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Raw materials and water supply system in sweet potato shochu: the case study of Kagoshima Prefecture

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Sweet potato shochu is a specialty product of Kagoshima Prefecture. There are 104 shochu makers in the prefecture. The warm southern Kyushu and rough terrain make it unsuitable to sake-making, and the liquor brewed there is created from the securing of local raw materials and a struggle with a warm climate. In this presentation, a study about raw materials and water supply and of the Kagoshima sweet potato shochu and their present conditions.

Since the 1970s, there has been an increased consumption of Kagoshima shochu in Kyushu. Then it passed through a three step shochu boom and became one of Japan's leading liquors. In 2005 Satsuma (sweet potato) shochu was designated at the geographic indication of origin for shochu. While such geographic indication certifies the production locale, Kagoshima's shochu-makers also emphasized the use of locally sourced raw materials. Under these circumstances, the local brands may face water problems, shortages of local raw material such as sweet potatoes and rice, and other future challenges.

Keywords: sweet potato shochu, raw materials supply system, water supply system, Kagoshima Prefecture