

Outline of the 46th Honkaku Shochu and Awamori Contest

National Research Institute of Brewing
Japan Sake and Shochu Makers Association
July 21, 2023

1. Contest

Honkaku Shochu and *Awamori* are the Japanese spirits distilled in a pot still.

The 46th Honkaku Shochu and Awamori Contest was held under the joint auspices of the National Research Institute of Brewing (NRIB) and the Japan Sake and Shochu Makers Association (JSS) on June 20 and 21, 2023. For this contest, a nationwide research of pot distillation *Shochu*, particularly *Honkaku Shochu* and *Awamori*, were conducted with the aim of clarifying the current manufacturing technology and trends in liquor quality, as well as contributing to the improvement of pot distillation *Shochu* (*Honkaku Shochu* and *Awamori*) qualities.

2. Special rules for entry

(1) Qualification for entry

Manufacturers which hold a license to produce pot distillation *Shochu* (*Honkaku Shochu* and *Awamori*).

(2) Applicable standard for entry

Entries must be products of *Honkaku Shochu* and *Awamori* to be sold on the market or during storage as commercially available. The number of entries per a manufacture is limited within 8 items.

(3) Entry fee

Members of the JSS: 5,500 yen per entry.

Others: 8,250 yen per entry.

3. Overview of entries

A total of 228 entries (111% of entries compared with previous year) were exhibited from 81 manufacturers (109%) in 26 prefectures. Overall number of entries increased by 23 compared to the previous year (Table 1).

4. Trends among entries

(1) Production area

As for the production area, the number of entries from Kyushu (Fukuoka and Kumamoto Regional Taxation Bureaus; Table 1) (165 entries) and Okinawa (23 entries), which are the main production areas for *Honkaku Shochu* and *Awamori*, are 188 that made up 82% of the total (Table 1).

(2) Varieties of raw materials

The following entries were received, rice *Shochu*: 35 (increased by 11 compared to the previous year), barley *Shochu*: 66 (decreased by 7), sweet potato *Shochu*: 82 (increased by 13), Awamori: 23 (increased by 6), sake lees *Shochu*: 11 (decreased by 1), buckwheat *Shochu*: 2 (increased by 2), brown sugar *Shochu*: 4 (no change compared to the previous year), and other *Shochu*: 3 (decreased by 1) (Table 2).

(3) Varieties of products techniques

Entries from normal products numbered 169 (110%). Entries from the special products, including long-term aged, cask-aged or earthenware jar-aged *Shochu*, numbered 59 (113%) (Table 3).

5. Judging panels

The judging panel consisted of 15 members in total who were appointed by the president of NRIB from *Shochu* and *Awamori* manufacturers recommended by JSS, *Shochu* and *Awamori* specialists from prefectural research centers, technical officers of Regional Taxation Bureaus, and the president and staffs of NRIB (Table 4).

The judging process was conducted in consideration of preventing the spread of COVID-19. Judges were seated at their assigned seats at 2-meter range intervals, and the samples were poured into plastic cups, closed with caps and served on trays to the judges individually. Each judge also used their own vessel for spitting out. Other measures against COVID-19 include installing medical thermometer before entering the judging room, installing alcohol-based sanitizer, wearing masks by each personal judgement, installing splash-proof partitions, and ensuring the ventilation of the judging room.

The sensory evaluation was conducted by a profile method, whereby 5 characters (raw material characteristics, rich/light, sweetness, aftertaste, and the total evaluation) were assessed on a 5-point scale. In addition, the presence/absence of 16 positive characters and 24 negative characters was considered (Figure).

6. Chemical analysis

To evaluate the level of manufacturing techniques, the chemical compounds, which are potential indicators of fermentation management, distillation operations, and storage management, were analyzed.

The results of the sensory evaluation and the chemical analysis will be informed to all the manufacturers applied for entries.

7. Quality trends

- (1) *Shochu* made from rice and barley was mainly fruity and mild tasted, that made from sweet potato was mainly floral, that made from sake lees was mainly highly fruity, and *Awamori* was mainly full-bodied.
- (2) As for normal products, fruity aromas were highly expressed in vacuum-distilled rice *Shochu* and barley *Shochu*. Roasting aromas were highly expressed in atmospheric-distilled barley *Shochu*. Floral aromas were highly expressed in vacuum-distilled, atmospheric-distilled, and the blend of both distilled sweet potato *Shochu*. Clear tastes were highly expressed in vacuum-distilled sweet potato *Shochu*. Rich tastes and sweet tastes were highly expressed in atmospheric-distilled *Awamori*. Fruity aromas, sweet tastes and clear tastes were highly expressed, and the average evaluation value was relatively good in vacuum-distilled sake lees *Shochu*. In addition, Clear tastes and higher raw material-derived characteristics were highly expressed in vacuum-distilled buckwheat *shochu*.
- (3) As for long-term aged products, long-term aged *Awamori* had matured aromas, rich tastes, sweet tastes, smooth tastes, and the average evaluation value of *Awamori* was relatively good. Sake lees *Shochu* had matured aromas, sweet tastes, smooth tastes, and the average evaluation value of sake lees *Shochu* was relatively good.
- (4) As for cask-aged products, the properties derived from cask were highly evaluated in cask-aged barley *Shochu*, sweet potato *Shochu* and rice *Shochu*.
- (5) As for earthenware jar-aged products, the characteristics derived from the jar-aged was highly expressed in earthenware jar-aged sweet potato *Shochu*, and it had sweet tastes.

Judging room



Seating: Seats were spaced at least 2 meters apart. Splash-proof screens were installed on each desk.



Serving: A plastic cup (140 ml volume) was filled with a sample (30 ml), and each cup was covered with a cap. They were placed on a tray. The tray was then individually served to a judge

Table 1 Number of manufactures and entries per prefecture in the 46th Honkaku Shochu and Awamori Contest

Manufacturer location		Number of manufactures		Number of entries										Total number of entries per Taxation Bureau Office		Compared with previous year
Regional Taxation Bureau	Prefecture	46th	45th	Varieties of single distilled <i>shochu</i>								46th	45th	46th	45th	
				Rice	Barley	Sweet potato	Awamori	Sake lees	Buckwheat	Brown sugar	Other					
Sapporo	Hokkaido	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	0	0	-
Sendai	Aomori	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	7	5	140
	Iwate	1	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2			
	Miyagi	1	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	1			
	Akita	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0			
	Yamagata	1	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2			
	Fukushima	1	0	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	0			
Kanto-Shinetsu	Ibaraki	1	1	-	-	2	-	-	1	-	-	3	5	13	10	130
	Tochigi	1	0	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	2	0			
	Gunma	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0			
	Saitama	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0			
	Niigata	4	3	4	-	-	-	3	1	-	-	8	5			
	Nagano	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0			
Tokyo	Chiba	0	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	1	5	5	100
	Tokyo	1	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	1			
	Kanagawa	1	1	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	2	1			
	Yamanashi	1	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2			
Kanazawa	Toyama	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	0	0	-
	Ishikawa	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0			
	Fukui	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0			
Nagoya	Gifu	0	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	4	4	9	44
	Shizuoka	1	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	4			
	Aichi	1	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	1			
	Mie	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0			
Osaka	Shiga	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	2	2	100
	Kyoto	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0			
	Osaka	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0			
	Hyogo	2	2	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2			
	Nara	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0			
	Wakayama	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0			
Hiroshima	Tottori	1	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	6	8	75
	Shimane	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0			
	Okayama	2	2	2	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	4	3			
	Hiroshima	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0			
	Yamaguchi	1	3	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	4			
Takamatsu	Tokushima	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	3	1	300
	Kagawa	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0			
	Ehime	1	0	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	0			
	Kochi	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1			
Fukuoka	Fukuoka	8	8	5	19	-	-	3	1	-	2	30	27	47	43	109
	Saga	1	1	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	5			
	Nagasaki	7	6	1	7	4	-	-	-	-	-	12	11			
Kumamoto	Kumamoto	5	4	9	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	11	9	118	105	112
	Oita	3	4	-	14	-	-	-	-	-	-	14	18			
	Miyazaki	5	6	1	6	15	-	-	1	-	-	23	28			
	Kagoshima	18	14	-	8	58	-	-	-	4	-	70	50			
Okinawa	Okinawa	11	6	-	-	-	23	-	-	-	-	23	17	23	17	135
Total		81	74	35	66	82	23	11	4	4	3	228	205	228	205	111

Table 2 Change in number of entries according to the varieties of single distilled *shochu*

Raw material Awards	Rice		Barley		Sweet potato		Awamori		Sake lees		Buckwheat		Brown sugar		Other		Total	
	Number of entries	Compared with previous awards	Number of entries	Compared with previous awards	Number of entries	Compared with previous awards	Number of entries	Compared with previous awards	Number of entries	Compared with previous awards	Number of entries	Compared with previous awards	Number of entries	Compared with previous awards	Number of entries	Compared with previous awards	Number of entries	Compared with previous awards
1st	38	-	16	-	78	-	24	-	24	-	5	-	4	-	15	-	204	-
6th	59	21	47	31	48	▲ 30	24	0	26	2	29	24	6	2	33	18	272	68
9th	69	10	100	53	26	▲ 22	24	0	<u>60</u>	34	<u>31</u>	2	7	1	<u>78</u>	45	395	123
10th	86	17	<u>110</u>	10	37	11	<u>37</u>	13	38	▲ 22	<u>31</u>	0	10	3	<u>78</u>	0	<u>427</u>	32
11th	<u>96</u>	10	105	▲ 5	48	11	23	▲ 14	25	▲ 13	26	▲ 5	8	▲ 2	53	▲ 25	384	▲ 43
16th	55	▲ 41	76	▲ 29	24	▲ 24	19	▲ 4	17	▲ 8	21	▲ 5	<u>11</u>	3	27	▲ 26	250	▲ 134
21st	63	8	70	▲ 6	22	▲ 2	17	▲ 2	27	10	19	▲ 2	4	▲ 7	23	▲ 4	245	▲ 5
26th	67	4	71	1	37	15	10	▲ 7	20	▲ 7	16	▲ 3	8	4	24	1	253	8
28th	76	9	94	23	69	32	15	5	21	1	22	6	<u>11</u>	3	27	3	335	82
31st	57	▲ 19	90	▲ 4	<u>103</u>	34	28	13	22	1	21	▲ 1	7	▲ 4	26	▲ 1	354	19
36th	23	▲ 34	54	▲ 36	68	▲ 35	20	▲ 8	14	▲ 8	0	▲ 21	3	▲ 4	8	▲ 18	190	▲ 164
37th	31	8	57	3	53	▲ 15	13	▲ 7	13	▲ 1	2	2	6	3	7	▲ 1	182	▲ 8
38th	21	▲ 10	50	▲ 7	66	13	16	3	6	▲ 7	2	0	2	▲ 4	4	▲ 3	167	▲ 15
39th	25	4	67	17	74	8	15	▲ 1	14	8	3	1	4	2	11	7	213	46
40th	32	7	67	0	88	14	22	7	13	▲ 1	3	0	4	0	7	▲ 4	236	23
41st	26	▲ 6	77	10	98	10	18	▲ 4	13	0	4	1	7	3	5	▲ 2	248	12
42nd	24	▲ 2	95	18	85	▲ 13	17	▲ 1	8	▲ 5	3	▲ 1	2	▲ 5	4	▲ 1	238	▲ 10
43rd	22	▲ 2	71	▲ 24	73	▲ 12	17	0	8	0	3	0	1	▲ 1	2	▲ 2	197	▲ 41
44th	24	2	71	0	68	▲ 5	13	▲ 4	11	3	2	▲ 1	2	1	2	0	193	▲ 4
45th	24	0	73	2	69	1	17	4	12	1	2	0	4	2	4	2	205	12
46th	35	11	66	▲ 7	82	13	23	6	11	▲ 1	4	2	4	0	3	▲ 1	228	23

Note 1: "Compared with previous awards" for 36th, 31st, 28th, 26th, 21st, 16th, 9th and 6th refers to comparisons to the 31st, 28th, 26th, 21st, 16th, 11th, 6th and 1st Awards, respectively.

Note 2: Underlined numbers are the highest numbers of entries in the past.

Table 3 Details of products in the 46th Honkaku Shochu and Awamori Contest

Varieties of single distilled <i>shochu</i>			Normal products								Special products								Total	
			Vacuum distillation		Atmospheric distillation		Blend		Subtotal		Long-term aging		Cask aging		Earthenware jar aging		Subtotal			
			Number of entries		Number of entries		Number of entries		Number of entries		Number of entries		Number of entries		Number of entries		Number of entries		Number of entries	
			46th	45th	46th	45th	46th	45th	46th	45th	46th	45th	46th	45th	46th	45th	46th	45th	46th	45th
Rice			24	12	1	3	-	-	25	15	3	4	6	3	1	2	10	9	35	24
Barley			31	34	9	6	10	13	50	53	2	3	14	17	-	-	16	20	66	73
Sweet potato			8	5	51	48	3	3	62	56	6	4	4	2	10	7	20	13	82	69
Awamori			2	2	14	10	1	-	17	12	6	4	-	-	-	1	6	5	23	17
Sake lees			6	6	-	1	-	-	6	7	3	2	2	3	-	-	5	5	11	12
Buckwheat			3	1	-	-	1	1	4	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	2
Brown sugar			1	2	1	2	-	-	2	4	2	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	4	4
Other			3	3	-	1	-	-	3	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	4
Detail	Kudzu vine	1	1	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
	Chestnut	1	1	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
	Black been	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
	Sesame	1	1	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Total			78	65	76	71	15	17	169	153	22	17	26	25	11	10	59	52	228	205

Table 4 List of Judging panels for the 46th Honkaku Shochu and Awamori Contest

	Name	Organization and Position	
1	SUDO, Shigetoshi	Japan Sake and Shochu Makers Association	Technical Advisor
2	MIYAUCHI, Youichi	Munemasa Syuzo Co., Ltd.	Manager, Manufacturing Department
3	HAYASHI, Yasuhiro	Hayashi Shuzo Co.,Ltd.	Chief Brewer
4	KAMESAWA, Daiki	Kirishima Shuzo Co., Ltd.	Blender, Quality Control Division
5	SHIMOJI, Issei	Kikunotsuyu Distillery Co., Ltd.	Representative Director
6	OBA, Takahiro	Biotechnology and Food Research Institute, Fukuoka Industrial Technology Center	Director, Microbiology and Brewing Group, Food Division
7	GOTO, Yuji	Oita Industrial Research Institute	Chief Researcher, Food Industry Section
8	OTANI, Taketo	Kagoshima Prefectural Institute of Industrial Technology	Chief Researcher, Food and Chemistry Division
9	AKUTSU, Takehiro	Fukuoka Regional Taxation Bureau	Chief Technical Officer, Office of Analysis and Brewing Technology
10	MOTOMURA, Hajime	Kumamoto Regional Taxation Bureau	Director, Office of Analysis and Brewing Technology
11	WATANABE, Kentaro	Okinawa Regional Taxation Office	Chief Technical Officer, Indirect Tax Division
12	FUKUDA, Hisashi*	National Research Institute of Brewing	President
13	SUZUKI, Takashi	National Research Institute of Brewing	Director, Planning and Management Division
14	IWASHITA, Kazuhiro**	National Research Institute of Brewing	Director, Analytical Research Division
15	MUKAI, Nobuhiko	National Research Institute of Brewing	Director, Brewing Technology Division

*the judge participating only on the first day

**the judge participating only on the second day

Figure Judging Sheet for the 46th Honkaku Shochu and Awamori Contest

本格焼酎・泡盛鑑評会審査カード		
審査酒番号 _____ 審査員 _____		
[評価項目]		
<div> <div>とても良い</div> <div>どちらでもない</div> <div>難点あり</div> </div> <div>総合評価</div>		
<div> <div>強い</div> <div>どちらでもない</div> <div>弱い</div> </div> <div>原料特性</div>		
<div> <div>濃い</div> <div>どちらでもない</div> <div>薄い</div> </div> <div>味の濃淡</div>		
<div> <div>強く感じる</div> <div>やや強い</div> <div>感じる</div> <div>やや感じる</div> <div>感じない</div> </div> <div>甘味</div>		
<div> <div>すっきり</div> <div>どちらでもない</div> <div>もたつく</div> </div> <div>後味</div>		
<div> <div>[香り]</div> <div>[特性]</div> <div>[指摘項目]</div> </div>		
果実様	<input type="checkbox"/> 果実様	<input type="checkbox"/> エステル臭
花様	<input type="checkbox"/> 花様	
甘い香り	<input type="checkbox"/> バニラ香	
	<input type="checkbox"/> カaramel様	
香ばしい・煙様	<input type="checkbox"/> 香ばしい	<input type="checkbox"/> こげ臭
		<input type="checkbox"/> 燻製・薬品様
硫化物様		<input type="checkbox"/> 硫化物様
酸臭・乳製品様	<input type="checkbox"/> 乳製品様	<input type="checkbox"/> ジアセチル
		<input type="checkbox"/> 酸臭
草様・溶媒様		<input type="checkbox"/> アルデヒド
		<input type="checkbox"/> インク様
油様・キノコ様	<input type="checkbox"/> 油香	<input type="checkbox"/> 油臭
	<input type="checkbox"/> キノコ様	<input type="checkbox"/> カビ臭
原料	<input type="checkbox"/> 原料特性	<input type="checkbox"/> 原料不良
蒸留		<input type="checkbox"/> 未だれ臭
貯蔵	<input type="checkbox"/> 熟成香	<input type="checkbox"/> ガス臭
容器	<input type="checkbox"/> 樽香・かめ香	<input type="checkbox"/> 樽臭・かめ臭
移り香		<input type="checkbox"/> ゴム臭・樹脂臭
<div> <div>[味]</div> <div>[特性]</div> <div>[指摘項目]</div> </div>		
濃さ	<input type="checkbox"/> 濃醇	<input type="checkbox"/> 過多
淡さ	<input type="checkbox"/> 淡麗	<input type="checkbox"/> うすい
甘辛	<input type="checkbox"/> 甘い	<input type="checkbox"/> くらい
きれいさ	<input type="checkbox"/> きれい	<input type="checkbox"/> くどい
刺激感	<input type="checkbox"/> なめらか	<input type="checkbox"/> あらい
		<input type="checkbox"/> 酸味
		<input type="checkbox"/> 苦味
		<input type="checkbox"/> 渋味
<div> <div>[調和]</div> <div>[特性]</div> <div>[指摘項目]</div> </div>		
	<input type="checkbox"/> 調和	<input type="checkbox"/> 不調和
<div> <div>短評・助言</div> </div>		

← 5-point scale evaluation

Overall evaluation

Raw material characteristics

Body

Sweet taste

Aftertaste

← Optional checks (aroma)

Fruity

Floral

Sweet

Roast, Smoky

Sulfury

Volatile acids, Milk product

Herbal, Solvent

Oily, Mushroom

Raw material characteristic

Distillation-derived

Cask-aged, earthenware jar-aged

Lingering scent

← Optional checks (taste)

Full body

Light body

Sweetness

Clean

Smooth

← Optional checks (balance)

Total balance

← Comment/Advice