

# Outline of the 41<sup>st</sup> Honkaku Shochu and Awamori Contest

National Research Institute of Brewing  
Japan Sake and Shochu Makers Association  
June 26, 2018

## 1. Contest

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

The 41<sup>st</sup> 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 5 and 6, 2018. 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*).

### (2) Applicable standard for entry

Entries must be products of single distilled *shochu* to be sold on the market or during storage in order to commercially available. The number of entries per manufacture is limited within 8 points.

### (3) Entry fee

Members of the Japan Sake and Shochu Makers Association: 5,400 yen per entry.

Others: 8,100 yen per entry.

## 3. Overview of entries

248 entries (105% of the number of entries in June 2017) were exhibited from 96 manufacturers (110%) in 26 prefectures (Table 1).

Overall, the number of entries increased by 12 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 201 and made up 81% of the total.

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

Compared to the previous year's contest, the number of rice *shochu* entries decreased by 6 (81%), barley *shochu* entries increased by 10 (115%), sweet potato *shochu* entries increased by 10 (111%), *awamori* entries decreased by 4 (82%), sake cake *shochu* entries was same, brown sugar *shochu* entries increased by 3 (175%), and other *shochu* entries decreased by 2 (71%).

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

Entries from normal product line numbered 193 (103%). Entries from the special product line, composed of long-term aging, barrel aging and jar aging shochu, numbered 55 (112%).

#### 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 5 characters (rich/light, sweetness, aftertaste, material characteristics and the total evaluation) were assessed on a 5-point scale. In addition, the presence/absence of 14 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 mainly mild flavored, *that* made from sweet potato and *awamori* are mainly fragrant, and *that* made from sake cake is mainly highly fruity flavored.
- 2) Generally, flavors from raw materials were highly expressed in vacuum-distilled sake cake *shochu* and aged sake cake *shochu*. Furthermore, both aged barley and aged sweet potato *shochu*, and vacuum-distilled sake cake *shochu* were given higher scores in overall evaluation.
- 3) The flavor profile of both barrel-aged rice and barrel-aged barley *shochu* tended to reflect the characteristics of the barrel.

**Table 1 Number of manufactures and entries per prefecture in the 41st Honkaku Shochu 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	41st	40th	Detail								41st	40th	41st	40th		
				Rice	Barley	Sweet potato	Awamori	Sake lees	Buckwheat	Brown sugar	Other						
Sapporo	Hokkaido	0	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	1	0	1	-
Sendai	Aomori	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	6	12	50
	Iwate	1	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	3			
	Miyagi	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	2	1			
	Akita	0	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	5			
	Yamagata	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	3			
	Fukushima	1	0	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0			
Kantoshin'etsu	Ibaraki	1	3	1	1	4	-	-	1	-	-	-	7	7	11	11	100
	Tochigi	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0			
	Gunma	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0			
	Saitama	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0			
	Niigata	3	3	1	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	4	4			
	Nagano	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0			
Tokyo	Chiba	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	6	6	100
	Tokyo	1	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1			
	Kanagawa	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	2	2			
	Yamanashi	1	1	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	3			
Kanazawa	Toyama	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	0	0	-
	Ishikawa	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0			
	Fukui	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0			
Nagoya	Gifu	2	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	2	1	9	4	225	
	Shizuoka	2	1	2	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	4	1				
	Aichi	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0				0
	Mie	1	1	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3				2
Osaka	Shiga	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	3	6	50
	Kyoto	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0			
	Osaka	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0			
	Hyogo	3	3	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	4			
	Nara	0	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	2			
	Wakayama	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0			
Hiroshima	Tottori	0	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	2	8	8	100
	Shimane	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0			
	Okayama	2	1	1	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	3	2			
	Hiroshima	1	1	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2			
	Yamaguchi	2	1	-	-	2	-	1	-	-	-	-	3	2			
Takamatsu	Tokushima	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	4	6	67
	Kagawa	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0			
	Ehime	2	3	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	3	5			
	Kochi	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1			
Fukuoka	Fukuoka	11	6	1	27	1	-	1	1	-	3	34	24	55	41	134	
	Saga	2	2	-	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	4				
	Nagasaki	7	7	-	9	6	-	-	-	-	-	15	13				
Kumamoto	Kumamoto	5	6	8	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	12	128	119	108	
	Oita	4	4	-	10	-	-	1	-	-	-	11	15				
	Miyazaki	7	4	1	7	20	-	-	1	-	-	29	23				
	Kagoshima	24	19	-	8	63	-	-	-	-	7	78	69				
Okinawa	Okinawa	7	8	-	-	-	18	-	-	-	-	18	22	18	22	82	
Total		96	87	26	77	98	18	13	4	7	5	248	236	248	236	105	

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

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	<b>60</b>	34	<b>31</b>	2	7	1	<b>78</b>	45	395	123	
10th	86	▲ 17	<b>110</b>	▲ 10	37	▲ 11	<b>37</b>	13	38	▲ 22	<b>31</b>	0	10	3	<b>78</b>	0	<b>427</b>	32	
11th	<b>96</b>	▲ 10	105	▲ 5	48	▲ 11	23	▲ 14	25	▲ 13	5	26	▲	8	▲ 2	53	▲ 25	384	▲ 43
16th	55	▲ 41	76	▲ 29	24	▲ 24	19	▲ 4	17	▲ 8	21	▲ 5	<b>11</b>	3	27	▲ 26	250	▲ 134	
21st	63	▲ 8	70	▲ 6	22	▲ 2	17	▲ 2	27	10	2	19	▲	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	<b>11</b>	7	27	▲ 6	335	▲ 55	
29th	63	▲ 13	84	▲ 10	79	▲ 10	30	▲ 15	25	▲ 4	3	19	▲	8	▲ 3	29	▲ 2	337	▲ 2
30th	67	▲ 4	91	▲ 7	88	▲ 9	27	▲ 3	29	▲ 4	4	15	▲	5	▲ 3	25	▲ 4	347	▲ 10
31st	57	▲ 10	90	▲ 1	<b>103</b>	▲ 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	3	14	▲	7	▲ 2	11	▲ 8	288	▲ 37
34th	36	▲ 8	49	▲ 28	69	▲ 13	17	▲ 15	7	▲ 14	▲	9	▲	2	▲ 5	10	▲ 1	202	▲ 86
35th	24	▲ 12	57	▲ 8	58	▲ 11	16	▲ 1	3	▲ 11	▲	2	▲ 3	2	0	11	▲ 1	181	▲ 21
36th	23	▲ 1	54	▲ 3	68	▲ 10	20	▲ 4	14	▲ 3	2	0	▲	3	▲ 1	8	▲ 3	190	▲ 9
37th	31	▲ 8	57	▲ 3	53	▲ 15	13	▲ 7	1	▲ 13	▲	2	▲	6	▲ 3	7	▲ 1	182	▲ 8
38th	21	▲ 10	50	▲ 7	66	▲ 13	16	▲ 3	7	▲ 6	▲	2	0	▲	4	▲ 2	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	1	▲ 13	▲	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	

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

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

**Table 3 Status of exhibits in the 41st Honkaku Shochu Awards**

Raw material category		Normal products	Special products	Total
		Number of entries	Number of entries	Number of entries
Rice		20	6	26
Barley		57	20	77
Sweet potato		85	13	98
Awamori		10	8	18
Sake lees		7	6	13
Buckwheat		4	-	4
Brown sugar		6	1	7
Other		4	1	5
Detail	Sesame	1	1	2
	Sake	1	-	1
	Chestnut	1	-	1
	Kudzu vine	1	-	1
Total		193	55	248

Note: "Special products" refers to long-term aging, barrel aging and jar aging.