

Food Safety Report for December 2013

Centre for Food Safety
Food and Environmental
Hygiene Department

January 2014

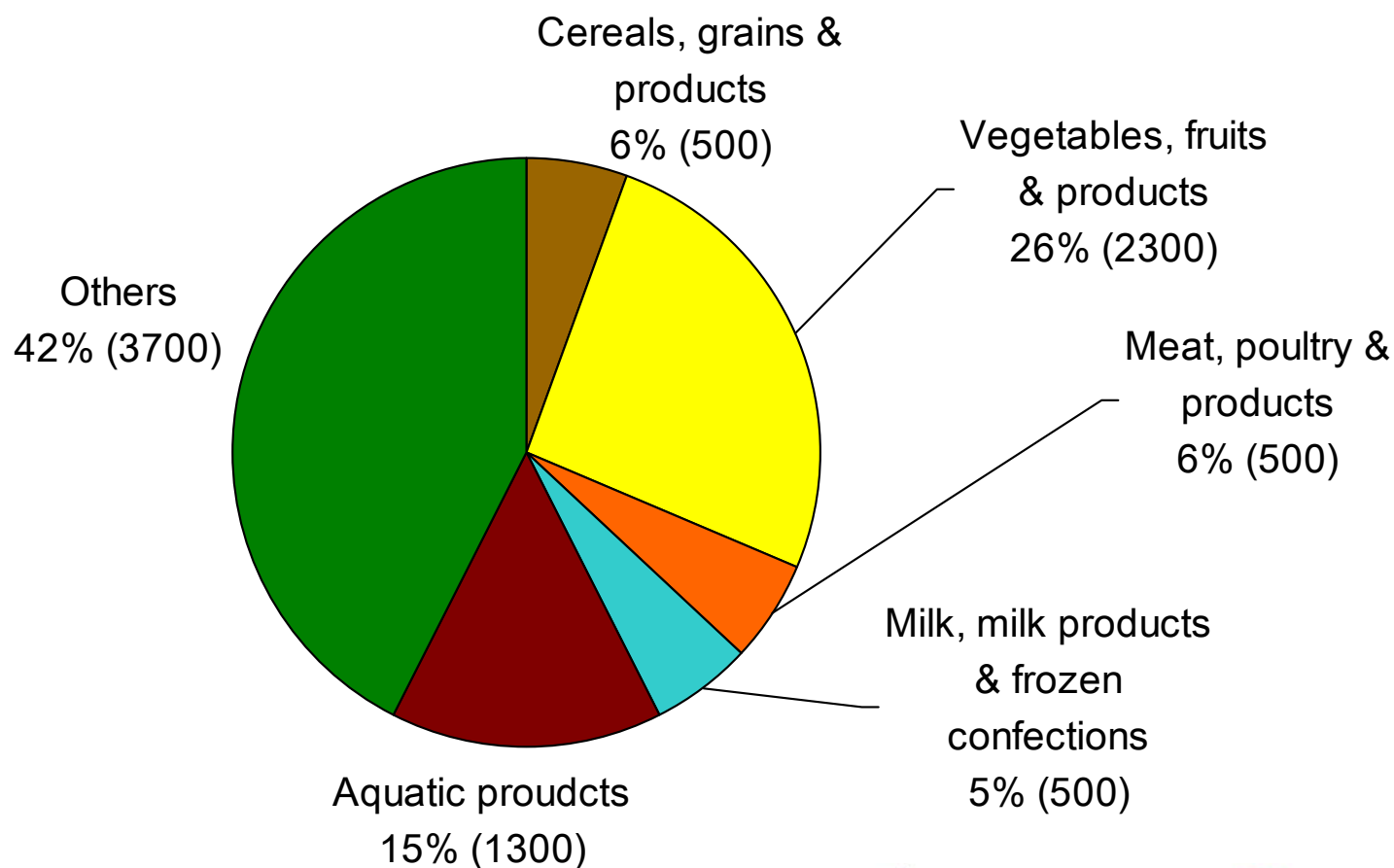


Introduction

- 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 December 2013.

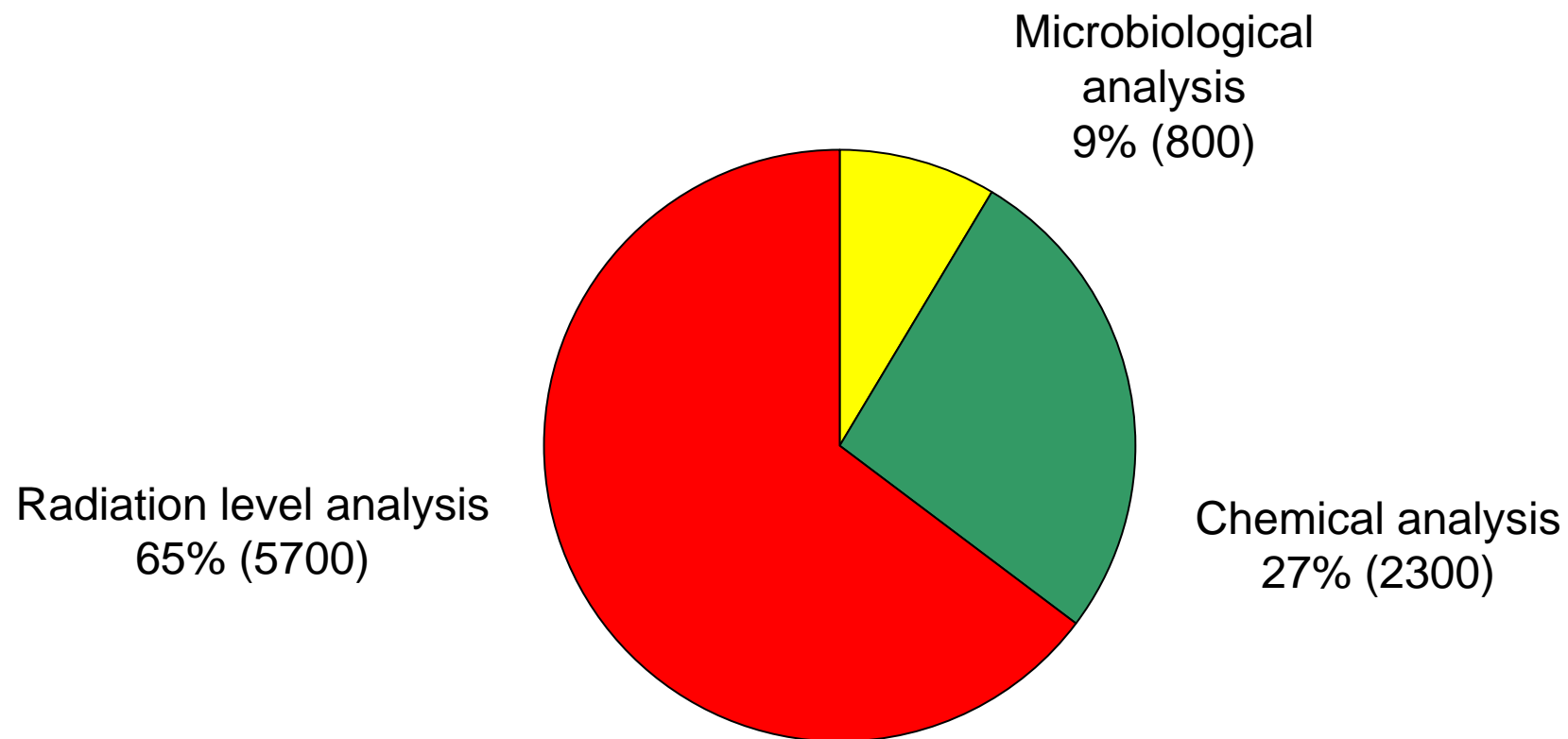
Types of food tested

- About 8800 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.

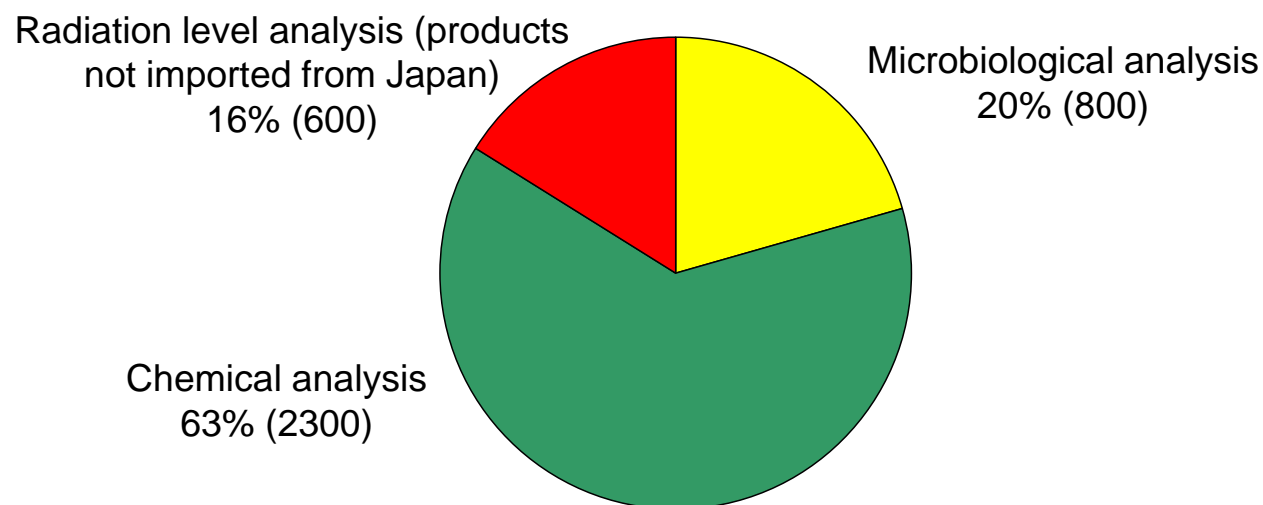
Types of testing



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Types of testing (Cont'd)

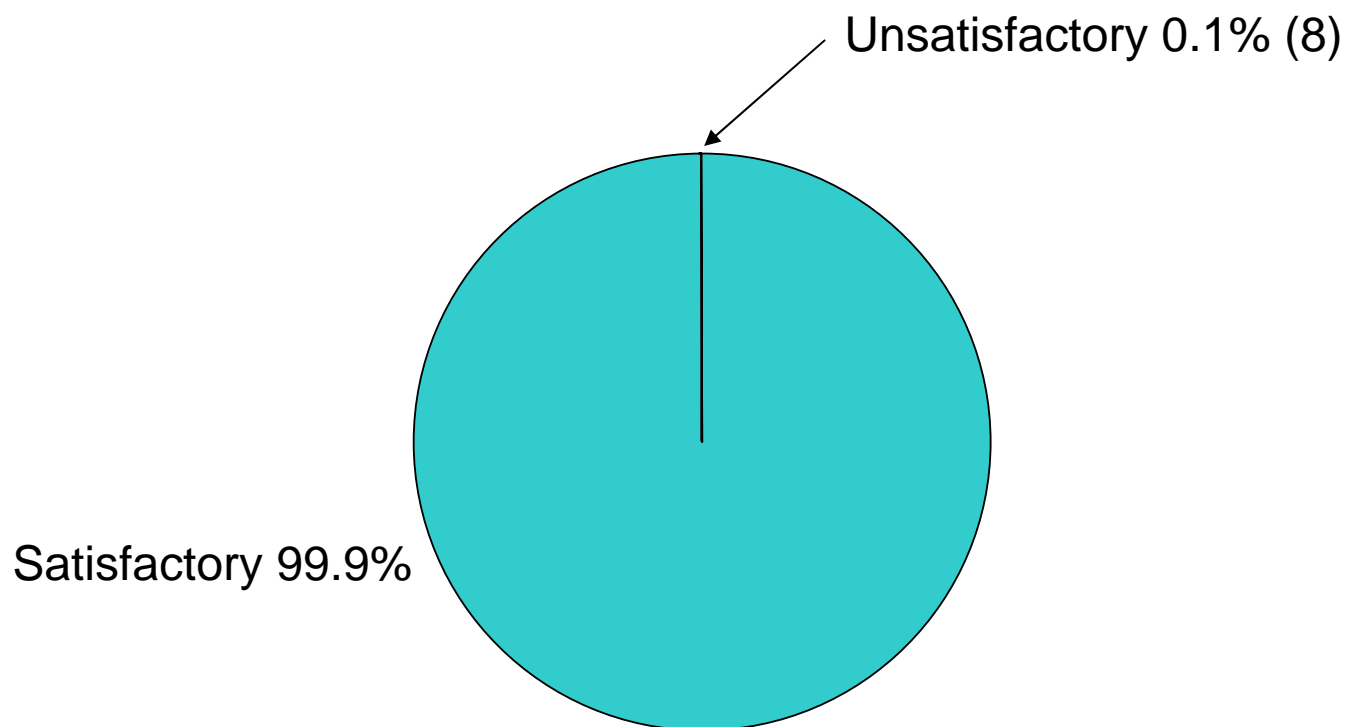
- In response to the Fukushima nuclear power plant incident in Japan, CFS has stepped up surveillance of imported Japanese food for testing of radiation level from mid-March 2011. In December 2013, all the radiation level test results of about 5100 samples were satisfactory.
- Except that, types of testing for the remaining food surveillance samples are distributed as follows:



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

Overall results

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



Unsatisfactory samples

- 8 unsatisfactory food samples included 5 previously announced results. The remaining 3 unsatisfactory samples are as follows :

Food Group	<i>No. of Samples Tested</i>	<i>No. of Unsatisfactory Samples</i>
Vegetables, fruits & products	2300	0
Meat, poultry & products	500	0
Aquatic & related products	1300	3
Milk, milk products & frozen confections	500	0
Cereal, grains & products	500	0
Others	3700	0
<i>Total</i>	8800	3

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

1. Vegetables, fruits & products

- About 2300 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
- All samples 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
- Overall satisfactory rate was 99.4%. Other than the 3 unsatisfactory fresh meat samples announced earlier, remained samples for other tests were all satisfactory.



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 99.8%, with 3 unsatisfactory samples in this report.



3. Aquatic and related products (Cont'd)

Metallic contamination

- 2 unsatisfactory samples:

Sample	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
2 frozen ling fillets	Mercury	1.1 ppm– 1.2 ppm ⁽¹⁾

(1) The level exceeded the legal limit (0.5 ppm). Upon normal consumption, it is unlikely to pose adverse health effect on consumers. Long term excessive consumption of ling fish fillet with the same level of mercury may affect the nervous system.

Veterinary drug residues

- 1 unsatisfactory sample:

Sample	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
Frozen skin on grouper fish fillet	Chloramphenicol	0.9 ppb ⁽²⁾

(2) Not permitted in food. Upon normal consumption, it is unlikely to pose adverse health effect on consumers.

Other tests

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

4. Milk, milk products & frozen confections

- About 500 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
- 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, veterinary drug residues and metallic contamination)
 - Radiation level tests
- Overall satisfactory rate was 99.8%. Other than an unsatisfactory rice sample announced earlier, remained samples for other tests were all satisfactory.



6. Other food commodities

- About 3700 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 99.97%. Other than an unsatisfactory candied lotus seed sample announced earlier, remained samples for other tests were all satisfactory.

Follow-up actions

- Trace source of food items in question.
- Mark and seal the affected food for disposal later.
- Issue warning letters to the vendors concerned.
- Take prosecution actions if there is sufficient evidence.
- Hold and test food if import of the affected food by the importer concerned is continued.
- Concerning a frozen fish fillet sample detected with prohibited substance, CFS has banned further import of the same food from the same source.

Advice for trade and consumers

- 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.
- Regarding some fish samples were found containing excessive mercury, appropriate consumption of a variety of fish is recommended. As pregnant women, women planning pregnancy and young children are more susceptible to the effects of mercury, they should avoid large predatory fish when choosing fish dishes.
- Consumers should patronize reliable premises for buying food. They should also maintain balanced diet to minimize food risk.