

## Summary of Product Specification of Japanese GIs

### I . Name of the Geographical Indication

萩 (Hagi)

### II . Product Category

Seishu (sake) – Article 3, Item 7 of Liquor Tax Act

### III . Petitioner

Hagi Region Geographical Indication Management Committee  
1755-1 Ogoorikamigo, Yamaguchi City, Yamaguchi Prefecture

### IV . Date of Protection in Japan

30, March, 2021

### V . Product Description

(a) Raw Material and Production Method (See Annex 1&2)

(1) Raw materials

- i ) Only rice, limited to rice with a rating of grade 3 or higher, harvested in the production area (See VI) is used for rice and rice koji.
- ii) Water collected only in the production area.
- iii) Ingredients for “Sake” with the provision of Article 3, Item 7 of the Liquor Tax Act are used, provided that, among the ingredients for sake with the provision of Article 2 of the Enforcement Order of the Liquor Tax Act, ingredients other than alcohol (limited to the case in which, among ingredients, the weight of alcohol does not exceed 50% of the weight of rice (including rice for koji)) shall not be used.

(2) Production method

- i ) Sake shall produce in the production area in accordance with the production method of sake with the provision of Article 3, Item 7 of the Liquor Tax Act.
- ii) Liquors must be stored in the production area, if needed in the producing process.
- iii) In the case of bottling in containers to be shipped to customers, liquors must be bottled in the production area.

(b) Characteristic

Generally speaking, sake of Hagi is characterized by fresh flavor with rice-derived mellow

and elegant umami and refreshing sourness.

The aroma is described as green bamboo and fresh green in addition to ripe banana, melon and litchi. Of sake of Hagi, ginjo sake is also fragrant with fruits, such as apple and pineapple.

The aftertaste retains a certain level of umami with sourness, bitterness and a light alcohol touch, which does not affect the flavor of meals, and this sake has the quality that does not bore the drinker even after drinking several cups in a row.

Sake of Hagi has refreshing flavor, which brings out the delicate taste of food when combined with ingredients with plain taste, such as whitefish and steamed fish paste, which are specialties of Hagi.

## **VI. Description of the Geographical Area**

Hagi City and Abu Town in Abu County, Yamaguchi Prefecture

## **VII. Link with the Geographical Area**

### **(a) Natural factor**

The production area of Hagi is situated in the northern part of Yamaguchi Prefecture, which is on the westernmost of the main island of Japan. The region has small land on the flat, surrounded by mountains at 400 meters or so above sea level with only its northern side facing the Sea of Japan.

This region is dotted with small lava plateaus created by the volcanic activity of the "Abu Volcanoes," and the Abu River, the Zomeki River, the Tama River and others flow between the plateaus following complicated patterns. Based on these lava plateaus that were eroded by the rivers, there are small tablelands in the mountainous area mainly in the Mutsumi area and the Fukuei area. These tablelands are made of clayey soil that has good drainage, where rice farming has been popular.

The climate is relatively warm partly due to the Tsushima Current, which is a warm current, in the Sea of Japan. Especially, in the mountainous area with striving rice farming, the difference in temperature among days from July to August is wide, which can be said to be suitable to mature rice production.

In this region, there are plenty of ejecta from volcanoes and volcanic rocks that were created when underground magma cooled and solidified, such as granite. As water necessary for sake-making, water here is low in mineral and soft and good in quality.

In the winter time, when sake is brewed, hours of sunlight shorten but precipitation is large, making the average humidity relatively high, which can be thought to give a characteristic impact to sake-making in this region.

Thanks to the natural environment, sake of Hagi, brewed from home-grown rice and with good water, has the quality that gives rice-derived mellow and elegant umami and refreshing sourness.

(b) Human factor

In the downstream basin of the Abu River, flowing through the region, there is a delta in which the Hagi castle town was built by Terumoto Mori, a feudal lord, in the 17th century and developed as the base of the Choshu Domain.

The Choshu Domain was focused on increasing not only rice harvest volume but also production of regional specialties, such as salt and paper, for the purpose of improving its finances. In this region as well, paddy fields were cultivated, and steamed fish paste and others from catches of fresh fish from the Sea of Japan were produced.

Sake consumed in the developed Hagi castle town needed to be transported in by sea or through mountain passes due to its geographical factor of being surrounded on three sides by mountains. However, once rice farming started in environs of the Hagi castle town, sake-making was also commenced by using home-grown rice.

Sake-making technique was brought in by Otsu Toji (one of the sake brewer groups) who lived in environs of Nagato City (former Heki Town, Otsu County), Yamaguchi Prefecture, and a method for sake-making suitable to this region was gradually established.

Even today, sake brewery workers who learned zymurgy or zymology actively interact with Otsu Toji. The region verifies the high-level brewing technique of Otsu Toji with a scientific viewpoint and turns it into a technique that suits the environment of this region, thereby making efforts to maintain and improve the characteristic of Hagi.

In parallel, brewers have led an effort to make rice for sake-making that has low contents of protein in cooperation with local farmers since around 1990. Additionally, the "Hagi Sakamai Migaki (sake rice polishing) Cooperative," financed by brewers and local farmers, plays an role in securing ingredient rice with good quality through activities, such as establishing the "Hagi Sakamai Tosei (sake rice polishing) Factory," a facility for polishing sake rice.

In this way, based on the tradition of farm to table, dating back to the Edo Period (from the 17th to the 19th centuries), a great number of not only liquor manufacturers and sake rice producers but also a mass of retailers, distributors and consumers take part in rice planting and rice harvesting, creating an atmosphere of the whole community engaging in sake-making.

## VIII. Control Body

In order to use "Hagi," the liquor that uses "Hagi" is required to be confirmed by the following control body pursuant to guidelines for work implementation, prepared by the organization.

Hagi Region Geographical Indication Management Committee  
1755-1 Ogoorikamigo, Yamaguchi City, Yamaguchi Prefecture

(Annex1)

Liquor Tax Act(excerpt)

(Definitions of other terms)

Article 3

(7) “Seishu” means the following liquors of less than 22 percent alcohol content:

- a. Liquors made by fermenting rice, rice koji and water as the raw materials and filtering the resultant fermented substance;
- b. Liquors made by fermenting rice, rice koji, water, seishu lees and any other substance provided for by Cabinet Order as the raw materials and filtering the resultant fermented substance (limited to the case where the total weight of the substance provided for by such Cabinet Order does not exceed fifty hundredths of the weight of rice (including rice for koji preparation)); and
- c. Liquors made by adding seishu lees to seishu and filtering the resultant substance.

Enforcement Ordinance of Liquor Tax Act(excerpt)

(Raw materials of sake)

Article 2.

The substances provided for by Cabinet Order as the raw materials of sake as stated in Article 3, Item 7, b. of the shall be alcohol (including liquors conforming to the provisions of Article 3, Item 9 (excluding the provisions for alcohol content) (excluding the liquors to which any substance other than water is added) whose alcohol content is 36 percent or more but no more than 45 percent; the same shall apply hereinafter), shochu (continuous distilled shochu or single distilled shochu, excluding shochu to which any substance other than water is added; the same shall apply hereinafter), grape sugar or any other saccharide provided for by an ordinance of the Ministry of Finance, organic acid, amino-acid salt or sake.

(Annex2) flowchart of making Seishu

