

## Summary of Product Specification of Japanese GIs

### I. Name of the Geographical Indication

滋賀 (Shiga)

### II. Product Category

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

### III. Petitioner

Shiga Sake Brewing Cooperative

Collabo-Shiga 21, 2-1 Uchidehama, Otsu City, Shiga

### IV. Date of Protection in Japan

13, April, 2022

### V. Product Description

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

(1) Raw materials

- i) Only rice harvested in Shiga Prefecture (rated as third grade or higher under the Agricultural Products Inspection Act (No. 144 of 1951)) shall be used for rice and koji.
- ii) Only water obtained in Shiga Prefecture shall be used.
- iii) The ingredients of “seishu” as specified in Article 3, Item 7 (a) of the Liquor Tax Act (No. 6 of 1953) must be used.

(2) Production method

- i) The alcohol must be brewed in Shiga Prefecture in accordance with the sake brewing method specified in Article 3, Item 7 (a) of the Liquor Tax Act.
- ii) To meet the production process quality requirements listed in the right column of the table in Paragraph 1 of the Standard for Seishu Production Process Quality Indications (Japanese National Tax Agency Notification No. 8 of November 1989) (limited to those brewed using only white rice, malted rice and water as ingredients).
- iii) To store in Shiga Prefecture during the brewing process.
- iv) To pack in containers in Shiga Prefecture intended to be delivered to consumers.

(b) Characteristic

Shiga’s Seishu generally has a rich sweetness and an umami derived from rice.

Its mouthfeel reveals firm acidity in the mild sweetness and swelling umami and it can be

enjoyed over a wide range of temperatures such as rei-shu (cold sake) and kanzake (warmed sake).

Junmaishu has a modest aroma, but that of the rice is bolstered by the fruit-like aroma formed by yeast. Junmai ginjoshu also boasts a gorgeous fruit-like ginjo aroma. All of them have well-balanced sweetness, umami, sourness and aroma and premium beverages, which you will never tire of enjoying.

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

Shiga Prefecture

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

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

Shiga Prefecture is located in the middle of the Japanese archipelago. Within its center lies the Omi Basin and Lake Biwa, the oldest and largest in Japan, which occupies about a sixth of the entire prefecture. Lake Biwa is surrounded by mountains around 1,000m high on all sides, such as the Hira, Hiei, Ibuki Mountains, and Suzuka Mountains.

About 460 different rivers of varying size flow into Lake Biwa from these mountains; forming alluvial fans and deltas in the process and ultimately delivering well-drained and fertile soil. Moreover, the rich and high-quality underground water flowing in from the surrounding mountains has been used for rice farming in Omi Basin and the terraced rice fields since times of yore, producing widely acclaimed Omi rice as an ingredient for sake, as well as underground water.

Shiga Prefecture also overlaps climatic zones of the Sea of Japan, Tokai and Seto Inland Sea sides. Despite its mild and semi-oceanic climate, unique differences in temperature emerge from within the basin day and night, which explain why farming sake rice varieties like Ginfubuki, Tamasakae and Yamada Nishiki is so popular. These sake rice varieties are used for Junmaishu and Junmai ginjoshu within many of the prefectural sake breweries.

Furthermore, the extremely cold winter weather, which is also unique to the basin, has a key impact on fermentation during the sake brewing process in making the process more gentle.

Within this natural environment, natural blessings such as good-quality rice, rich and high-quality underground water and a cold climate encouraging gentle fermentation, combine for sake with “a rich sweetness and rice-derived umami”, which is characteristic of Shiga’s Seishu.

### **(b) Human factor**

Sake brewing in Shiga Prefecture goes back a long way, with “Soboshu” (Monk's sake) of Hyakusaiji temple recorded in documents such as the Official Service Diary during the Muromachi period.

In the Edo period other than the Tokaido and Nakasendo roads, which linked Kyoto to Edo, numerous highways and traffic on Lake Biwa, such as the Wakasa Kaido, which is famous as the “Saba Kaido (Mackerel Highway)” and the Hokkoku Kaido, allowed people and products to

come and go from all over the country, and sake brewing along the highway and in post towns to become popular.

In addition, “Omi Merchants”, who traveled all the country and brewed sake throughout Japan besides their main business, helped sake brewing take root, not only in Shiga Prefecture but also elsewhere, which explains the proliferation of breweries with “Omi merchant” roots in various places, when tracing back their histories.

“Hokkokuya”, a staffing agency for Notoshu (Noto Toji), was established in Otsu City in Meiji period and the precursor to many Noto Toji brewing sake at breweries throughout Shiga Prefecture. Brewers collectively strove to optimize the sake quality of each brewery and over 200 breweries made sake in Shiga Prefecture during the Taisho period.

Subsequently, while demand for sake began to decline nationwide after peaking in 1973, each brewery in Shiga Prefecture responded by switching from conventional Futsushu (ordinary sake) to high-quality sake varieties like Junmaishu and Ginjoshu. Taking advantage of Shiga Prefecture’s status as one of the major rice-producing regions in Japan, breweries have begun to make sake from rice farmed by contracting with local farmers.

Moreover, in 1994, the Yogo Institute of the Japan Fermentation Research Organization was established in Yogo-cho (now known as Nagahama City), Shiga Prefecture, as part of efforts to help revitalize regional culture and industries through studies in zymology.

This institute engaged in research and promotion for zymology and supporting projects for the fermentation industry, academic research related to fermented foods such as Seishu and Funazushi, as Shiga Prefecture specialties. They strove to revitalize the region and developed a richly fragrant and sharp-flavored sake yeast. The launch of Junmaishu “Kocho no sato” and “Shiga no umi”, as unified brands from the prefecture's breweries using this yeast, was acclaimed as the efforts of an industry-academia partnership coming to fruition and collaborating with the Federation of Shiga Sake Brewing Associations (now known as the Shiga Sake Brewing Association).

Taking this opportunity, prefectural breweries continue to strive unceasingly to further refine their brewing skills and produce sake with a taste that exemplifies the rich sweetness and umami of rice and the individuality of each brewery, mainly in the form of high-quality sake varieties like Junmaishu.

In recent years, in 2004, the Shiga Prefecture Agricultural Technology Promotion Center and Japan Agricultural Cooperatives collaborated and revived “Shiga Wataribune Roku-go”, which was a recommended sake rice variety in Shiga Prefecture until 1959. Breweries in the prefecture made sake with it, while Shiga Prefecture enacted an “Ordinance to Entertain with Local Sake in Omi and Promote its Dissemination” (Shiga Prefectural Ordinance No. 13 of March 28, 2016). Accordingly, public and private sectors joined forces to promote demand for Seishu and foster sake industries in Shiga.

## **VIII. Control Body**

In order to use "Shiga," the liquor that uses "Shiga" is required to be confirmed by the following

control body pursuant to guidelines for work implementation, prepared by the organization.

Shiga Sake Brewing Cooperative

Collabo-Shiga 21, 2-1 Uchidehama, Otsu City, Shiga

(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)

