

## Summary of Product Specification of Japanese GIs

### I. Name of the Geographical Indication

佐賀 (Saga)

### II. Product Category

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

### III. Petitioner

GI Saga Management Committee

6-14 Ekiminami Honmachi, Saga City, Saga (c/o Saga Sake Brewers Association)

### IV. Date of Protection in Japan

14, June, 2021

### V. Product Description

#### (a) Ingredients and Production Method (See Annex 1&2)

##### (1) Ingredients

- i) Rice and rice koji for use must be chosen only from domestic rice. However, when “The SAGA certified sake (ninteishu)” is indicated under 9, rice and rice koji for use must be chosen only from the rice harvested within the scope of its geographical origin.
- ii) Water for use must be taken only within the scope of its geographical origin.
- iii) Ingredients for use must be ones specified as raw materials for “seishu” by Article 3, item 7 of the Liquor Tax Act (Act No. 6 of 1953).

However, of raw materials for seishu specified by Article 2 of the Order of Enforcement of the Liquor Tax Act, no ingredients other than alcohol must be used (limited to the case of using alcohol when the weight of alcohol out of the ingredients does not exceed 50-100ths of the weight of rice (including koji rice).

##### (2) Production method

- i) Sake must be one that was produced by the production method of seishu stipulated by Article 3, item 7 of the Liquor Tax Act and within the scope of its geographical origin.
- ii) When sake is stored in the process of sake brewing, it must be stored within the scope of its geographical origin.
- iii) Bottling must be completed with containers planned to be delivered to consumers within the scope of its geographical origin.

(b) Characteristic

(1) Sensory factors

Seishu of Saga generally has a ripe taste with rich rice-derived mellow umami, which gives mild flavor and sweetness peculiar to rice spread throughout the mouth.

Of seishu of Saga, sake with a specific class name (tokutei meisho shu)(Note) such as ginjoshu, junmaishu or honjozoshu (sake brewed without addition of saccharides and no more than 120 litres of seed alcohol per tonne) is mellow and tasty with rich flavor brought in harmony with afterglow of the fragrance slowly rising from the throat to the nose, after the spread of the sweetness peculiar to rice, which realizes the feeling of genuine taste.

Such seishu of Saga goes well with dishes that have relatively strong taste as sake drunk during the meal with those dishes.

(Note) Sake with a specific class name (tokutei meisho shu) means seishu brewed by the production method set forth in the right columns of the table in paragraph 1 of the Standard for Seishu Production Method and Quality Indications (National Tax Agency Notification No. 8 of November 1989).

(2) Chemical factors

Any seishu of Saga that does not meet requirements for productions methods and quality of sake with a specific class name shall have the degree of sweetness/dryness (amakarado) more than 0 as obtained by the following formula:

Degree of sweetness/dryness =  $193593 / (1443 + \text{Sake meter value (Nihonshudo)}) - 1.16 \times \text{acidity} - 132.57$

## VI. Description of the Geographical Area

Saga Prefecture

## VII. Link with the Geographical Area

(a) Natural factor

Saga Prefecture is situated in the northwest of Kyushu, and faces two seas: Genkai-nada Sea on the north side and Ariake Sea on the south side. From the northeast to central regions in Saga Prefecture, there are Sefuri Mountains including Mt. Sefurisan and Mt. Tenzan that are approximately 1,000 meters above sea level, and in the southwest region across the hills formed by repeated fault movement, there are Mt. Taratake, 996 meters above sea level, and highlands.

From the south side of Sefuri Mountains to Ariake Sea, Saga Plain spreads. The Plain had been formed by sedimentary earth and sand from many rivers flowing from the Mountains, including Chikugo River and Kase River.

Saga Plain is a vast and flat lowland and blessed with warm weather throughout the year, which enables the creation of many paddy fields with water resources from rivers to each small area through waterways, and has been utilized as one of the richest grain-yielding areas in Kyushu since a long time ago.

It was able to transport an abundant amount of good quality rice made in this region to each

region of Saga through roads including Karatsu Okan developed over hills along faults in the hill zone and Nagasaki Kaido, and also to use an abundant amount of underground water from Sefuri Mountains and Mt. Taratake in each region of Saga. This suggests that Saga has been under an appropriate environment for sake brewing since a long time ago.

(b) Human factor

Sake brewing in Saga has a long history. It was reported that sake named “Bizen sake” had been presented to the then current government (Kamakura Bakufu) during the Kamakura period in the 12th and 13th centuries.

Seishu brewing became popular in the mid-19th century (late Edo period). It was said that the 10th Load of Saga Domain, Mr. Naomasa Nabeshima had encouraged sake brewing to rebuild the exhausted economy of the Domain, and he had made seishu brewed all over Saga by lending rice to regions where no rice could grow by regions including Saga Plain where an abundant amount of rice could grow. Thus, the technology of sake brewing in Saga has developed and accumulated all over Saga taking advantage of the characteristics of an abundant amount of rice as sake brewing aimed at keeping the rich mellow taste of rice.

Owing to sake brewing developed by the Load Naomasa Nabeshima as a modern industry, sake brewed in Saga also came to be distributed and sold in other regions in Kyushu through roads including Nagasaki Kaido. In Kyushu situated in the south of Japan with relatively high average temperature, there are many salty-sweet flavored dishes cooked with sweet and tasty soy sauce, and as sake drunk during the meal with those dishes, the characteristics of mellow seishu whose taste from mellow rice leading to sweetness is arranged with the acid taste ingredient produced by action such as fermentation in a certain balance have been formed.

In recent years, each sake brewer is working on the study of the sake brewing technology everyday. In addition, the “Saga designation of origin management committee” organized mainly by Saga Prefecture has carried out “The SAGA certified sake (ninteishu)” activities. Through those activities, seishu well balanced in taste and aroma only is certified as sake brewed in Saga by a taste examination conducted to confirm requirements for raw materials of such sake, the “use of raw materials and water made only in Saga Prefecture.” These are raw materials used at the time of the rise of sake brewing in Saga. While Saga’s sake that is more traditional and rooted in the community is respected, brewers still make efforts to further improve the quality of their sake.

Furthermore, the “Saga Prefecture Ordinance on Promoting Toasts with Japanese Sake (June 27, 2013)” was promulgated by Saga Prefecture and came into force. In Saga Prefecture, the local government and people together work towards the improvement of the quality of sake and the dissemination and expansion of the “Saga” seishu brand.

## VIII. Control Body

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

GI Saga Management Committee

6-14 Ekiminami Honmachi, Saga City, Saga (c/o Saga Sake Brewers Association)

**IX. Others**

For the indication of “The SAGA certified sake (ninteishu)” with the use of the geographical indication “Saga” it shall be indicated pursuant to the guidelines for work implementation.

(Annex1)

**Liquor Tax Act (excerpt)**

(Definitions of other terms)

Article 3

In this Act, the meanings of the terms listed in the following items are as prescribed respectively in those items:

(1) ~ (6) .....

(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.

(8) ~ (27) .....

**Order for the Enforcement 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 (sake)

