

Outline of the 40th Honkaku Shochu and Awamori Contest

National Research Institute of Brewing
Japan Sake and Shochu Makers Association
June 23, 2017

1. Contest

Single distilled *shochu*, *honkaku shochu* particularly, and *awamori* are the Japanese spirits distilled in a pot still.

The 40th 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 on June 1 and 2, 2017. For this contest, a nationwide research of single distilled *shochu* and *awamori* were conducted with the aim of clarifying the current manufacturing technology and trends in liquor quality, as well as sharing this information with the manufacturers.

The contest title has been altered to “The Honkaku Shochu and Awamori Contest” from previous “The Honkaku Shochu Contest.”

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 per entry.

3. Overview of entries

236 entries (111% of the number of entries in June 2016) were exhibited from 87 manufacturers (100%) in 28 prefectures (Table 1).

Overall, the number of entries increased by 23 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, where are the main production areas for *honkaku shochu* and *awamori*, numbered 182 and made up 77% of the total.

(2) Raw materials category (Table 2)

Compared to the previous year’s contest, the number of rice *shochu* entries increased by 7 (128%), barley *shochu* entries was same (100%), sweet potato *shochu* entries increased by 14 (119%), *awamori* entries remarkably increased by 7 (147%), and sake cake *shochu* entries increased by 8 (233%).

(3) Production line (Table 3)

Entries from the “special product line,” consisting mainly of long-term aged *shochu*, numbered 49 (102%).

5. Jury

The jury consisted of 26 members who were appointed by the president of NRIB from *shochu* and *awamori* 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 26 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 *shochu* made from sweet potato and *awamori* 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 vacuum-distilled sake cake *shochu* and the barley *shochu* distilled at atmospheric pressure. Furthermore, barrel-aged rice *shochu*, *awamori* distilled at atmospheric pressure, vacuum-distilled sake cake *shochu* were given higher scores in aroma, flavor, and overall evaluation.
- 3) The flavor profile of barrel-aged barley *shochu* tended to reflect the characteristics of the barrel.

Table 1 Number of manufactures and entries per prefecture in the 40th Honkaku Shochu and Awamori Awards

Manufacturer location		Number of manufactures		Number of exhibits									Total number of exhibits per Taxation Bureau Office		Compared with previous awards (%)	
Regional Taxation Bureau	Prefecture	40th	39th	Detail								40th	39th			
				Rice	Barley	Sweet potato	Awamori	Sake cake	Buckwheat	Brown sugar	Other					
Sapporo	Hokkaido	0	0	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	0	1	0	-
Sendai	Aomori	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	12	14	86
	Iwate	3	3	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	6			
	Miyagi	1	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	1			
	Akita	1	1	3	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	5	3			
	Yamagata	0	0	2	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	3	0			
	Fukushima	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	4			
Kantoshin'etsu	Ibaraki	3	2	1	1	4	-	1	-	-	-	7	5	11	15	73
	Tochigi	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0			
	Gunma	0	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	2			
	Saitama	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0			
	Niigata	3	5	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	4	6			
	Nagano	0	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	2			
Tokyo	Chiba	0	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	3	6	6	100
	Tokyo	1	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	1			
	Kanagawa	1	0	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	2	0			
	Yamanashi	1	1	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	2			
Kanazawa	Toyama	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	0	0	-
	Ishikawa	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0			
	Fukui	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0			
Nagoya	Gifu	1	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	2	4	3	133
	Shizuoka	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1			
	Aichi	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0			
	Mie	1	0	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	0			
Osaka	Shiga	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	6	4	150
	Kyoto	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0			
	Osaka	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0			
	Hyogo	3	3	1	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	4			
	Nara	1	0	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	2	0			
	Wakayama	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0			
Hiroshima	Tottori	1	0	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	2	0	8	7	114
	Shimane	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0			
	Okayama	1	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2			
	Hiroshima	1	1	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	2	2			
	Yamaguchi	1	2	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	2	3			
Takamatsu	Tokushima	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	6	8	75
	Kagawa	0	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	3			
	Ehime	3	1	1	2	-	-	1	-	-	1	5	1			
	Kochi	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	4			
Fukuoka	Fukuoka	6	8	1	17	1	-	-	1	-	4	24	30	41	48	85
	Saga	2	2	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	5			
	Nagasaki	7	7	-	10	3	-	-	-	-	-	13	13			
Kumamoto	Kumamoto	6	5	10	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	12	10	119	93	128
	Oita	4	3	-	15	-	-	-	-	-	-	15	10			
	Miyazaki	4	6	1	5	16	-	-	1	-	-	23	20			
	Kagoshima	19	18	2	5	57	-	-	-	4	1	69	53			
Okinawa	Okinawa	8	6	-	-	-	22	-	-	-	-	22	15	22	15	147
Total		87	87	32	67	88	22	13	3	4	7	236	213	236	213	111

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

Raw material category Awards	Rice		Barley		Sweet potato		Awamori		Sake cake		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	60	34	31	2	7	1	78	45	395	123
10th	86	17	110	10	37	11	37	13	38	▲ 22	31	0	10	3	78	0	427	32
11th	96	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	11	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
27th	73	6	76	5	45	8	17	7	22	2	22	6	4	▲ 4	21	▲ 3	280	27
28th	76	3	94	18	69	24	15	▲ 2	21	▲ 1	22	0	11	7	27	6	335	55
29th	63	▲ 13	84	▲ 10	79	10	30	15	25	4	19	▲ 3	8	▲ 3	29	2	337	2
30th	67	4	91	7	88	9	27	▲ 3	29	4	15	▲ 4	5	▲ 3	25	▲ 4	347	10
31st	57	▲ 10	90	▲ 1	103	15	28	1	22	▲ 7	21	6	7	2	26	1	354	7
32nd	51	▲ 6	83	▲ 7	98	▲ 5	28	0	20	▲ 2	17	▲ 4	9	2	19	▲ 7	325	▲ 29
33rd	44	▲ 7	77	▲ 6	82	▲ 16	32	4	21	1	14	▲ 3	7	▲ 2	11	▲ 8	288	▲ 37
34th	36	▲ 8	49	▲ 28	69	▲ 13	17	▲ 15	14	▲ 7	5	▲ 9	2	▲ 5	10	▲ 1	202	▲ 86
35th	24	▲ 12	57	8	58	▲ 11	16	▲ 1	11	▲ 3	2	▲ 3	2	0	11	1	181	▲ 21
36th	23	▲ 1	54	▲ 3	68	10	20	4	14	3	0	▲ 2	3	1	8	▲ 3	190	9
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

Note 1. White rice bran is included under "other."

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

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

Table 3 Status of exhibits in the 40th Honkaku Shochu and Awamori Awards

Raw material category			Special products	Total
		Number of entries	Number of entries	Number of entries
Rice		21	11	32
Barley		51	16	67
Sweet potato		78	10	88
Awamori		17	5	22
Sake cake		9	4	13
Buckwheat		3	-	3
Brown sugar		4	-	4
Other		4	3	7
Detail	Chestnut	1	1	2
	Sesame	1	1	2
	Carrot	1	-	1
	Barley and rice	-	1	1
	Kudzu vine	1	-	1
Total		187	49	236

Note 1. "Special products" refers to a product that has been treated with long-term aging, barrel aging, and jar aging, in its maturation process.