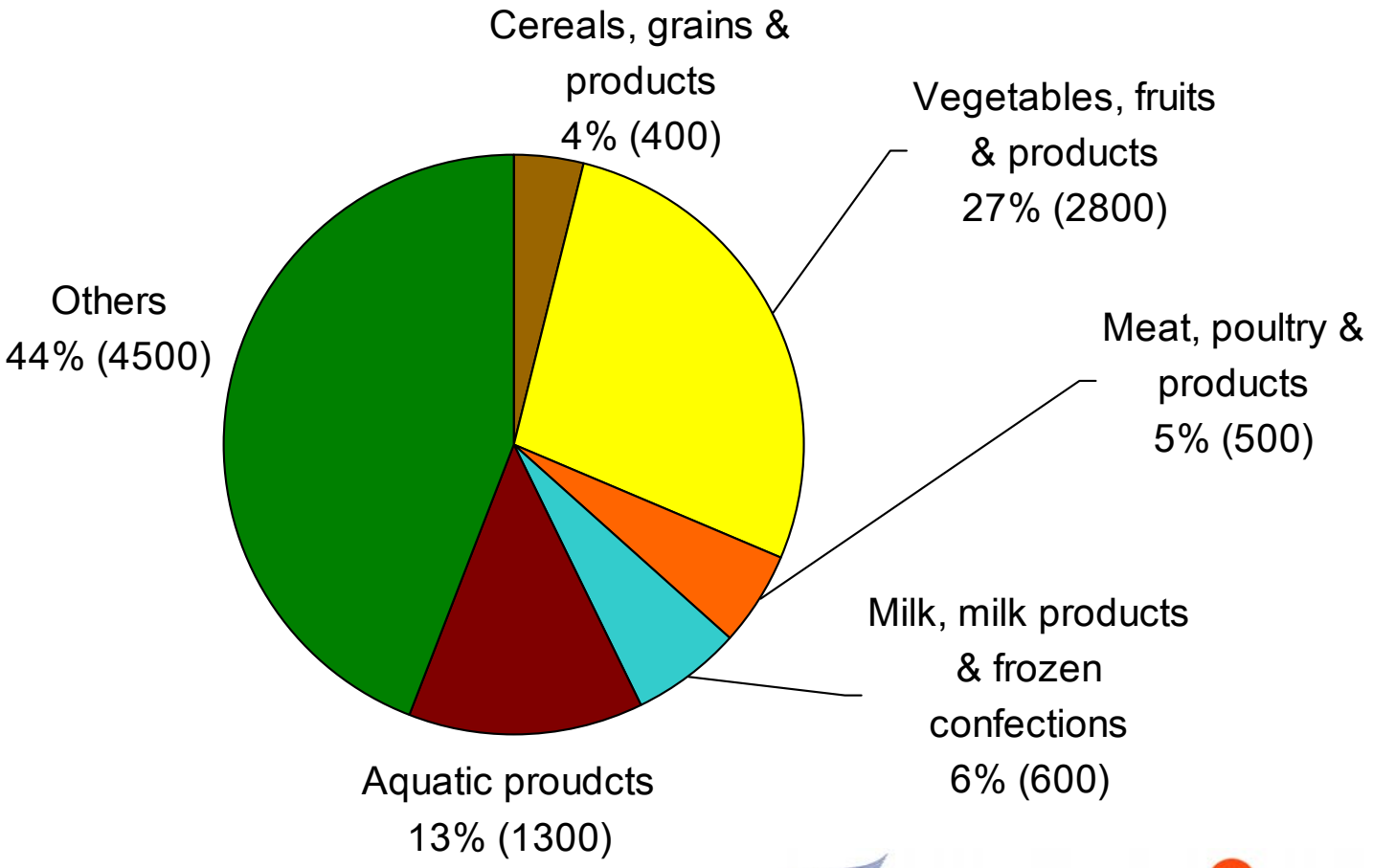
- The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) adopts the three-tier food surveillance approach, i.e. routine food surveillance, targeted food surveillance and seasonal food surveillance to collect samples at import, wholesale and retail levels for microbiological, chemical and radiological tests.

- CFS releases the “Food Safety Report” every month so as to allow the public to obtain the latest food safety information timely.

- This presentation gives an account of the food surveillance sample result analyses in January 2013.

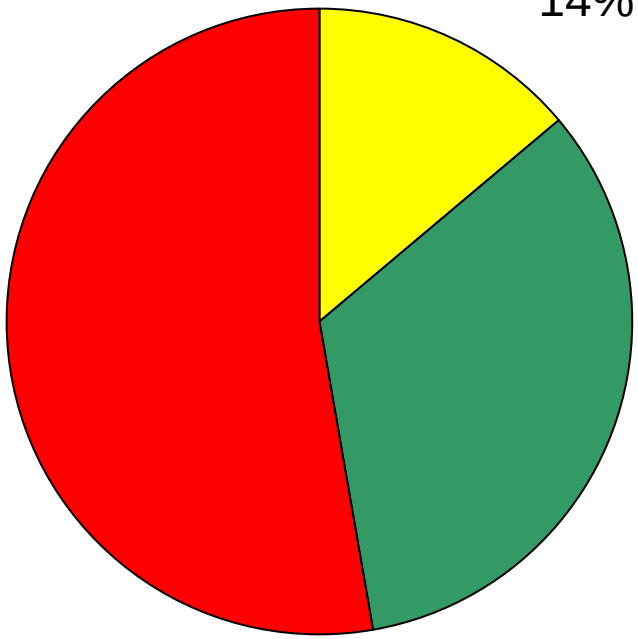
Types of food tested

- About 10100 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

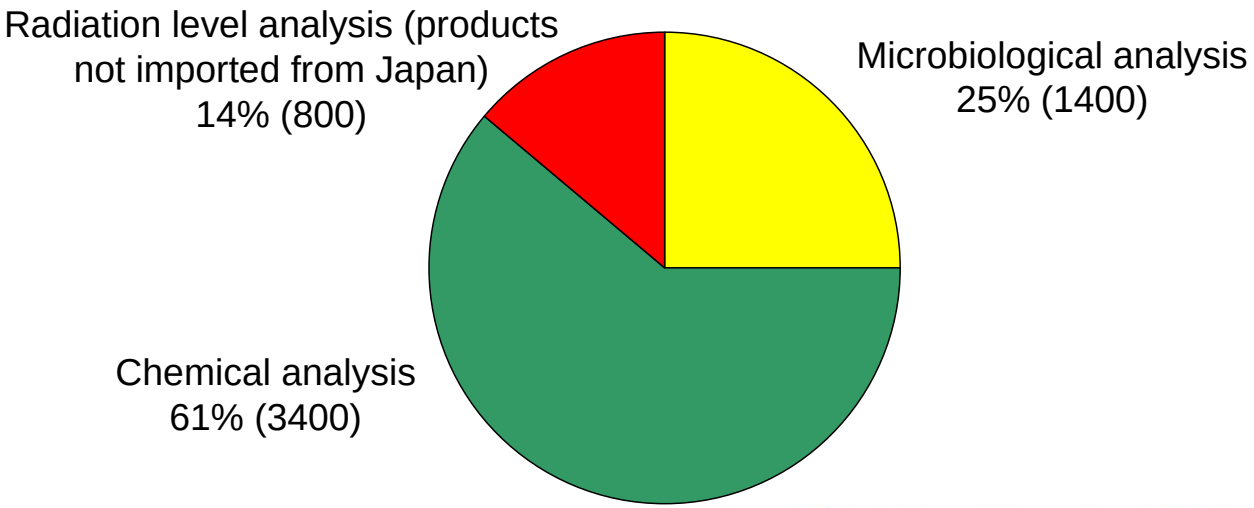


N.B.: Figures in brackets are rounded and may not add up to total due to rounding.

Types of testing (Cont'd)

- In response to the Fukushima nuclear power plant incident in Japan, CFS has stepped up surveillance of imported Japanese food for testing of radiation level from mid-March 2011. In January 2013, all the radiation level test results of about 4600 samples were satisfactory.

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



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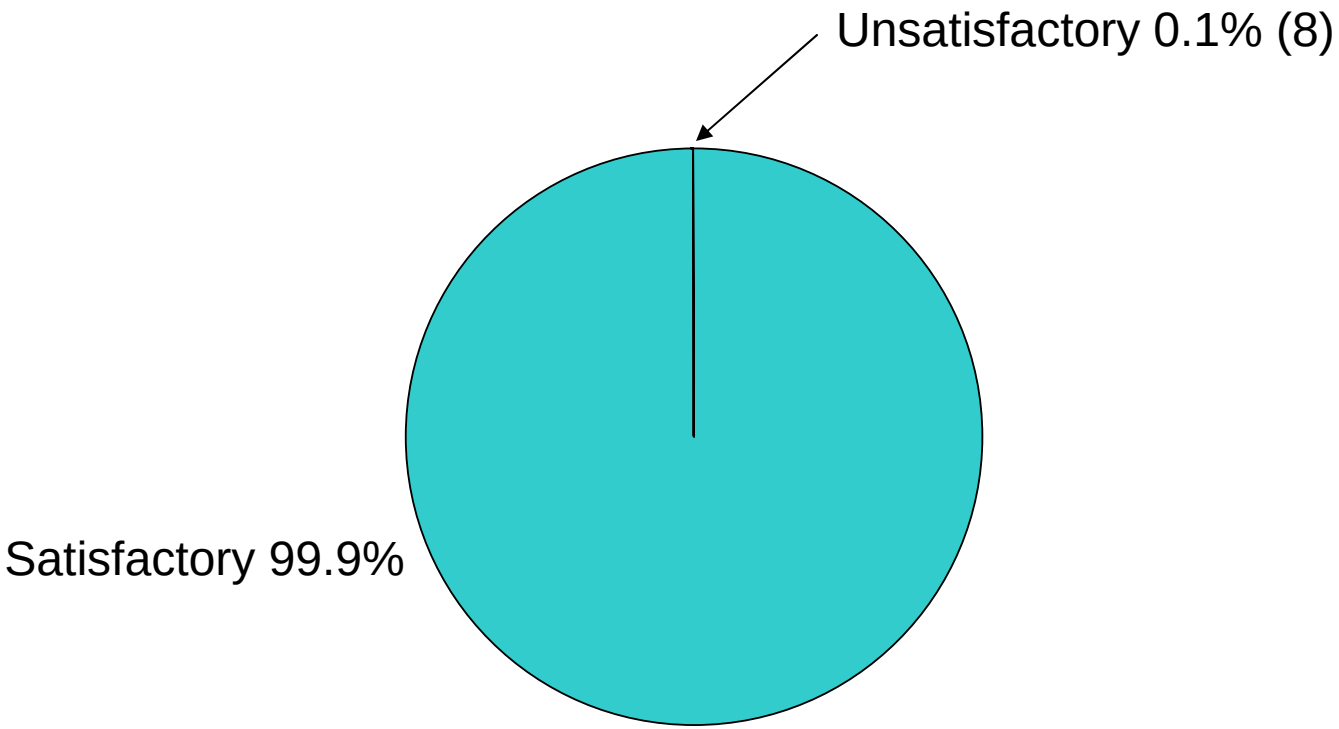
Overall results

- There were 8 unsatisfactory samples. Overall satisfactory rate was 99.9%.



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Unsatisfactory samples

- 8 unsatisfactory food samples included 2 previously announced results. The remaining 6 unsatisfactory samples are as follows :

Food Group	***No. of Samples Tested***	***No. of Unsatisfactory Samples***
Vegetables, fruits & products	**2800**	**3**
Meat, poultry & products	**500**	**0**
Aquatic & related products	**1300**	**1**
Milk, milk products & frozen confections	**600**	**1**
Cereal, grains & products	**400**	**0**
Others	**4500**	**1**
Total	**10100**	**6**

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

1. Vegetables, fruits & products

- About 2800 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
    - Preservatives
    - Pathogens
  - Radiation level tests

- Overall satisfactory rate was 99.9%. Other than 1 unsatisfactory sample of preserved pummelo announced earlier, 3 other samples were found unsatisfactory.

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

Tests on preservatives

- 2 unsatisfactory samples:

Sample	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
White fungus	Sulphur dioxide	3400 ppm (1)
Bamboo fungus	Sulphur dioxide	4500 ppm (1)

(1) The level exceeded the legal limit (500 ppm). It is of low toxicity and it is unlikely that it would pose any adverse health effect to consumers upon normal consumption. However, for individuals who are allergic to this preservative, there may be symptoms of breathing difficulty, headache and nausea

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

Tests on metallic contamination

- 1 unsatisfactory sample:

Sample	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
Chinese celery	Cadmium	0.18 ppm (1)

(1) The level exceeded the legal limit (0.1 ppm). it is unlikely that it would pose any adverse health effect to consumers upon normal consumption.

Other tests

- Samples for other tests (e.g. pesticide residues and pathogens) 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)
  - Radiation level tests
- All samples were satisfactory.





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3. Aquatic and related products

- About 1300 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, toxins and veterinary drug residues)
  - Radiation level tests

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




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3. Aquatic and related products (Cont'd)

Microbiological tests

- 1 unsatisfactory sample:

Sample	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
Raw oyster	Norovirus nucleic acid	Detected (1)

(1) Norovirus may cause vomiting, diarrhoea, abdominal pain and fever

Other tests

- Samples for other tests (e.g. pesticides, veterinary drug residues and colouring matters) were satisfactory.

4. Milk, milk products & frozen confections

- About 600 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, preservatives, veterinary drug residues and colouring matters)
  - Radiation level tests

- Overall satisfactory rate was 99.8%, with 1 unsatisfactory sample in this report.




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

Microbiological tests

- 1 unsatisfactory sample:

Sample	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
Raw milk (before heat treatment)	Total bacterial count Coliform count	1.1×10^7 /ml (1) Detected (2)

(1) Exceeded the legal limit of a maximum of 200000 total bacterial count per ml.
(2) Exceeded the legal limit of cannot be detected in 0.001ml.

Other tests

- Samples for other tests (e.g. melamine, preservatives, veterinary drug residues and colouring matters) were satisfactory.

5. Cereal, grains and products

- About 400 samples included rice/noodles, flour, bread and breakfast cereal.

- Analysis included:
  - Microbiological tests
  - Chemical tests (e.g. preservatives, pathogens)
  - Radiation level tests

- All samples were satisfactory.




6. Other food commodities

- About 4500 food samples were collected. Types included:

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

- Overall satisfactory rate was 99.96%. Other than the 1 unsatisfactory candied lotus seed sample announced earlier, 1 additional sample was found unsatisfactory.

6. Other food commodities (Cont'd)

Microbiological test

- 1 unsatisfactory sample:

Sample	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
Coconut tart	*Salmonella* (pathogen)	Detected (1)

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

Other tests

- Samples for other tests (e.g. colouring matters, metallic contaminations, veterinary drug residues) were satisfactory.

Follow-up actions

- Trace source of food items in question.
- Request the vendors concerned to stop sale and dispose of incriminated food items.
- Issue warning letters to the vendors concerned.
- Take follow-up samples for analysis.
- Take prosecution actions if there is sufficient evidence.

Advice for trade

- 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
- 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.
- The trade should source food from reliable suppliers and maintain a good recording system in accordance with the Food Safety Ordinance to allow source tracing if needed.

Advice for 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 contaminants adhered to the surface.
- Sulphur dioxide is a food preservative of low toxicity. It is also water-soluble and most of it tends to be removed through washing and cooking.
- People with history of allergy should read food labels of pre-packaged foods to avoid certain preservatives as appropriate (e.g. avoidance of sulphur dioxide in asthmatic patients who are allergic to sulphur dioxide).
- Consumers should patronize reliable premises for buying food. They should also maintain balanced diet to minimize food risk.