

# Targeted Food Surveillance - Colouring Matters in Soup Mix and Spicy Snacks

Centre for Food Safety

Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

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# Introduction

## ■ Background

- Colouring matters are commonly applied to soup mix and spicy snacks (e.g., potato chips, prawn chips and corn chips) to intensify their colour.
- Some are permitted colouring matters but some are not. Examples of non-permitted colouring matters include Sudan dyes and orange II.

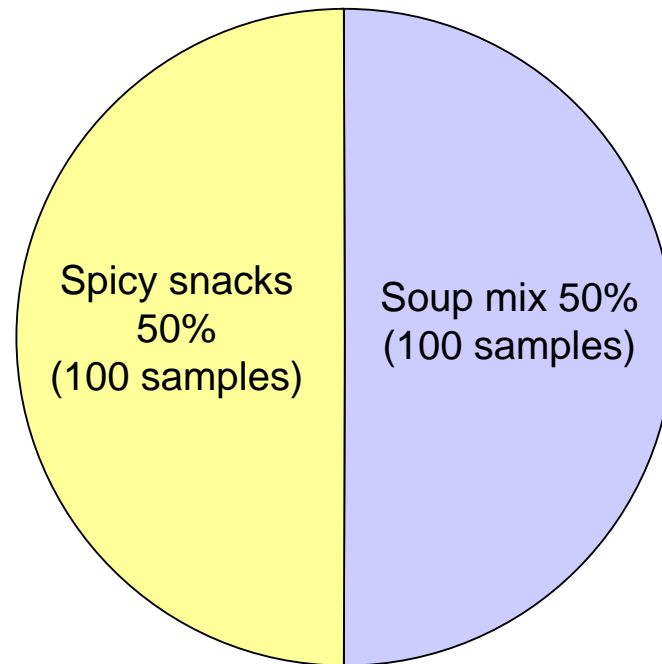
## ■ Objective

- The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) has conducted a targeted food surveillance project to assess the use of colouring matters in soup mix and spicy snacks.

# Types of samples

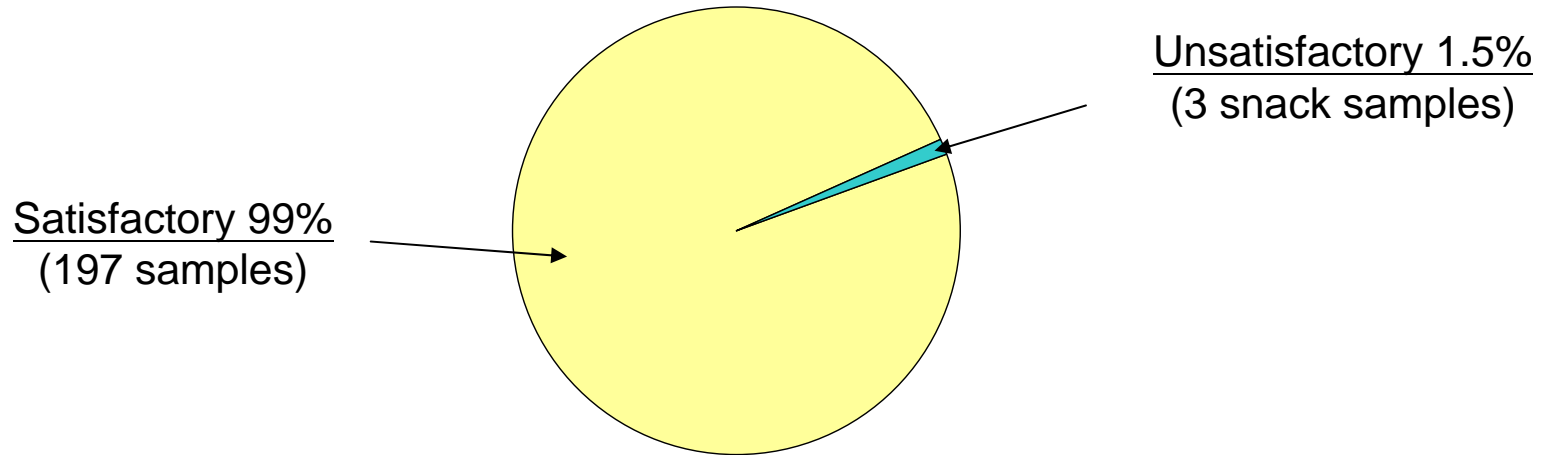
- 200 (100 soup mix & 100 spicy snack) samples were collected for testing of colouring matters including:

- Sudan dyes
- Acid red 52
- Orange II
- Yellow OB
- Dimethyl Yellow



# Overall result

- Overall satisfactory rate was 98.5%.



- Soup mix
  - ❑ All results (100%) were satisfactory.
- Spicy snacks
  - ❑ Satisfactory rate was 97%.
  - ❑ 3 unsatisfactory samples

# Unsatisfactory samples

- 2 Samples (a corn chip sample and a spicy sliced cuttlefish sample) were found to contain trace amounts of Sudan dyes.
- A rice cracker sample was found to contain Acid Red 52.
- Sudan dyes and Acid Red 52 are not permitted colouring matters in food.
- Based on the low levels of Sudan dyes detected and the low toxicity of Acid Red 52, normal consumption is unlikely to pose adverse health effects.

# Follow up actions

- Trace the source of food in question.
- Ask concerned retailers to stop selling and to dispose of those food items.
- Issue warning letters.
- Request concerned suppliers to recall the affected products.
- Take prosecution actions if there is sufficient evidence.

# Advice for trade

- Under the law, no food intended for sale for human consumption shall contain any added colour which is not a permitted colouring matter. The maximum penalty for conviction is a fine of \$50,000 and imprisonment for 6 months.
- The trade should adhere to the "good manufacturing practice" (GMP) for manufacturing food products, and comply with the legal requirements when using food additives.

# Advice for consumers

- Purchase soup mix and spicy snacks from reliable shops.
- Take a balanced diet so as to avoid excessive exposure to food additives from a small range of food items.