

# Food Safety Report for November 2012

Centre for Food Safety  
Food and Environmental  
Hygiene Department



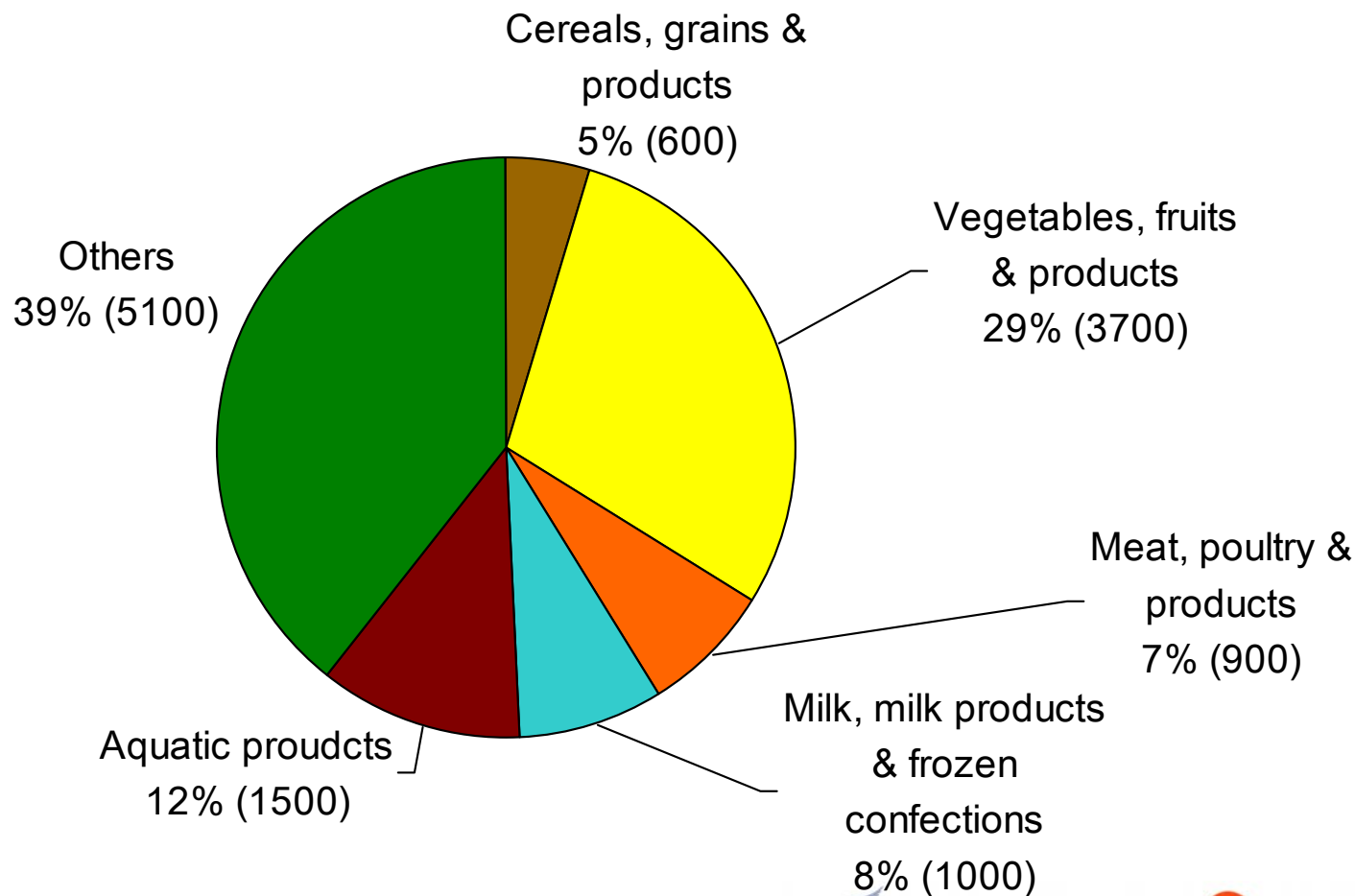
December 2012

# 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 November 2012.

# Types of food tested

- About 12900 food samples of various food groups were tested.

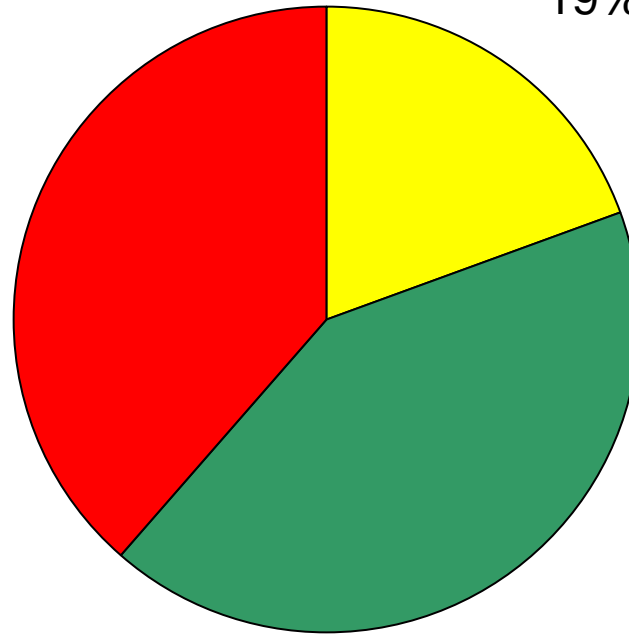


N.B.: Figures in brackets are rounded and may not add up to total due to rounding.

# Types of testing

Microbiological  
analysis  
19% (2500)

Radiation level analysis  
39% (5000)

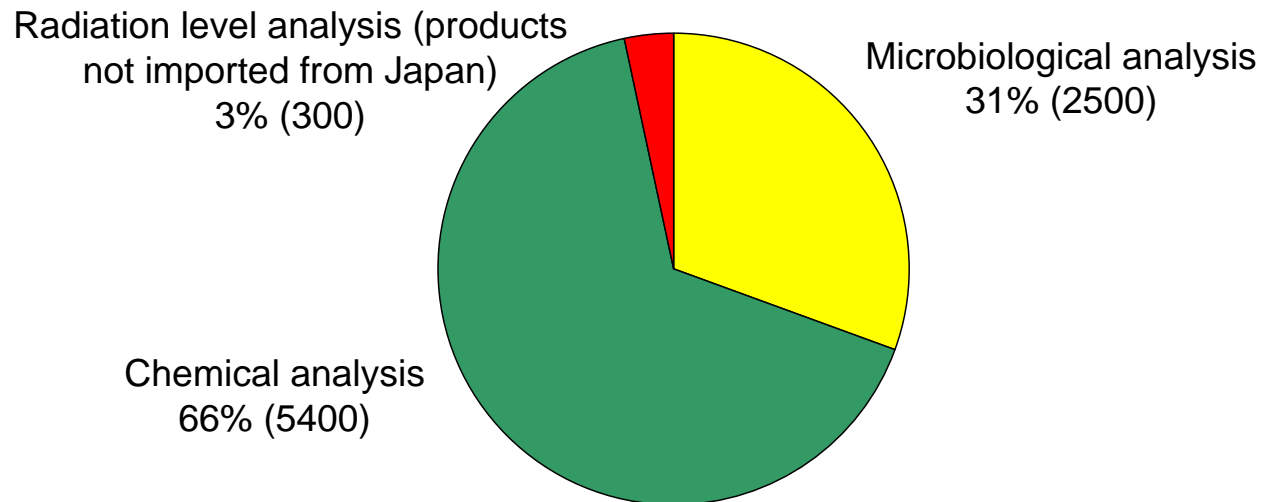


Chemical analysis  
42% (5400)

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

# Types of testing (Cont'd)

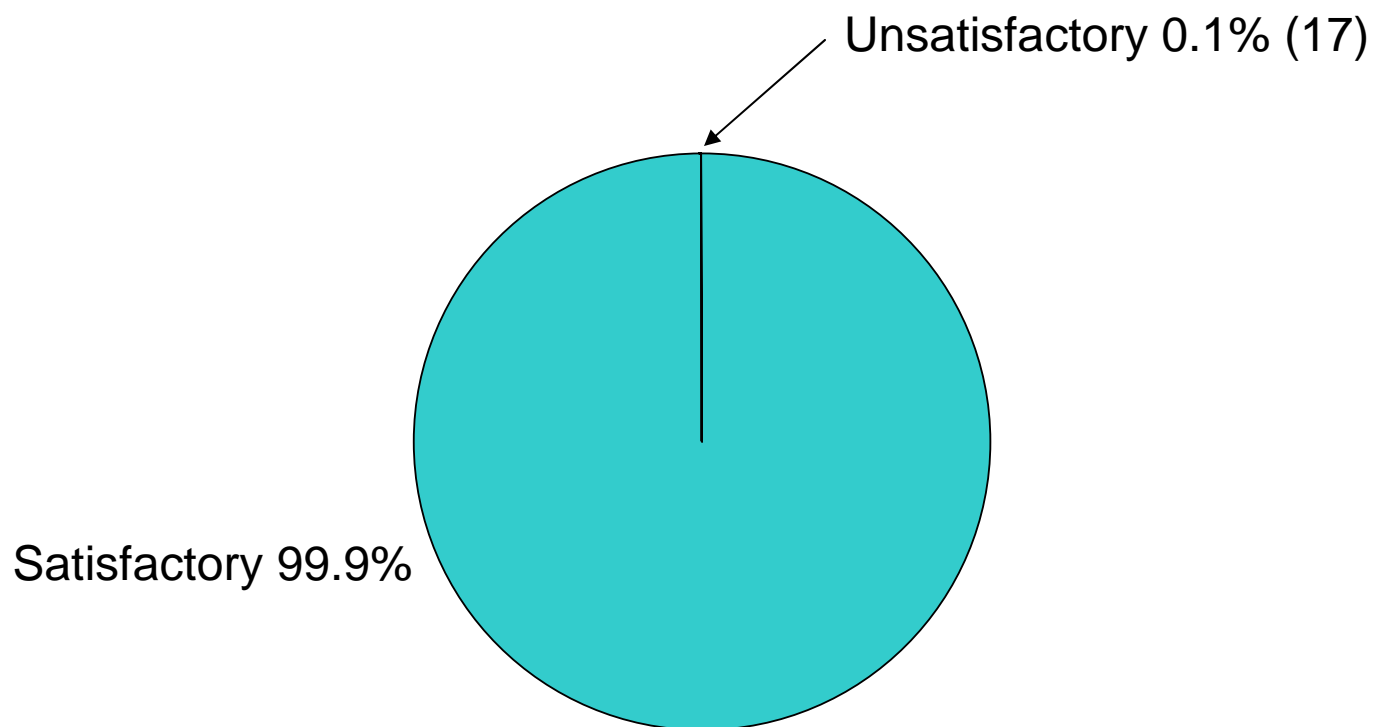
- In response to the Fukushima nuclear power plant incident in Japan, CFS has stepped up surveillance of imported Japanese food for testing of radiation level from mid-March 2011. In November 2012, all the radiation level test results of about 4700 samples were satisfactory.
- Except that, types of testing 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 17 unsatisfactory samples. Overall satisfactory rate was 99.9%.



# Unsatisfactory samples

- 17 unsatisfactory food samples included 2 previously announced results. The remaining 15 unsatisfactory samples are as follows :

<b>Food Group</b>	<b><i>No. of Samples Tested</i></b>	<b><i>No. of Unsatisfactory Samples</i></b>
<b>Vegetables, fruits &amp; products</b>	<b>3700</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Meat, poultry &amp; products</b>	<b>900</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Aquatic products</b>	<b>1500</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Milk, milk products &amp; frozen confections</b>	<b>1000</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Cereal, grains &amp; products</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Others</b>	<b>5100</b>	<b>6</b>
<b><i>Total</i></b>	<b>12900</b>	<b>15</b>

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

# 1. Vegetables, fruits & products

- About 3700 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%, with 3 unsatisfactory samples in this report.





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

## Preservatives

- 2 unsatisfactory samples:

Sample	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
Preserved sweet potato	Sorbic acid	472 ppm <sup>(1)</sup>
Preserved pummelo	Benzoic acid	1300 ppm <sup>(2)</sup>

<sup>(1)</sup> A commonly used preservative but is not permitted in this kind of food. It is of low toxicity and will not pose adverse health effect to consumers.

<sup>(2)</sup> The detected levels exceeded legal limits (1000 ppm), but they are of low toxicity and will not cause adverse health effects.

## Metallic Contamination

- 1 unsatisfactory sample:

Sample	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
Chinese flowering cabbage	Cadmium	0.25 ppm <sup>(3)</sup>

<sup>(3)</sup> The level exceeded the legal limit (0.1 ppm). Upon normal consumption, it is unlikely that the above vegetables with cadmium at the detected levels would pose any adverse health effect to consumers. Long term excessive consumption with the same level of cadmium may affect the kidneys. Thorough washing and soaking of vegetables will remove some cadmium attached on their surfaces.

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

## Other tests

- Samples for other tests (e.g. pesticides, pathogens) were satisfactory.

## 2. Meat, poultry & products

- About 900 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 99.8%. Except for the previously announced unsatisfactory samples of 2 fresh meats (contained a preservative, sulphur dioxide), the remained samples were satisfactory.



# 3. Aquatic products

- About 1500 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 samples in this report.



# 3. Aquatic products (Cont'd)

## Veterinary drug residues

- 1 unsatisfactory sample:

Sample	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
Frozen prawn	AOZ	0.002 ppm <sup>(1)</sup>

(1) The detected levels were low. They are unlikely to pose adverse effects on consumers upon normal consumption.

## Other tests

- Samples for other tests (e.g. Microbiological tests , preservatives, metallic contamination, toxins ) were satisfactory.

## 4. Milk, milk products & frozen confections

- About 1000 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 99.5%, with 5 unsatisfactory samples in this report.



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

## Microbiological tests

- 5 unsatisfactory samples:

Sample	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
5 frozen confections	coliform organisms	510-1300 /g <sup>(1)</sup>

(1) Coliform count is a hygienic indicator. The detected levels exceeded the legal limit of 100/g

## Other tests

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

# 5. Cereal, grains and products

- About 600 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 5100 food samples were collected. Types included:

Mixed dishes <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Pathogens and preservatives</li></ul>	Condiments and sauces <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Preservatives and colouring matters</li></ul>
Dim Sum <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Pathogens , preservatives and colouring matters</li></ul>	Snack <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Pathogens and colouring matters</li></ul>
Beverages <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Microbiological tests, preservatives, colouring matters and metallic contamination</li></ul>	Eggs and egg products <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Colouring matters and melamine</li></ul>
Sushi and sashimi <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Microbiological tests</li></ul>	Others <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Plasticisers and preservatives</li></ul>
Sugar and sweets <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Preservatives, colouring matters and metallic contamination</li></ul>	

- Overall satisfactory rate was 99.9%. with 6 unsatisfactory samples.

# 6. Other food commodities (Cont'd)

## Preservatives

- 6 unsatisfactory samples:

Sample	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
6 candied lotus seed	Sulphur dioxide	660-980 ppm <sup>(1)</sup>

(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

## Other tests

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

- 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.
- Consumers should patronize reliable premises for buying food. They should also maintain balanced diet to minimize food risk.