

Advisory Council on Food and Environmental Hygiene

Summary of Recent Food Surveillance

Targeted surveillance on *Enterobacter sakazakii* in powdered infant formula

Enterobacter sakazakii is a bacterium that can cause a rare infection in infants. There has been rising concern on its possible presence in milk powder in overseas literature. The CFS conducted a targeted food surveillance project to assess the situation in powdered infant formula in 2009. A total of 100 infant formula samples were collected for testing of *Enterobacter sakazakii*.

1. All samples of the project tested negative of the bacterium. A press release on the surveillance results was issued in December 2009, with advice on food safety given to the trade and the public.

Popular food items survey on traditional local snacks

2. Traditional local snacks are popular in Hong Kong. In late 2009, the CFS collected samples of these snacks for a popular food items survey.

3. A total of 308 samples of traditional local snacks were collected from supermarkets, retail shops, restaurants and food factories for chemical and microbiological tests.

4. Of the 308 samples tested, the overall satisfactory rate was 98.7%, with four unsatisfactory results. Among the unsatisfactory samples, one rice cracker with peanut was found to contain 0.025ppm aflatoxin, one “lo shui” cuttlefish was found to contain *Staphylococcus aureus*, one preserved pummelo and one vegetarian sausage found to contain benzoic acid with levels ranging from 1400 to 2200ppm. Except the cuttlefish sample with *Staphylococcus aureus* which may cause gastrointestinal upset, all the other food items did not pose serious health effects to the public upon normal consumption.

5. The CFS has taken follow-up actions including issuing warning letters, asking the concerned vendors to stop selling the food items, tracing the sources and taking further samples for testing. A press release on the surveillance results was issued in December 2009, with advice on food safety given to the trade and the public.

Seasonal food surveillance on Lunar New Year food

6. In early 2010, the CFS had also completed a seasonal food surveillance project on the safety of Lunar New Year food.

7. A total of 685 samples were collected from food factories, restaurants and retailers (e.g. dried aquatic products shops, supermarkets and bakeries) for microbiological and chemical tests.

8. Of the 685 samples tested, the overall satisfactory rate was 99.3%, with five unsatisfactory results. Among the unsatisfactory samples, one Chinese preserved pork sausage was found to contain non-permitted colouring matter “Red 2G”, two Bamboo fungus (竹筴) and one dried fish maw were found to contain sulphur dioxide with levels ranging from 270 to 4800ppm and one Shanghai New Year pudding (水磨年糕) was found to contain 48ppm sulphur dioxide with 2700ppm benzoic acid. All the concerned food items did not pose serious health effects to the public upon normal consumption.

9. The CFS has taken follow-up actions including issuing warning letters, asking relevant vendors to stop selling the food items, tracing the sources and taking further samples for testing. The surveillance results were publicised in two batches by issuing press releases in January and February 2010 respectively, with advice given to the trade and the public.

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