
Seasonal Food Surveillance on Rice Dumplings

Centre for Food Safety
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

May 2007

Introduction

■ Background

- ❑ Rice dumpling is a seasonal food for the coming Tuen Ng Festival in June 2007.
- ❑ The Centre for Food Safety recently conducted a seasonal food surveillance project on rice dumpling.

■ Objective

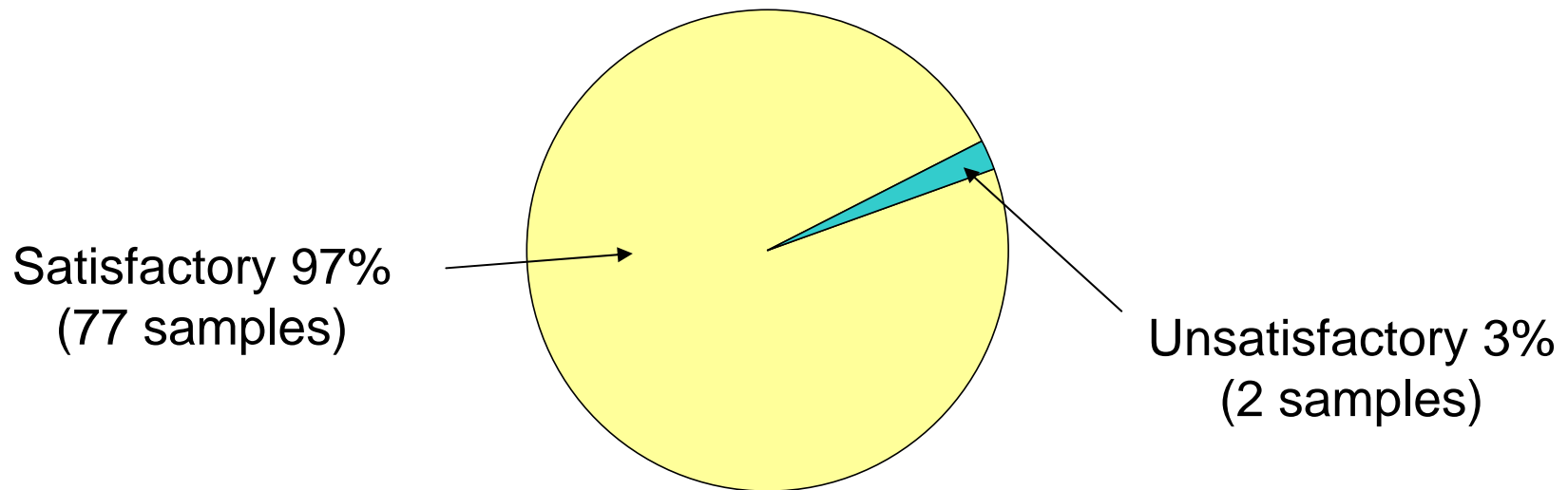
- ❑ To provide food safety information on rice dumplings to consumers and the trade in a timely manner

Types of test

- 79 samples were collected from food premises and food factories for:
 - Chemical analysis
 - colouring matters (e.g. Sudan dyes, tartrazine)
 - preservatives (e.g. boric acid, salicylic acid and benzoic acid)
 - heavy metals (e.g. arsenic, cadmium, mercury)
 - pesticides (e.g. methamidophos and DDT)
 - Microbiological analysis (e.g. *Salmonella*, *Staphylococcus aureus* and *Bacillus cereus*)

Overall result

- 97% of the 79 samples were found to be satisfactory.



Unsatisfactory samples

- Two samples were found to contain trace amount (0.046 and 0.12 ppm respectively) of the non-permitted colouring matter, Sudan IV.
- Based on the levels of Sudan dyes detected, usual consumption is unlikely to pose significant health effect.

Follow up actions

- Traced the source of food in question;
- Asked concerned restaurants to stop selling the affected batches of rice dumplings;
- Requested concerned suppliers to stop selling and remove from market the affected products, and dispose of the concerned products/ingredients;
- If there is sufficient evidence, the Centre for Food Safety will take prosecution action.

Advice for trade

- Food manufacturers should purchase food ingredients from reliable suppliers.
- Sudan dyes are non-permitted colouring matters under the Colouring Matter in Food Regulations, Cap, 132. 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

- Buy rice dumplings from reliable retail outlets and do not patronise illegal hawkers.
- Reheat rice dumplings thoroughly for at least 15 minutes with centre temperature at or above 75 °C before consumption.
- Maintain a balanced diet. Take at least two servings of fruits and three servings of vegetables every day.