

Outline of the 47th Honkaku Shochu and Awamori Contest

National Research Institute of Brewing
Japan Sake and Shochu Makers Association
June 21, 2024

1. Contest

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

The 47th 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 (JSS) on June 4 and 5, 2024. 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.

2. Special rules for entry

(1) Qualification for entry

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

(2) Applicable standard for entry

Entries must be products of *Honkaku Shochu* and *Awamori* to be sold on the market or during storage as commercially available. The number of entries per a manufacture is limited within 8 items.

(3) Entry fee

Members of the JSS: 5,500 yen per entry.

Others: 8,250 yen per entry.

3. Overview of entries

A total of 200 entries (88% of entries compared with previous year) were exhibited from 75 manufacturers (93%) in 24 prefectures. The overall number of entries decreased by 28 compared with that in the previous year (Table 1).

4. Trends among entries

(1) Production area

As for the production area, the number of entries from Kyushu (Fukuoka and Kumamoto Regional Taxation Bureaus; Table 1) (150 entries) and Okinawa (19 entries), which are the main production areas for *Honkaku Shochu* and *Awamori*, are 169 that made up 85% of the total (Table 1).

(2) Varieties of raw materials

The following entries were received, rice *Shochu*: 31 (decreased by 4 compared with that in the previous year), barley *Shochu*: 72 (increased by 6), sweet potato *Shochu*: 54 (decreased by 28), *Awamori*: 19 (decreased by 4), sake lees *Shochu*: 12 (increased by 1), buckwheat *Shochu*: 4 (no change compared with that in the previous year), brown sugar *Shochu*: 3 (decreased by 1), and other *Shochu*: 5 (increased by 2) (Table 2).

(3) Varieties of products techniques

Entries from normal products numbered 146 (86%). Entries from the special products, including long-term aged, cask-aged or earthenware jar-aged *Shochu*, numbered 54 (92%) (Table 3).

5. Judging panels

The judging panel consisted of 15 members who were appointed by the president of NRIB from *Shochu* and *Awamori* manufacturers recommended by JSS, *Shochu* and *Awamori* specialists from prefectural research centers, technical officers of Regional Taxation Bureaus, and the president and staff of NRIB (Table 4).

The individual judgement process has been conducted since the 43th Honkaku *Shochu* and *Awamori* Contest in 2020 to prevent the spread of COVID-19. After May 2023, COVID-19 was reclassified into class 5, and the implementation of infection control measures was left to the judgment of individuals. However, we decided to continue conducting the individual judgement process for this judgement.

The judges were seated at their assigned seats at regular intervals, and the samples were poured into plastic cups, closed with caps, and served on trays to the judges individually. Each judge also used their own vessels to spit out. Additionally, we installed splash-proof partitions in the judging room.

In order to total the judging results, paper-based mark cards had been used since the 11th Honkaku *Shochu* and *Awamori* Contest in 1987. However, tablet computer devices were used in this judgement as substitutes for mark cards.

The sensory evaluation was conducted by a profile method, whereby 5 characteristics (raw material characteristics, rich/light, sweetness, aftertaste, and the total evaluation) were assessed on a 5-point scale. In addition, the presence/absence of 17 positive and 24 negative characters was considered in a check-tall-all-apply manner (Figure).

6. Chemical analysis

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 applied for entries.

7. Quality trends

- (1) *Shochu* made from rice and barley was mainly fruity and mild tasted, that made from sweet potato was mainly floral, that made from sake lees was mainly highly fruity, and *Awamori* was mainly full-bodied.
- (2) As for normal products, fruity aromas were highly expressed in vacuum-distilled rice *Shochu*, vacuum-distilled barley *Shochu*, the blend of both distilled barley *Shochu*, and vacuum-distilled sweet potato *Shochu*. Roasting aromas and rich tastes were highly expressed in atmospheric-distilled barley *Shochu*. Clear tastes and sweet tastes were highly expressed in vacuum-distilled sweet potato *Shochu*. Rich tastes were highly expressed in atmospheric-distilled *Awamori*. Fruity aromas, sweet tastes and clear tastes were highly expressed, and the average evaluation value was relatively good in vacuum-distilled sake lees *Shochu*.
- (3) As for long-term aged products, long-term aged *Awamori* had matured aromas, rich tastes, sweet tastes. Long-term aged sweet potato *Shochu* had floral aromas, sweet tastes, and the average evaluation value was relatively good.
- (4) As for cask-aged products, the properties derived from cask were highly evaluated in cask-aged barley *Shochu* and cask-aged rice *Shochu*. In addition, smooth tastes were highly expressed in cask-aged rice *Shochu*.
- (5) As for earthenware jar-aged products, smooth tastes were 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 on each desk.



Serving: A plastic cup (140 ml volume) was filled with a sample (30 ml), and each cup was covered with a cap. They were placed on a tray. The tray was then individually served to a judge

Table 1 Number of manufactures and entries per prefecture in the 47th Honkaku Shochu and Awamori Contest

Manufacturer location		Number of manufactures		Number of entries										Total number of entries per Taxation Bureau Office		Compared with previous year
Regional Taxation Bureau	Prefecture	47th	46th	Varieties of single distilled <i>shochu</i>								47th	46th	47th	46th	
				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	7	7	100
	Iwate	1	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2			
	Miyagi	1	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	1			
	Akita	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0			
	Yamagata	1	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2			
	Fukushima	1	1	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2			
Kanto-Shinetsu	Ibaraki	1	1	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	2	3	8	13	62
	Tochigi	0	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	2			
	Gunma	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0			
	Saitama	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0			
	Niigata	5	4	1	-	-	-	4	1	-	-	6	8			
	Nagano	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0			
Tokyo	Chiba	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	4	5	80
	Tokyo	1	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1			
	Kanagawa	1	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	2			
	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	4	125
	Shizuoka	1	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2			
	Aichi	2	1	1	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	3	2			
	Mie	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0			
Osaka	Shiga	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	1	2	50
	Kyoto	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0			
	Osaka	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0			
	Hyogo	1	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2			
	Nara	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0			
	Wakayama	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0			
Hiroshima	Tottori	1	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	5	6	83
	Shimane	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0			
	Okayama	2	2	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	3	4			
	Hiroshima	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0			
	Yamaguchi	1	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	1			
Takamatsu	Tokushima	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	1	3	33
	Kagawa	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0			
	Ehime	0	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	2			
	Kochi	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1			
Fukuoka	Fukuoka	7	8	4	16	-	-	2	1	-	4	27	30	46	47	98
	Saga	1	1	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	5			
	Nagasaki	6	7	-	11	3	-	-	-	-	-	14	12			
Kumamoto	Kumamoto	5	5	10	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	12	11	104	118	88
	Oita	5	3	1	18	-	-	-	-	-	-	19	14			
	Miyazaki	5	5	2	7	14	-	-	2	-	-	25	23			
	Kagoshima	15	18	1	8	36	-	-	-	3	-	48	70			
Okinawa	Okinawa	9	11	-	-	-	19	-	-	-	-	19	23	19	23	83
Total		75	81	31	72	54	19	12	4	3	5	200	228	200	228	88

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

Raw material 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
45th	24	0	73	2	69	1	17	4	12	1	2	0	4	2	4	2	205	12
46th	35	11	66	▲ 7	82	13	23	6	11	▲ 1	4	2	4	0	3	▲ 1	228	23
47th	31	▲ 4	72	6	54	▲ 28	19	▲ 4	12	1	4	0	3	▲ 1	5	2	200	▲ 28

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 47th 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			
			47th	46th	47th	46th	47th	46th	47th	46th	47th	46th	47th	46th	47th	46th	47th	46th		
Rice			19	24	2	1	-	-	21	25	5	3	4	6	1	1	10	10		
Barley			32	31	8	9	14	10	54	50	3	2	14	14	1	-	18	16		
Sweet potato			4	8	38	51	2	3	44	62	3	6	2	4	5	10	10	20		
Awamori			-	2	12	14	1	1	13	17	5	6	-	-	1	-	6	6		
Sake lees			6	6	-	-	-	-	6	6	4	3	2	2	-	-	6	5		
Buckwheat			2	3	-	-	1	1	3	4	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-		
Brown sugar			-	1	1	1	-	-	1	2	1	2	1	-	-	-	2	2		
Other			4	3	-	-	-	-	4	3	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-		
Detail	Gyokuro	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-		
	Kudzu vine	1	1	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1		
	Chestnut	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1		
	Sesame	1	1	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1		
	Japanese barnyard millet	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-		
	Yam	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-		
Total			67	78	61	76	18	15	146	169	22	22	24	26	8	11	54	59		

Table 4 List of Judging panels for the 47th Honkaku Shochu and Awamori Contest

	Name	Organization and Position	
1	SUDO, Shigetoshi	Japan Sake and Shochu Makers Association	Technical Advisor
2	TANAKA, Kentarou	EBISU SHUZO CO., LTD.	Representative Director
3	YOKOYAMA, Yuzo	Omoya Brewery Co., Ltd.	Representative Director
4	NAGASAWA, Yoshikazu	SANWA SHURUI Co., Ltd.	Deputy General Manager, Supply Chain Management Division
5	BIRO, Makoto	KOMASA JYOZO CO., LTD.	Distillery Manager and Master Blender, Production Division
6	SAWADA, Kazutaka	Industrial Technology Center of Saga	Researcher, Division of food and cosmetics
7	TANAKA, Ryoichi	Kumamoto Industrial Research Institute	Chief Researcher, Food Science and Technology
8	OCHI, Hiroshi	Miyazaki Prefectural Food Research and Development Center	Chief Researcher, Applied Microorganism Department
9	TAMAMURA, Takako	Okinawa Industrial Technology Center	Supervisory Researcher
10	KURAMITSU, Junichi	Fukuoka Regional Taxation Bureau	Director, Office of Analysis and Brewing Technology
11	SHINODA, Noriko	Kumamoto Regional Taxation Bureau	Chief Technical Officer, Office of Analysis and Brewing Technology
12	IEHARA, Maki	Okinawa Regional Taxation Office	Technical Officer, Indirect Tax Division
13	FUKUDA, Hisashi	National Research Institute of Brewing	President
14	MUKAI, Nobuhiko	National Research Institute of Brewing	Director, Brewing Technology Division
15	MASAKI, Kazuo	National Research Institute of Brewing	Duputy Director, Brewing Microbiology Division

Figure
Tablet Judging Screen for the 47th Honkaku Shochu and Awamori Contest
(Image)

審査酒番号：●

区分

：麦

蒸留方法

：減圧

アルコール度数

：25度

備考

：－



	1	2	3	4	5
総合評価	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
原料特性	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
味の濃淡	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
甘味	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
後味	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

審査酒番号：●

香り（フレーバーホイール）

	チェック	解除
果実様	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
花様	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
バニラ香	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
キャラメル様	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
香ばしい	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
乳製品様	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
油香	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
キノコ様	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
エステル臭	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
こげ臭	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
燻製・薬品様	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
硫化物様	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ジアセチル	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
酸臭	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
アルデヒド	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
インク様	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
油臭	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
カビ臭	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- ← 5-point scale evaluation
- Overall evaluation
 - Raw material characteristics
 - Body
 - Sweet taste
 - Aftertaste
- ← Optional checks
(aroma, flavor wheel)
- Fruity
 - Floral
 - Sweet
 - Roast, Smoky
 - Sulfury
 - Volatile acids, Milk product
 - Herbal, Solvent
 - Oily, Mushroom

審査酒番号：●
香り（原料・製造工程）

	チェック	解除
原料特性	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
熟成香	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
樽香・かめ香	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
原料不良	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
未だれ臭	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ガス臭	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
樽臭・かめ臭	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ゴム臭・樹脂臭	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

審査酒番号：●
味

	チェック	解除
濃醇	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
淡麗	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
甘い	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
きれい	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
なめらか	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
過多	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
うすい	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
からい	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
くどい	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
あらい	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
酸味	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
苦味	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
渋味	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

審査酒番号：●
調和

	チェック	解除
調和	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
不調和	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

審査酒番号：●
短評・助言

回答を入力してください

← Optional checks
(aroma, material and process)
Raw material characteristic
Distillation-derived
Cask-aged, earthenware jar-aged
Lingering scent

← Optional checks (taste)
Full body
Light body
Sweetness
Clean
Smooth

← Optional checks (balance)
Total balance

← Comment/Advice