

Outline of the 43rd Honkaku Shochu and Awamori Contest

National Research Institute of Brewing
Japan Sake and Shochu Makers Association
October 30, 2020

1. Contest

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

The 43rd 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 October 6 and 7, 2020. 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.

Although the judging session of the contest is usually held in June every year, this year we decided to postpone the contest to avoid the spread of COVID-19. The judging session was held in October in consideration of the need to prevent infection. Unfortunately, we decided to cancel the sensory evaluation meeting for manufacturing professionals and experts this year because we expect many people would attend the meeting from all over Japan.

2. Exhibit

(1) Qualification for entry

Manufacturers who hold a license to produce single distilled *Shochu* (*Honkaku Shochu* and *Awamori*).

(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 items.

(3) Entry fee

Members of the Japan Sake and Shochu Makers Association: 5,500 yen per entry.

Others: 8,250 yen per entry.

3. Overview of entries

197 entries (83% of the number of entries in June 2019) were exhibited from 68 manufacturers (76%) in 23 prefectures (Table 1).

Overall, the number of entries decreased by 41 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 166 and made up 84% 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 decreased by 24 (75%), sweet potato *Shochu* entries decreased by 12 (86%), brown

sugar *Shochu* entries decreased by 1(50%), *Awamori*, sake cake *Shochu* and buckwheat *Shochu* entries did not changed, and other *Shochu* entries decreased by 2 (50%).

(3) Details of products (Table 3)

Entries from normal products numbered 143 (79%). Entries from the special products, corresponding to long-term aged, barrel aged or jar aged *Shochu*, numbered 54 (93%).

5. Judging panels

The judging panels consisted of 14 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, *Shochu* and *Awamori* specialists from prefectural research centers, technical officers of the National Tax Agency, and executive officers and staff of NRIB.

The judging process was conducted in consideration of preventing the spread of COVID-19.

Judges were seated at their assigned seats at 2-meter intervals, and the samples to be judged were poured into plastic cups and served on trays to each judge individually. Each judge also used their own vessel for spitting out. Other measures against COVID-19 include taking body temperature measurements before judging, installing disinfectant solutions, wearing masks, installing splash-proof partitions, and considering the ventilation of the judging room.

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 manufacturers the results of the quality evaluation and the chemical analysis.

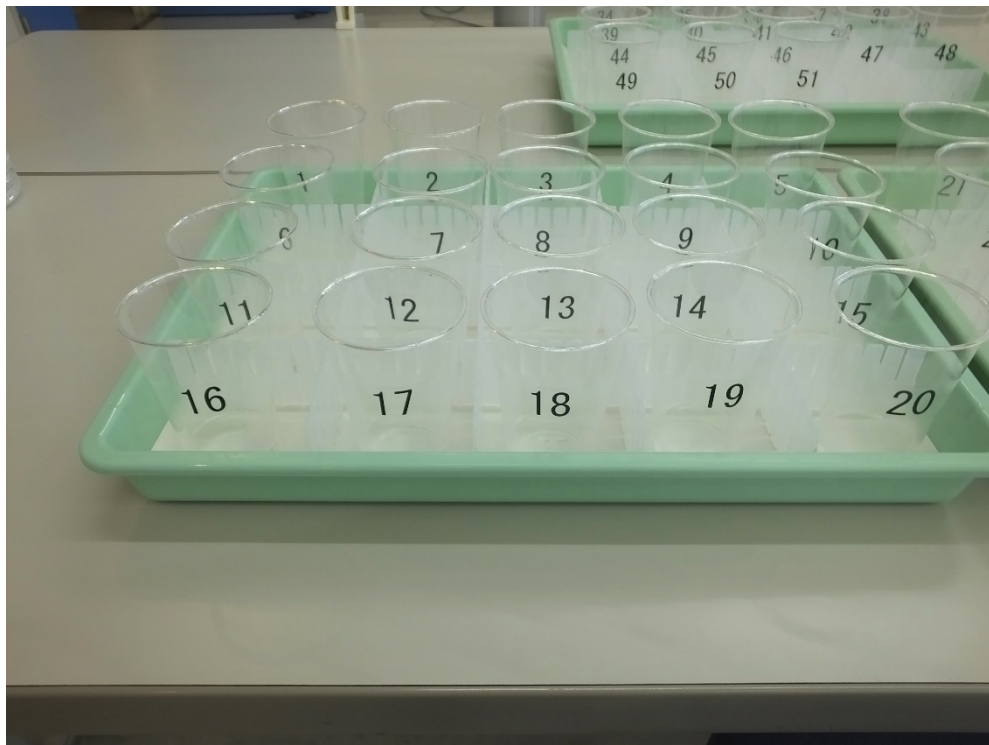
7. Quality trends

- 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) As for normal products, flavors from raw materials were highly expressed in vacuum-distilled sake cake *Shochu* and in atmospheric-distilled barley *Shochu*.
- 3) As for long-term aged products, matured aroma tended to be high with long-term aged *Awamori*.
- 4) As for cask-aged products, 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 sake cake *Shochu* was highly evaluated for both the characteristics derived from cask and raw material.
- 5) As for jar-aged products, the characteristics derived from jar-storage was highly expressed in jar-aged *Awamori*.

Judging room



Seating: Seats was spaced at least 2 meters apart.



Serving: A plastic cup (150 ml volume) was filled with a sample (30-35 ml) and served to a judge individually on a tray.

Table 1 Number of manufactures and entries per prefecture in the 43rd 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	43rd	42nd	Varieties of single distilled <i>shochu</i>								43rd	42nd	43rd	42nd		
				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	5	4	125
	Iwate	1	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2			
	Miyagi	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	1			
	Akita	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0			
	Yamagata	1	0	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	0			
	Fukushima	0	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	1			
Kanto-Shinetsu	Ibaraki	1	1	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	5	7	7	100
	Tochigi	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0			
	Gunma	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0			
	Saitama	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0			
	Niigata	2	2	1	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	3	2			
	Nagano	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0			
Tokyo	Chiba	0	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	2	4	7	57
	Tokyo	1	2	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2			
	Kanagawa	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	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	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	7	2	350
	Shizuoka	2	1	2	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	3	1			
	Aichi	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	1			
	Mie	1	0	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	0			
Osaka	Shiga	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	2	3	67
	Kyoto	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0			
	Osaka	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0			
	Hyogo	2	3	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	3			
	Nara	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0			
	Wakayama	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0			
Hiroshima	Tottori	1	0	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	0	5	5	100
	Shimane	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0			
	Okayama	2	2	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	3			
	Hiroshima	0	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	1			
	Yamaguchi	0	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	1			
Takamatsu	Tokushima	0	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	1	1	7	14
	Kagawa	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0			
	Ehime	0	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	2			
	Kochi	1	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	4			
Fukuoka	Fukuoka	7	11	1	21	1	-	-	1	-	2	26	36	43	75	57	
	Saga	2	2	-	6	-	-	1	-	-	-	7	6				
	Nagasaki	5	10	-	6	4	-	-	-	-	-	10	33				
Kumamoto	Kumamoto	3	5	4	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	11	106	111	95	
	Oita	4	3	-	15	-	-	1	-	-	-	16	11				
	Miyazaki	6	6	2	7	18	-	-	2	-	-	29	28				
	Kagoshima	16	20	-	8	45	-	-	-	1	-	54	61				
Okinawa	Okinawa	6	8	-	-	-	17	-	-	-	-	17	17	17	17	100	
Total		68	90	22	71	73	17	8	3	1	2	197	238	197	238	83	

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
43rd	22	▲ 2	71	▲ 24	73	▲ 12	17	0	8	0	3	0	1	▲ 1	2	▲ 2	197	▲ 41

Note 1: "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 2: Underlined numbers are the highest numbers of entries in the past.

Table 3 Details of products in the 43rd Honkaku Shochu Awards

Varieties of single distilled <i>shochu</i>		Normal products								Special products								Total	
		Vacuum distillation		Atmospheric distillation		Blend		Total		Long-term aging		Barrel aging		Earthenware jar aging		Total			
		Number of entries		Number of entries		Number of entries		Number of entries		Number of entries		Number of entries		Number of entries		Number of entries			
		43rd	42nd	43rd	42nd	43rd	42nd	43rd	42nd	43rd	42nd	43rd	42nd	43rd	42nd	43rd	42nd	43rd	42nd
Rice		11	19	1	1	-	-	12	20	3	3	7	1	-	-	10	4	22	24
Barley		33	41	7	15	9	6	49	62	1	8	20	21	1	4	22	33	71	95
Sweet potato		4	5	57	65	4	5	65	75	4	3	2	3	2	4	8	10	73	85
Awamori		1	3	7	7	-	-	8	10	4	3	2	2	3	2	9	7	17	17
Sake cake		4	4	-	-	-	-	4	4	1	2	3	2	-	-	4	4	8	8
Buckwheat		1	2	-	-	1	1	2	3	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	3	3
Brown sugar		-	-	1	2	-	-	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2
Other		2	4	-	-	-	-	2	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	4
Detail	Kudzu vine	1	1	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
	Sesame	1	1	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Total		56	78	73	90	14	12	143	180	13	19	35	29	6	10	54	58	197	238