

# Outline of the 37<sup>th</sup> Honkaku Shochu Contest

National Research Institute of Brewing  
June 27, 2014

## 1. Contest

*Honkaku shochu* is the Japanese distilled liquor made with a pot still.

The 37<sup>th</sup> Honkaku Shochu Contest was held under the joint auspices of the National Research Institute of Brewing (NRIB) and the Japan Sake and Shochu Makers Association on June 9 and 10, 2014. For this contest, a nationwide research of *honkaku shochu* was conducted with the aim of clarifying the current manufacturing technology and trends in liquor quality, as well as sharing this information with the manufacturers.

## 2. Exhibit

### (1) Qualification for entry

Manufacturers who hold a license to produce single-distilled *shochu* (*honkaku shochu*) and are members of the Japan Sake and Shochu Makers Association.

### (2) Applicable standard for entry

Entries must be products to be sold on the market. There is no limit for the number of entries.

### (3) Entry fee

The entry fee is 5,400 yen (including consumption tax) per entry.

## 3. Overview of entries

182 entries (96% of the number of entries in June 2013) were exhibited from 83 manufacturers (102%) in 28 prefectures (Table 1).

Overall, the number of entries decreased by 8 compared to the previous contest (Table 2).

## 4. Trends among entries

### (1) Production area (Table 1)

As for the production areas, entries from Kyushu and Okinawa, which are the main production areas for *honkaku shochu*, numbered 135 and made up 74% of the total.

### (2) Raw materials (Table 2)

Compared to the previous year's contest, the number of rice *shochu* entries increased by 8 (135%), barley *shochu* entries increased by 3 (106%), sweet potato *shochu* entries decreased by 15 (78%), *awamori* entries decreased by 7 (65%), buckwheat *shochu* entries, which was zero in the previous year, increased to 2, sake lees *shochu* entries decreased by 1 (93%), and entries using other raw materials increased by 2 (118%).

### (3) Production line (Table 3)

Entries from the "special product line", consisting mainly of long-term aged *shochu*, numbered 36 (103%).

## 5. Jury

The jury consisted of 22 members who were appointed by the president of NRIB from *shochu*

manufacturers recommended by the Japan Sake and Shochu Makers Association, academic experts, technical officers of the National Tax Agency, and staff of NRIB.

#### 6. Evaluation of liquor quality

The quality evaluation was performed by sensory evaluation and chemical analysis. The sensory evaluation was conducted by a profile method, whereby 4 characters (aroma, taste, material characteristics and the total evaluation) were assessed on a 5-point scale. In addition, the presence/absence of 18 positive characters and 28 negative characters was checked.

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

We will inform all the exhibitors the results of the quality evaluation and the chemical analysis.

#### 7. Quality trends

- 1) *Shochu* made from rice and barley is typically crisp, clean, and light, while *awamori* and *shochu* made from sweet potato are known for their traditional flavor and aroma. These characteristics were found in this year's entries.
- 2) Generally, flavors from raw materials were highly expressed in the *awamori*, the sweet potato *shochu*, and the *shochu* using other raw materials. Furthermore, both aged *awamori* and aged barley *shochu* were given high scores in aroma, flavor, and overall evaluation.
- 3) The flavor profile of both barrel-aged rice *shochu* and barrel-aged barley *shochu* tended to reflect the characteristics of the barrel.

**Table 1** Number of manufactures and entries per prefecture in the 37<sup>th</sup> Honkaku Shochu Contest

Manufacturer location		Number of manufactures		Number of exhibits								Total number of exhibits per Taxation Bureau Office		Compared with previous contest (%)	
Regional Taxation Bureau	Prefecture	37th	36th	Detail							37th	36th	37th		36th
				Rice	Barley	Sweet potato	Awamori	Buckwheat	Sake lees	Other					
Sapporo	Hokkaido	0	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	1	0	1	-
Sendai	Aomori	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	11	13	85
	Iwate	1	1	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	3			
	Miyagi	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	1			
	Akita	3	2	2	-	1	-	-	3	-	6	6			
	Yamagata	0	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	1			
	Fukushima	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	2			
Kantoshin'etsu	Ibaraki	2	1	1	1	3	-	-	-	1	6	5	9	7	129
	Tochigi	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0			
	Gunma	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0			
	Saitama	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0			
	Niigata	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	3	2			
	Nagano	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0			
Tokyo	Chiba	0	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	2	6	3	200
	Tokyo	2	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	2	1			
	Kanagawa	1	0	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	0			
	Yamanashi	1	0	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	0			
Kanazawa	Toyama	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	0	0	-
	Ishikawa	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0			
	Fukui	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0			
Nagoya	Gifu	1	0	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0	5	4	125
	Shizuoka	2	1	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	2	2			
	Aichi	0	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	2			
	Mie	1	0	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	2	0			
Osaka	Shiga	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	5	2	250
	Kyoto	1	0	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0			
	Osaka	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0			
	Hyogo	2	0	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	0			
	Nara	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0			
	Wakayama	2	1	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	2	2			
Hiroshima	Tottori	1	0	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	0	6	5	120
	Shimane	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0			
	Okayama	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0			
	Hiroshima	1	1	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	2	3			
	Yamaguchi	2	2	-	-	2	-	-	1	-	3	2			
Takamatsu	Tokushima	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	5	11	45
	Kagawa	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0			
	Ehime	2	2	1	1	2	-	-	-	-	4	4			
	Kochi	1	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	7			
Fukuoka	Fukuoka	8	9	3	17	-	-	1	-	3	24	25	38	46	83
	Saga	2	3	-	4	-	-	-	-	1	5	4			
	Nagasaki	6	8	-	8	1	-	-	-	-	9	17			
Kumamoto	Kumamoto	5	4	9	3	2	-	-	-	-	14	7	84	78	108
	Oita	3	3	-	9	-	-	-	1	-	10	7			
	Miyazaki	3	4	1	3	5	-	1	-	1	11	15			
	Kagoshima	21	19	1	9	33	-	-	-	6	49	49			
Okinawa	Okinawa	5	8	-	-	-	13	-	-	-	13	20	13	20	65
Total		83	81	31	57	53	13	2	13	13	182	190	182	190	96

**Table 2** Change in number of entries according to raw material category

Contest \ Raw material	Rice		Barley		Sweet potato		Awamori		Buckwheat		Sake lees		Other		Total	
	Number of entries	Compared with previous contest	Number of entries	Compared with previous contest	Number of entries	Compared with previous contest	Number of entries	Compared with previous contest	Number of entries	Compared with previous contest	Number of entries	Compared with previous contest	Number of entries	Compared with previous contest	Number of entries	Compared with previous contest
1st	40	-	16	-	77	-	24	-	5	-	24	-	20	-	206	-
6th	59	▲ 19	47	▲ 31	48	▲ 29	24	0	29	▲ 24	26	▲ 2	39	▲ 19	272	▲ 66
9th	69	▲ 10	100	▲ 53	26	▲ 22	24	0	<u>31</u>	▲ 2	<u>60</u>	▲ 34	85	▲ 46	395	▲ 123
10th	86	▲ 17	<u>110</u>	▲ 10	37	▲ 11	<u>37</u>	▲ 13	<u>31</u>	0	38	▲ 22	<u>88</u>	▲ 3	<u>427</u>	▲ 32
11th	<u>96</u>	▲ 10	105	▲ 5	48	▲ 11	23	▲ 14	26	▲ 5	25	▲ 13	61	▲ 27	384	▲ 43
16th	55	▲ 41	76	▲ 29	24	▲ 24	19	▲ 4	21	▲ 5	17	▲ 8	38	▲ 23	250	▲ 134
21st	63	▲ 8	70	▲ 6	22	▲ 2	17	▲ 2	19	▲ 2	27	▲ 10	27	▲ 11	245	▲ 5
26th	67	▲ 4	71	▲ 1	37	▲ 15	10	▲ 7	16	▲ 3	20	▲ 7	32	▲ 5	253	▲ 8
27th	73	▲ 6	76	▲ 5	45	▲ 8	17	▲ 7	22	▲ 6	22	▲ 2	25	▲ 7	280	▲ 27
28th	76	▲ 3	94	▲ 18	69	▲ 24	15	▲ 2	22	0	21	▲ 1	38	▲ 13	335	▲ 55
29th	63	▲ 13	84	▲ 10	79	▲ 10	30	▲ 15	19	▲ 3	25	▲ 4	37	▲ 1	337	▲ 2
30th	67	▲ 4	91	▲ 7	88	▲ 9	27	▲ 3	15	▲ 4	29	▲ 4	30	▲ 7	347	▲ 10
31st	57	▲ 10	90	▲ 1	<u>103</u>	▲ 15	28	▲ 1	21	▲ 6	22	▲ 7	33	▲ 3	354	▲ 7
32nd	51	▲ 6	83	▲ 7	98	▲ 5	28	0	17	▲ 4	20	▲ 2	28	▲ 5	325	▲ 29
33rd	44	▲ 7	77	▲ 6	82	▲ 16	32	▲ 4	14	▲ 3	21	▲ 1	18	▲ 10	288	▲ 37
34th	36	▲ 8	49	▲ 28	69	▲ 13	17	▲ 15	5	▲ 9	14	▲ 7	12	▲ 6	202	▲ 86
35th	24	▲ 12	57	▲ 8	58	▲ 11	16	▲ 1	2	▲ 3	11	▲ 3	13	▲ 1	181	▲ 21
36th	23	▲ 1	54	▲ 3	68	▲ 10	20	▲ 4	0	▲ 2	14	▲ 3	11	▲ 2	190	▲ 9
37th	31	▲ 8	57	▲ 3	53	▲ 15	13	▲ 7	2	▲ 2	13	▲ 1	13	▲ 2	182	▲ 8

Note 1. Brown sugar is included under "other".

Note 2. "Compared with previous contest" for 26th, 21st, 16th, 9th and 6th refers to comparisons to the 21st, 16th, 11st, 6th and 1st contest, respectively.

Note 3. Underlined numbers are the highest numbers of entries in the past.

**Table 3** Status of exhibits in the 37<sup>th</sup> Honkaku Shochu Contest

Raw material category			Special products	Total
		Number of entries	Number of entries	Number of entries
Rice		23	8	31
Barley		43	14	57
Sweet potato		50	3	53
Awamori		8	5	13
Sake lees		10	3	13
Buckwheat		2		2
Other		10	3	13
Detail	Brown sugar	5	1	6
	Pumpkin	1		1
	Kudzu vine	1		1
	Water chestnut	1		1
	Sesame	1	1	2
	Corn	1		1
	Barley / Sweet potato		1	1
Total		146	36	182

Note 1. "Special products" refers to long-term aging, cask aging and jar aging.