The Annual Japan Sake Awards 2018 were held under the joint auspices of the National Research Institute of Brewing (NRIB) and the Japan Sake and Shochu Makers Association. This year marks the 106th Annual Japan Sake Awards, which were first held in 1911.

For this contest, a nationwide investigation of manufactured sake was conducted with the aim of clarifying the current manufacturing technology and trends in order to contribute to the improvement of sake quality and to enhance public awareness of sake. This is the only one national contest of sake, and we believe that these awards contribute to improvements in manufacturing technology and quality of sake.

1. Application process
   (1) Applicant requirement
       Manufacturers who hold a sake brewing license.
   (2) Standard for entry
       Sake applied to this contest must be unprocessed Ginjo-shu brewed at the manufacturer’s own licensed production sites during the brewing year 2017 (from July 2017 until the application deadline of the contest), as stipulated in the “labeling standard for the manufacturing process and quality of sake” of the National Tax Agency. Applied sake must have a degree of acidity* higher than 1.0 and contain no added aroma compounds.
   (3) Number of entries
       Limited to one entry per manufacturer.
   (4) Entry fee
       The entry fee is 16,200 yen (including consumption tax) per item.

   *Degree of acidity is volume (mL) of 0.1 N NaOH solution to neutralize 10 mL of sake to pH 7.2. Acidity 1.0 is equal to 0.090 g of lactic acid/100 mL or 0.075 g of tartaric acid/100 mL.

2. Overview of the awards
   (1) Number of entries, 850
   (2) Schedule of blind tasting
       Preliminary judging: 3 days, from April 24 to 26, 2018
       Final judging: 2 days; May 8 and 9, 2018
   (3) Judging panels
       Experts on sensory evaluation of sake and appointed by the president of the NRIB from:
       Sake manufacturers
       Sake specialists from prefectural research centers
       Technical officers of the National Tax Agency
       Staff of NRIB
(4) Methods of blind tasting
   a) During the preliminary judging, a sensory profile of each sake was created by characterizing “aroma” and “taste” and evaluating “total quality” (5-point scale). In the final judging, an overall sensory evaluation was given (3-point scale). For both the preliminary and final judging, entries were grouped based on the concentration of aroma compounds, which was analyzed in advance.
   b) Results of the sensory profile and overall evaluation will be sent to the applicants in the hope that the results might be used to improve Ginjo-shu manufacturing technology and storage management in the future.

(5) Results
   - Prize winners, 421 entries
   - Gold prize winners (those recognized as the very best among the prize winners), 232 entries
   Testimonials are presented to the manufacturers jointly by the presidents of the NRIB and the Japan Sake and Shochu Makers Association. The list of gold prize winning sake is shown on a separate sheet.

(6) Tasting event for sake manufacturers etc.
   - Time: Wed. May 30, 2018, 10:00 – 15:30
   - Place: Higashi Hiroshima Sports Park, Gymnasium
     67-1, Taguchi, Saijo-cho, Higashi-hiroshima, Hiroshima

(7) Public Tasting will be held by the Japan Sake and Shochu Makers Association.
   http://www.japansake.or.jp/

3. Comments on the quality of entries this year is coming soon.