

# Outline of the 44<sup>th</sup> Honkaku Shochu and Awamori Contest

National Research Institute of Brewing  
Japan Sake and Shochu Makers Association  
August 27, 2021

## 1. Contest

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

The 44<sup>th</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 August 3 and 4, 2021. For this contest, a nationwide research of pot distillation *Shochu*, particularly *Honkaku 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 pot distillation *Shochu* (*Honkaku Shochu* and *Awamori*) qualities.

The judging session of the contest is usually held in June every year, however this year we decided to postpone the contest to August in consideration of need to prevent the spread of COVID-19. We decided to cancel the sensory evaluation meeting arranged for manufacturing professionals and experts last year since we expected many people from all over Japan would attend the meeting during COVID-19 spread. This year, the meeting was decided to be held on August 27 under the consideration to prevent the infection of new corona virus.

## 2. Special rules

### (1) Qualification for entry

Manufacturers who hold a license to produce pot distillation *Shochu* (*Honkaku Shochu* and *Awamori*).

### (2) Applicable standard for entry

Entries must be products of pot distillation *Shochu* (*Honkaku Shochu* and *Awamori*) to be sold on the market or during storage as 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

A total of 193 entries (98% of the previous year's total entry number) were exhibited from 71 manufacturers (104%) in 23 prefectures (Table 1).

Overall number of entries decreased by 4 compared to the previous year (Table 1 and Table 2).

## 4. Trends among entries

### (1) Production area

As for the production area, the number of entries from Kyushu (153 entries) and Okinawa (13 entries), which are the main production areas for *Honkaku Shochu* and *Awamori*, are 166 that made up 86% of the total (Table 1).

### (2) Varieties of raw materials

The following entries were received, rice *Shochu*: 24 (increased by 2 compared to the previous year's

contest), barley *Shochu*: 71 (no change), sweet potato *Shochu*: 68 (decreased by 5), Awamori: 13 (decreased by 4), sake lees *Shochu*: 11 (increased by 3), buckwheat *Shochu*: 2 (decreased by 1), brown sugar *Shochu*: 2 (increased by 1), and other *Shochu*: 2 (no change) (Table 1 and Table 2).

### (3) Varieties of products techniques

Entries from normal products numbered 139 (97%). Entries from the special products, corresponding to long-term aged, cask-aged or earthenware jar-aged *Shochu*, numbered 54 (no change) (Table 3).

## 5. Judging panels

The judging panels consisted of 13 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 prefectural research centers, technical officers of the National Tax Agency, and staffs of NRIB (Table 4).

The judging process was conducted in consideration of preventing the spread of COVID-19. Judges were seated at their assigned seats at 2-meter range intervals, and the samples were poured into plastic cups and served on trays to the judges individually. Each judge also used their own vessel for spitting out. Other measures against COVID-19 include measuring body temperature before entering the judging room, installing alcohol-based sanitizer, wearing masks, installing splash-proof partitions, ensuring 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 (raw 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 considered (Figure).

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

The results of the sensory evaluation and the chemical analysis will be informed to all the manufacturers.

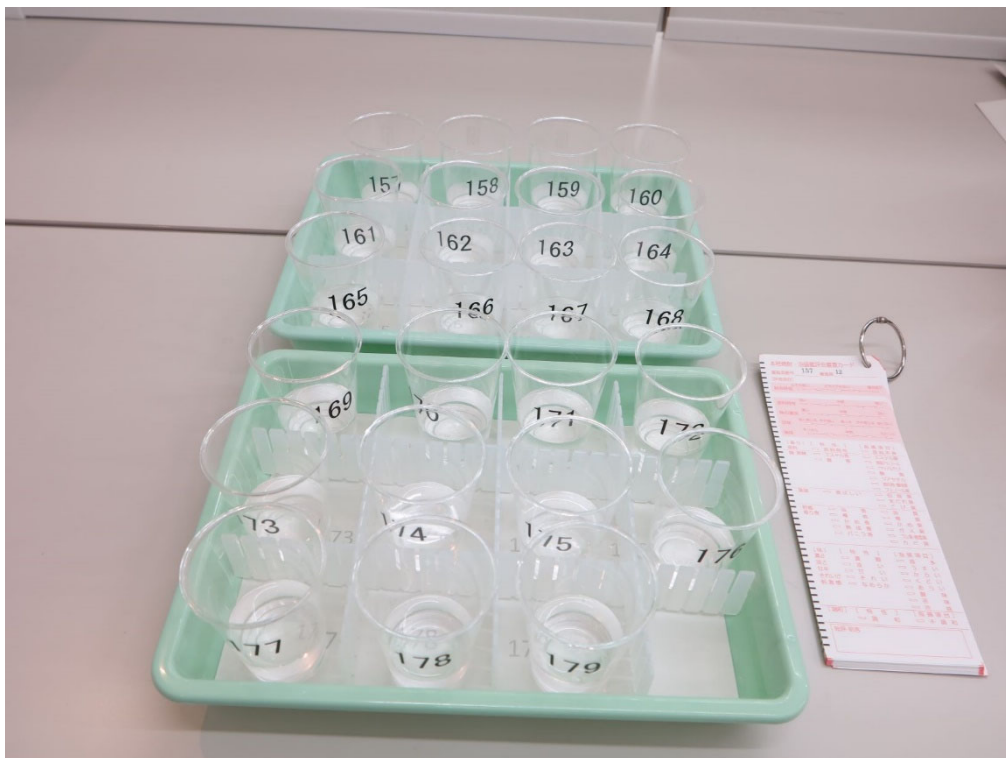
## 7. Quality trends

- (1) *Shochu* made from rice and barley was mainly aromatic and mild tasted, that made from sweet potato and *Awamori* was mainly fragrant, and that made from sake lees was mainly highly fruity flavored.
- (2) As for normal products, flavors from raw materials and a richer taste were highly expressed atmospheric-distilled barley *Shochu* and *Awamori*. In addition, the average value of the overall evaluation was relatively good in sweet potato *Shochu* produced by blending atmospheric distillation and vacuum distillation, as well as in vacuum-distilled sake lees *Shochu*.
- (3) As for long-term aged products, rice *Shochu* had low raw material-derived characteristics. In addition, long-term products of sake lees *Shochu* and rice *Shochu* tended to be smoother in taste.
- (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* and rice *Shochu*. Moreover, cask-aged sweet potato *Shochu* was highly evaluated for both the characteristics derived from cask and raw materials.
- (5) As for earthenware jar-aged products, the characteristics derived from earthenware jar-aging was highly expressed in earthenware jar-aged sweet potato *Shochu*.

## Judging room



Seating: Seats were spaced at least 2 meters apart. Splash-proof screens were installed around the desks.



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 44<sup>th</sup> Honkaku Shochu and Awamori 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	44th	43rd	Varieties of single distilled <i>shochu</i>								44th	43rd	44th	43rd	Compared with previous contest (%)	
				Rice	Barley	Sweet potato	Awamori	Sake lees	Buckwheat	Brown sugar	Other						
Sapporo	Hokkaido	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	0	0	-
Sendai	Aomori	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	6	5	120
	Iwate	1	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2			
	Miyagi	1	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	1			
	Akita	1	0	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	0			
	Yamagata	1	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2			
	Fukushima	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0			
Kanto-Shinetsu	Ibaraki	0	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	4	4	7	57
	Tochigi	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0			
	Gunma	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0			
	Saitama	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0			
	Niigata	3	2	1	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	4	3			
	Nagano	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0			
Tokyo	Chiba	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	4	4	100
	Tokyo	1	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1			
	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	5	7	71
	Shizuoka	2	2	3	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	4	3			
	Aichi	1	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	1			
	Mie	0	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	3			
Osaka	Shiga	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	3	2	150
	Kyoto	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0			
	Osaka	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0			
	Hyogo	2	2	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2			
	Nara	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0			
	Wakayama	1	0	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0			
Hiroshima	Tottori	0	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	2	4	5	80
	Shimane	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0			
	Okayama	2	2	1	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	3	3			
	Hiroshima	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0			
	Yamaguchi	1	0	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	0			
Takamatsu	Tokushima	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	1	1	100
	Kagawa	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0			
	Ehime	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0			
	Kochi	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1			
Fukuoka	Fukuoka	7	7	1	19	1	-	1	-	-	2	24	26	40	43	93	
	Saga	1	2	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	7				
	Nagasaki	6	5	-	7	4	-	-	-	-	-	11	10				
Kumamoto	Kumamoto	4	3	7	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	11	7	113	106	107	
	Oita	4	4	-	19	-	-	-	-	-	-	19	16				
	Miyazaki	6	6	2	7	16	-	-	2	-	-	27	29				
	Kagoshima	18	16	-	8	46	-	-	-	2	-	56	54				
Okinawa	Okinawa	5	6	-	-	-	13	-	-	-	-	13	17	13	17	76	
Total		71	68	24	71	68	13	11	2	2	2	193	197	193	197	98	

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

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	<u>60</u>	34	<u>31</u>	2	7	1	<u>78</u>	45	395	123
10th	86	17	<u>110</u>	10	37	11	<u>37</u>	13	38	▲ 22	<u>31</u>	0	10	3	<u>78</u>	0	<u>427</u>	32
11th	<u>96</u>	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	<u>11</u>	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
28th	76	9	94	23	69	32	15	5	21	1	22	6	<u>11</u>	3	27	3	335	82
31st	57	▲ 19	90	▲ 4	<u>103</u>	34	28	13	22	1	21	▲ 1	7	▲ 4	26	▲ 1	354	19
36th	23	▲ 34	54	▲ 36	68	▲ 35	20	▲ 8	14	▲ 8	0	▲ 21	3	▲ 4	8	▲ 18	190	▲ 164
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
44th	24	2	71	0	68	▲ 5	13	▲ 4	11	3	2	▲ 1	2	1	2	0	193	▲ 4

Note 1: "Compared with previous awards" for 36th, 31st, 28th, 26th, 21st, 16th, 9th and 6th refers to comparisons to the 31st, 28th, 26th, 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 44<sup>th</sup> Honkaku Shochu and Awamori Contest**

Varieties of single distilled <i>shochu</i>		Normal products								Special products								Total	
		Vacuum distillation		Atmospheric distillation		Blend		Subtotal		Long-term aging		Cask aging		Earthenware jar aging		Subtotal			
		Number of entries		Number of entries		Number of entries		Number of entries		Number of entries		Number of entries		Number of entries		Number of entries			
		44th	43rd	44th	43rd	44th	43rd	44th	43rd	44th	43rd	44th	43rd	44th	43rd	44th	43rd	44th	43rd
Rice		13	11	2	1	-	-	15	12	6	3	3	7	-	-	9	10	24	22
Barley		34	33	8	7	7	9	49	49	2	1	20	20	-	1	22	22	71	71
Sweet potato		3	4	49	57	5	4	57	65	2	4	3	2	6	2	11	8	68	73
Awamori		1	1	7	7	-	-	8	8	2	4	1	2	2	3	5	9	13	17
Sake lees		6	4	-	-	-	-	6	4	3	1	2	3	-	-	5	4	11	8
Buckwheat		1	1	-	-	-	1	1	2	-	-	1	1	-	-	1	1	2	3
Brown sugar		-	-	1	1	-	-	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	2	1
Other		2	2	-	-	-	-	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2
Detail	Kudzu vine	1	1	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
	Sesame	1	1	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Total		60	56	67	73	12	14	139	143	16	13	30	35	8	6	54	54	193	197

**Table 4 List of Judging panels for the 44<sup>th</sup> Honkaku Shochu and Awamori Contest**

	Name	Workplace and Position	
1	YOSHIDA, Takafumi	NISHIYOSHIDA-SYUZO Co.,Ltd	Managing Director, Production Department
2	NAGASAWA, Yoshikazu	SANWA SHURUI Co.,Ltd.	Deputy General Manager, Supply Chain Management Division
3	YAMASHITA, Inori	NISHI SHUZO Co.,Ltd.	Laboratory Assistant Manager
4	OSHIRO, Yosuke	Nakijin Brewery Co.,Ltd.	President
5	INAI, Tomomi	Industrial Technology Center of Nagasaki	Chief Researcher, Food Development Support Center
6	MIYAWAKI, Tatsuya	Hiroshima Regional Taxation Bureau	Chief Technical Officer, Office of Analysis and Brewing Technology
7	IWATA, Tomoko	Fukuoka Regional Taxation Bureau	Director, Office of Analysis and Brewing Technology
8	MOTOMURA, Hajime	Kumamoto Regional Taxation Bureau	Director, Office of Analysis and Brewing Technology
9	SUZUKI, Takashi	National Research Institute of Brewing	Director, Planning and Management Division
10	YOSHIDA, Yuichi	National Research Institute of Brewing	Senior Advisor (Technology Transfer Propulsion), Planning and Management Division
11	EMURA, Takayuki	National Research Institute of Brewing	Director, Public Relations and Technology Support Division
12	MUKAI, Nobuhiko	National Research Institute of Brewing	Director, Brewing Technology Division
13	KANAI, Muneyoshi	National Research Institute of Brewing	Senior researcher, Brewing Microbiology Division

Figure Judging Sheet for the 44<sup>th</sup> Honkaku Shochu and Awamori Contest

5-point scale

Overall evaluation

Raw material characteristics

Body

Sweet taste

After taste

**本格焼酎・泡盛鑑評会審査カード**

審査酒番号 \_\_\_\_\_ 審査員 \_\_\_\_\_

[評価項目]

総合評価  とても良い  どちらでもない  難点あり

原料特性  強い  中間  弱い

味の濃淡  濃い  中間  薄い

甘味  強く感じる  やや強い  感じる  やや感じる  感じない

後味  すっきり  中間  もたつく

[香り] [特性] [指摘項目]

原料  原料特性  原料不良

麹・発酵  エステル香  エステル臭

麹香  高級アルコール

アセトアルデヒド

酸臭

ジアセチル

硫化物・酵母臭

フェノール臭

蒸留  香ばしい  初留臭

末だれ臭

こげ臭

貯蔵・移り香  油香  油臭

樽香  樽臭

かめ香  かめ臭

熟成香  ガス臭

バニラ香  ゴム臭・樹脂臭

カビ臭

[味] [特性] [指摘項目]

濃さ  濃醇  過多

淡さ  淡い  うすい

甘辛  甘い  からい

きれいさ  きれい  くだい

刺激感  なめらか  あらい

酸味

苦味

渋味

[調和] [特性] [指摘項目]

調和  不調和

短評・助言