



**FOOD SAFETY AND APPLIED NUTRITION DIRECTORATE
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INTERNAL MEMO

TO: DG (NAFDAC)
FROM: D (FSAN)
DATE: 10TH FEBRUARY, 2015

**SUBJECT: UPDATE ON PILOT STUDY/SURVEY OF TOMATO PASTE
IN RETAIL PACKS (TINS AND SACHETS) IMPORTED
FROM CHINA, DISTRIBUTED AND SOLD IN LAGOS.**

Sir,

Please, above subject matter refers.

Following Food Safety Concerns on the quality of branded tomato paste in retail packs imported from China and distributed and sold in Nigeria, an approval was given to conduct a pilot survey/study of such Tomato paste products in retail packs (Tin/Sachet).

FSAN working together with PRS and LS, came up with data collection template, study design, sampling procedure, laboratory requirements etc. in order to conduct a study/survey that will be valid nationally and internationally, evidence based and an effective aid to regulatory decision.

Lagos was chosen as the commercial center of Nigeria with more than two major seaports in Apapa, Tincan, etc, Land borders (Seme, etc.), Air cargo terminals (NAHCO, etc) and major markets serving not only Nigeria but West and Central Africa Sub-region,

Twenty seven (27) main markets and four (4) major supermarkets from the 3 Senatorial zones in Lagos were visited and samples purchased and submitted to the laboratory for analysis.

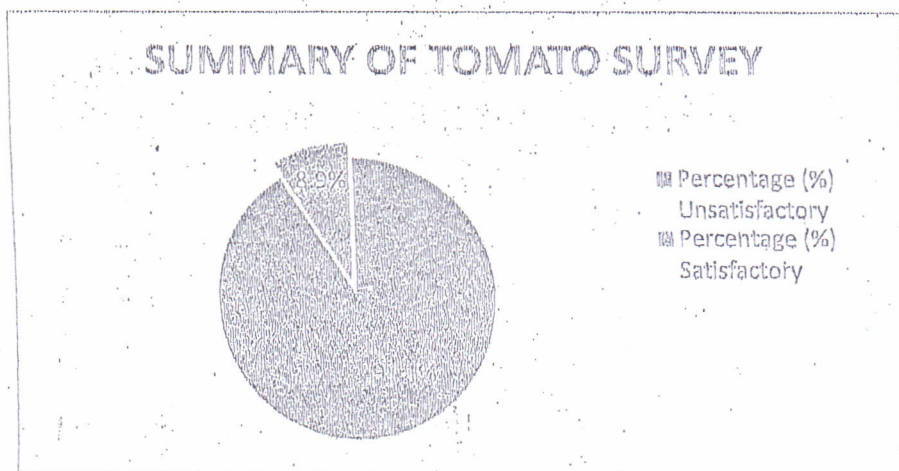
The focus of the study and laboratory analysis was the Tomato content. The Codex Standards and the Nigerian Industrial Standards (NIS) has specified that Tomato content should be 28% minimum.

Majority of the brands of Tomato paste sampled were registered brands. The results have also been forwarded to D (PRS) for Data Evaluation.

FINDINGS

1. Total no. of samples purchased and submitted to the laboratory=330.
2. Total no. samples released=314
3. Total no. found unsatisfactory due to Tomato content=286.
4. Total no. with satisfactory Tomato content=28
5. No of samples awaiting release from Laboratory = 16
6. Percentage (%) unsatisfactory = 91.1%
7. Percentage (%) satisfactory = 8.9%

Chart below represents summary of findings tomato survey (see attached Lab reports).



- ❖ All the unsatisfactory tomato paste products had the same red color as the satisfactory paste.

- ❖ The Food Safety implication and attendant Health effects of these findings are very alarming. Its results indicate that companies of registered tomato paste products from China are conniving with the Chinese manufacturers to dump substandard products to the unsuspecting Nigerian consumers.
- ❖ Food Fraud economic or otherwise is of increasing Food Safety importance globally and a lot of discussions of how to tackle same are being discussed at Global Food Safety Conferences, Meetings etc. all over the world.
- ❖ The red color indicates addition of color which is not permitted and some colors are known to be Carcinogenic. "What are these companies in China adding instead of tomato concentrate?"
- ❖ World Health Assembly (WHA) noted the increase in Non Communicable Diseases (NCDs), Diabetes, Cancer, Cardio vascular diseases, etc. including incidences of organ failures e.g. Kidney etc
- ❖ Stringent measures need to be taken to protect Nigerian consumers from consuming this array of substandard products.

RECOMMENDATION.

Taking all the above into consideration. I wish to recommend as follows:

1. Imported Tomato Paste brands in retail packs (tins or sachets) from China (High Risk Countries) should be suspended until further notice.
2. This does not affect the tomato concentrate in drums from China imported for local manufacture of various brands of tomato paste in retail packs (tins/sachet).
3. FSAN, PVG/PMS, I & E Directorates should start a nationwide recall and mop up of these brands of Tomato paste in retail packs from China already in circulation.
4. There would be need to inform relevant Federal Ministries, Nigerian Customs Service, Policy makers etc. of this measures, in order to guide Federal Government Policy on looking inwards to encourage local industries and reduce the import bills.

5. The importers of the few brands of tomato paste in retail packs would be subjected to a comprehensive GMP re-assessment of their manufacturing facilities before any decisions on their source continuance or otherwise.
6. All other importers would be advised to Change Manufacturing Source until measures are taken to minimize dumping of substandard products from China with the attendant Health problems.
7. FSAN Staff have been encouraged to study online Certification Programmes of Food Fraud in order to tackle the immense Food Safety problems associated with Substandard and Fake Food Products
8. Food Evaluation Division staff of FSAN should be commended for a job well done as this was part of the FSAN workplan and more of such studies are planned in future with industry support and collaboration.

Sir, please above submitted for your consideration and further directives.

Thank you.

Mainasara, O.N. (Mrs.)