

~Taking various measures to secure liquor tax revenues and lead to the development of liquor industry successfully ~

Both land tax and liquor tax accounted for a large share of total revenue sources in the Meiji era, especially, liquor tax revenues exceeded land tax revenues at one time. Thereafter, there has been an increase in the relative weight of income tax, corporation tax and consumption tax, etc., and in FY2013, liquor tax revenues comprised only 2.7% (¥1,370.9 billion) of all tax revenues. Even though the current portion of liquor tax revenue is limited, it fulfills an important role for national tax revenue even today because of the fact that liquor tax is not affected much by the economy, which provides stable tax revenues.

Compared with food items, a high tax rate is imposed on liquor. For securing liquor tax revenues appropriately and smoothly shift the tax burden onto customers, there is a liquor licensing system for manufactures and sellers.

The NTA, as the authority for the liquor industry, has taken various measures to lead to the development of liquor industry successfully and secure liquor tax revenues with considering the recent changes in the environment faced by liquor industries, such as decreasing domestic consumers because of the arrival of decreasing population and diversifying lifestyles, and rising health consciousness.

In recent years, the government has been developing environment for exporting liquors produced in Japan.

(1) Initiatives to ensure safety of liquor and enhance quality levels

~ For the purpose of providing consumers with safe and good quality liquors ~

The NTA works to ensure safety and high level of quality in the process of production through consumption of liquors.

Specifically, the NTA provides the liquor business operators with technical guidance and consultation concerning the safety of liquors, examines safety, quality and labeling of commercially sold liquor. The results of examination are listed on the NTA website.

With regard to the Fukushima No.1 Nuclear Power Plant accident, the NTA has been taking measures to ensure the safety of liquors in alliance with the National Research Institute of Brewing by radioactive examination on liquors.

(2) Measures for appropriate labeling of liquors

~ For providing consumers with reliableness on purchasing liquors ~

In recent years, there have been some inappropriate labeling cases where a sake containing distilled alcohol was labeled as “Junmai-shu” (Sake made only from rice and rice koji. Generally, it has rich taste and flavor.).

The NTA endeavors to ensure appropriate labeling of liquors so that consumers can purchase liquors with reliableness.

Specifically, the NTA provides liquor business operators with information and guidance on proper indication based on laws. In some cases, the NTA purchased liquors from the market and conducts inspection and examination to check carefully whether the labeling is appropriate or not by using the analysis method of the National Research Institute of Brewing.

National Research Institute of Brewing (NRIB)

National Research Institute of Brewing (NRIB) performs advanced analyses and appraisals of liquors required for proper and fair taxation of liquor tax, and conducts researches and studies to theoretically support its analyses and appraisals, such as researches and studies concerning the judgment of liquor items. It also conducts researches, studies, and information services contributing to the sound development of the liquor industry, such as development of ways to reduce harmful substances in liquors.

For further details, please visit the NRIB website (<http://www.nrrib.go.jp/English/index.htm>).

The NRIB distributes the latest information concerning liquor information magazines and event information through its e-mail magazine. To register, please send a blank e-mail to ssn@m.nrrib.go.jp (Registration is also available with the QR code on the right).



Analysis being conducted

(3) Response to social demands

～ Preventing inducement to improperly drink liquors ～

To prevent of inducement to improperly drink liquors such as underage drinking, the NTA provides guidance to ensure labeling on liquor containers, obligatory indication where liquor is exhibited, and appointment of liquor sales managers where liquor is sold.

As the Basic Act on Measures for Health Problems from Alcohol came into force in June 2014, the NTA has been promoting awareness among the public about alcohol-related problems to increase interest in this issue and foster a better understanding for cooperation with the relevant ministries and agencies.

～ Recycling liquor containers effectively ～

In order to ensure effective use of resources, the NTA keeps liquor business operators informed about liquor container recycling and reducing food waste generated in liquor manufacturing processes, etc.



Poster for the prevention of underage drinking
(For public facilities, liquor shops etc.)



Poster to raise public awareness
about alcohol-related problems



Poster for the promotion of
3R for liquor containers

(4) Initiatives to develop a fair trading environment in liquor

～ For more fair liquor trade ～

For the promotion of voluntary initiatives of liquor business operators to secure fair liquor trade, the NTA has established the Guidelines on Fair Liquor Trade and is working to build the awareness and understanding of such guidelines.

The NTA also examines actual trade practices according to the guidelines, and if it finds cases in which trading does not comply with the provided rules, it provides guidance for improvements, etc. As a result of examination, if there is suspicion of violating the Anti-Monopoly Act, it can take actions such as reporting the cases to the Fair Trade Commission (FTC) and cooperates with the FTC to take appropriate action.

(5) Providing information to liquor business operators

～ To stimulate the liquor industry ～

The NTA organizes a variety of seminars conducted by business-guidance experts, introduces actual cases of revitalization and management innovation attempted by liquor business operators, and provides information on measures for small- and medium-sized companies. It also examines and analyzes the industry trends based on various surveys conducted on manufacturers and distributors, and provides these results on the NTA website.

Column 9 Approaches to develop the environment for export of Japanese liquors

～ Promoting Japanese attractiveness to the world through Japanese liquors ～

1 Status of export of liquors

While domestic consumption of liquors has been downward due to the effects of the decrease in the drinking population and the aging society, the amount of Japanese liquors exported has been increasing in the past few years, thanks to the Japanese food boom overseas. In 2014, their exports amounted to 29.4 billion yen, marking the third consecutive year of a record high. Sake accounted for almost 40% of the export amount of liquors (approximately ¥11.5 billion). Not only major liquor manufacturers, but also small- and medium-sized manufactures in various regions of Japan export sake.

2 Development of export environment

As well as developing the liquor industry, the expansion of export of Japanese liquors is expected to bring spillover effects to related industries such as agriculture, food and liquor vessels, introduce the traditional Japanese culture to the world and stimulate the regional economies through the promotion of sightseeing tour centering on visiting sake makers, which may lead to the development of Japanese economy. From these viewpoints, development of export environment of Japanese liquors is a part of “Cool Japan Strategy”, which means to elevate the brand value of Japan by introducing the attractiveness of Japan to the world. Relevant ministries are working for it in cooperation with each other. The NTA is taking the following initiatives:

(1) Support for liquor industry

The NTA regularly exchanges opinions with liquor industry organizations and organizes seminars for individual liquor business operators to provide knowledge on international trade and other general export transactions with the support of regional offices of the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) and local branch offices of relevant ministries, etc. The NTA also supports various measures taken in the liquor industry; for example, aiding in developing export strategies at the Sake Export Council, which was inaugurated under the leadership of liquor makers and distributors.

(2) Efforts for abolishment and mitigation of trade barriers

Where the regulations or systems of the export destinations are the barriers, the NTA has made various efforts to remove such trade barriers by utilizing the government-level talks for the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) or the framework of World Trade Organization (WTO).

After the accident at Fukushima No. 1 Nuclear Power Plant caused by the Great East Japan Earthquake, some export destinations introduced import restrictions, such as the ban of imports or the obligatory attachment of certificates for liquors made in specific prefectures. The NTA has been urging these countries to lift or to mitigate the restrictions in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, by utilizing the results of radioactive examination and studies conducted in cooperation with the National Research Institute of Brewing as scientific data. As the result, restrictions on Japanese liquors have been lifted or mitigated in the EU, Brazil, Malaysia, Russia and Thailand.

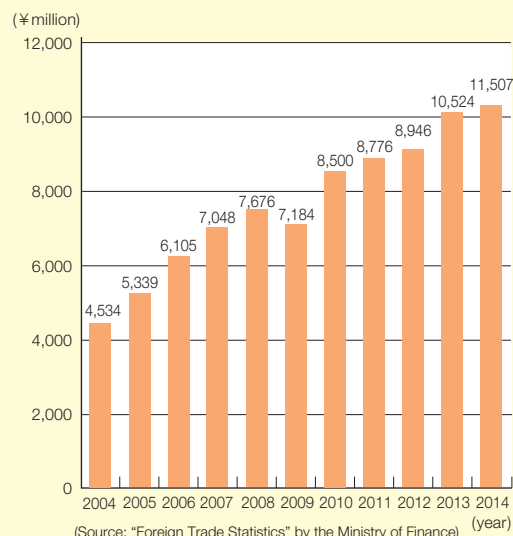
(3) Initiatives to present the attractiveness of Japanese liquors abroad

The NTA has taken many opportunities to send a message of attractiveness of Japanese liquors to the world:

The NTA launched an advertisement to raise awareness of Japanese liquors around the globe in cooperation with related industry organizations at international ceremony such as “Japan Night” held in the Davos Forum in January 2015. In some cases, the NTA officials also take part in such ceremony for promoting Japanese Liquors.

The NTA also plans to conduct tours at sake manufacturers for foreign ambassadors living in Tokyo in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Japan Sake and Shochu Makers Association.

■ Trend in the export amount of sake



Scene of the Japan Night at the Davos Forum