

Outline of the 42nd Honkaku Shochu and Awamori Contest

National Research Institute of Brewing
Japan Sake and Shochu Makers Association
June 21, 2019

1. Contest

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

The 42nd 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 4 and 5, 2019. 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 contributing to the improvement of single distilled *shochu* and *awamori* qualities.

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 be commercially available. The number of entries per manufacturer 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

238 entries (96% of the number of entries in June 2018) were exhibited from 90 manufacturers (94%) in 26 prefectures (Table 1).

Overall, the number of entries decreased by 10 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 203 and made up 85% of the total.

(2) Varieties of single distilled *shochu* (Table 2)

Compared to the previous year's contest, the number of rice *shochu* entries decreased by 2 (92%), barley *shochu* entries increased by 18 (123%), sweet potato *shochu* entries decreased by 13 (87%), *awamori* entries decreased by 1 (94%), sake cake *shochu* entries decreased by 5 (62%), buckwheat *shochu* entries decreased by 1 (75%), brown sugar *shochu* entries decreased by 5 (29%), and other *shochu* entries decreased by 1 (80%).

(3) Production line (Table 3)

Entries from normal product line numbered 180 (93%). Entries from the special product line, corresponding to long-term aging, barrel aging or jar aging *shochu*, numbered 58 (105%).

5. Judging panels

The judging panels consisted of 27 members who were appointed by the president of NRIB from:
Shochu and Awamori manufacturers recommended by the Japan Sake and Shochu Makers Association
Shochu and Awamori specialists from the Japan Sake and Shochu Makers Association and the Brewing Society of Japan

Shochu and Awamori specialists from prefectural research centers

Technical officers of the National Tax Agency

Executive officers 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 (material characteristics, rich/light, sweetness, aftertaste, and the total evaluation) were assessed on a 5-point scale. In addition, the presence/absence of 15 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 aromatic and mild tasted, *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*.
- 3) As for long-aged *shochu*, matured aroma tended to be high with long-aged *awamorri*. Furthermore, both aged sweet potato *shochu* and aged *awamori* were given higher scores in overall evaluation.
- 4) As for cask-aged *shochu*, the characteristics derived from raw materials tended to be lower but the properties derived from cask were highly evaluated in cask-aged barley *shochu*. Moreover, cask-aged sweet potato *shochu* was highly evaluated for both the characteristics derived from cask and raw material, and a good balance was observed.
- 5) As for jar-aged *shochu*, the characteristics derived from jar-storage was highly expressed in jar-aged baley *shochu* and jar-aged sweet potato *shochu*.

Table 1 Number of manufactures and entries per prefecture in the 42nd 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	42nd	41st	Varieties of single distilled <i>shochu</i>								42nd	41st	42nd	41st		
				Rice	Barley	Sweet potato	Awamori	Sake cake	Buckwheat	Brown sugar	Other						
Sapporo	Hokkaido	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	0	0	-
Sendai	Aomori	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	4	6	67
	Iwate	1	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2			
	Miyagi	1	2	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	2			
	Akita	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0			
	Yamagata	0	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	1			
	Fukushima	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1				
Kanto-Shinetsu	Ibaraki	1	1	0	1	3	-	-	1	-	-	5	7	7	11	64	
	Tochigi	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0				
	Gunma	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0				
	Saitama	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0				
	Niigata	2	3	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	2	4				
	Nagano	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0				
Tokyo	Chiba	1	0	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	2	0	7	6	117	
	Tokyo	2	1	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	2	1				
	Kanagawa	1	2	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	2				
	Yamanashi	1	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	3				
Kanazawa	Toyama	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	0	0	-	
	Ishikawa	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0				
	Fukui	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0				
Nagoya	Gifu	0	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	2	2	9	22	
	Shizuoka	1	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	4				
	Aichi	1	0	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	0				
	Mie	0	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	3				
Osaka	Shiga	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	3	3	100	
	Kyoto	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0				
	Osaka	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0				
	Hyogo	3	3	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	3				
	Nara	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0				
	Wakayama	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0				
Hiroshima	Tottori	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	5	8	63	
	Shimane	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0				
	Okayama	2	2	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	3	3				
	Hiroshima	1	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	2				
	Yamaguchi	1	2	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	3				
Takamatsu	Tokushima	1	0	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	0	7	4	175	
	Kagawa	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0				
	Ehime	1	2	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	2	3				
	Kochi	3	1	1	-	-	-	2	-	-	1	4	1				
Fukuoka	Fukuoka	11	11	1	28	4	-	-	1	-	2	36	34	75	55	136	
	Saga	2	2	1	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	6				
	Nagasaki	10	7	-	26	7	-	-	-	-	-	33	15				
Kumamoto	Kumamoto	5	5	7	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	11	10	111	128	87	
	Oita	3	4	1	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	11	11				
	Miyazaki	6	7	2	8	17	-	-	1	-	-	28	29				
	Kagoshima	20	24	1	10	48	-	-	-	2	-	61	78				
Okinawa	Okinawa	8	7	-	-	-	17	-	-	-	-	17	18	17	18	94	
Total		90	96	24	95	85	17	8	3	2	4	238	248	238	248	96	

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

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
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

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 42nd Honkaku Shochu Awards

Varieties of single distilled <i>shochu</i>		Normal products	Special products	Total
		Number of entries	Number of entries	Number of entries
Rice		20	4	24
Barley		62	33	95
Sweet potato		75	10	85
Awamori		10	7	17
Sake cake		4	4	8
Buckwheat		3	-	3
Brown sugar		2	-	2
Other		4	-	4
Detail	Kudzu vine	1	-	1
	Chestnut	1	-	1
	Sesame	1	-	1
	Yam	1	-	1
Total		180	58	238

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