
Targeted Food Surveillance — Sudan dyes in eggs and egg products

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Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

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Introduction

■ Background

- Sudan dyes are synthetic chemical dyes for industrial use. According to law, Sudan dyes are not permitted colouring matters in food.
- Previously, there were reports of food incident related to eggs that were detected to contain Sudan dyes. The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) also detected Sudan dyes in some eggs and egg products in past food surveillance programme.

■ Objective

- The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) recently conducted a targeted food surveillance project to assess the use of Sudan dyes in eggs and egg products.

Types of samples

- 200 samples were collected for testing of Sudan dyes.

- Samples include:
 - Eggs
 - Fried eggs, tea leaf chicken eggs and lo shui eggs

 - Egg products
 - Western cakes, egg tarts, egg rolls, egg noodles, salad dressings and mayonnaises, snacks, steamed egg custard buns and rice dumplings with duck egg yolk filling

Overall result

- All sample results were satisfactory.

Advice for trade

- Under the law, no food intended for sale for human consumption shall contain any added non-permitted colouring matters. The maximum penalty for conviction is a fine of \$50,000 and imprisonment for 6 months.
- Source materials from reliable suppliers. Ensure that ingredients used do not contain any non-permitted Sudan dyes.
- 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 food from reliable shops.
- Avoid choosing eggs and egg products which are of abnormally intensified colour.
- Take a balanced diet so as to avoid excessive exposure to food additives from a small range of food items.