

Seasonal Food Surveillance on Mooncakes

Centre for Food Safety

Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

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Introduction

■ Background

- ❑ Mooncake is a festive food of the Mid-Autumn Festival.
- ❑ The Centre for Food Safety recently conducted a seasonal food surveillance project on mooncakes for microbiological and chemical analysis.

■ Objective

- ❑ To provide food safety information on mooncakes to consumers and the trade in a timely manner

Types of test

- About 250 samples of various types of mooncakes (including 152 traditional, 89 snowy and 9 ice-cream mooncakes) were collected from retailers and food factories for:
 - Chemical analysis
 - Colouring matters (e.g. Sudan dyes, tartrazine)
 - Preservatives (e.g. sulphur dioxide, sorbic acid)
 - Sweeteners (e.g. saccharin, cyclamate, stevioside)
 - Antioxidants
 - Pesticides
 - Heavy metals
 - Microbiological analysis (e.g. total bacterial count, coliform organisms , *Listeria monocytogenes*)

Overall result

- All results were satisfactory.

Advice for trade

- Food manufacturers should purchase food ingredients from reliable suppliers.
- The trade should adhere to the "good manufacturing practice" (GMP) for manufacturing food products, and comply with the legal requirements when using food additives.
- Snowy and ice-cream mooncakes, which have not undergone baking or heating, should be handled hygienically during processing, transportation and storage. Snowy mooncakes should be kept at 4 °C or below, while ice-cream mooncakes at -18 °C or below.

Advice for consumers

- Buy mooncakes from reliable retail outlets and do not patronise unlicensed hawkers.
- Check the expiry dates of mooncakes and eat them within the recommended period.
- Take mooncakes, particularly snowy and ice-cream mooncakes, home immediately after purchase, and keep them in refrigerator.
- Eat mooncakes in moderation as most of them are rich in sugar and fat. Maintain a balanced diet.