Application Note AN-PAN-1036

Online determination of alkalinity and hardness in process and make up water for beer production

Beer is a popular beverage consumed by millions of people for enjoyment, despite its humble beginnings as a water purification technique in pre-modern times. Brewing beer requires large amounts of water which must adhere to strict alkalinity, hardness, and pH parameters to ensure uniformity in flavor and appearance between each batch. Alkalinity is introduced by carbonates and hydroxides in water which raise and buffer the pH. Hardness, balanced to a large degree by the alkalinity, comes from calcium (Ca) and magnesium (Mg) ions, mainly present as hydrogen carbonates.

Depending on the concentration ranges, the 2035 Process Analyzer or the 2060 Process Analyzer from Metrohm Process Analytics are ideally suited for the fully automatic analysis of these important quality parameters in process and make-up water, as well as additional parameters like pH or conductivity. The analyzers can signal the brewery's distribution control system (DCS) to correct the water chemistry, ensuring consistent product quality.

INTRODUCTION

Beer is an alcoholic beverage consumed in most countries worldwide, made from fermented malted grains, with a wide alcohol content range from 0 to 12%. Its origins are unclear, but it has been linked to ancient civilizations, with recipes inscribed thousands of years ago upon stone tablets. Before today's hygienic practices were applied, alcoholic beverages were developed as a water purification technique, as drinking water from natural sources was likely to make one ill due to pollution and disease.

The beer brewing process is intensive and can be categorized in the following steps: malting, milling/grinding, mashing, lautering (separating and rinsing the grains from the liquid portion known as «wort»), boiling the wort, fermenting, conditioning, filtering, and finally filling bottles or barrels. Each step must be properly controlled in the process to ensure uniformity of the end product, which is important to facilitate brand loyalty. Making beer incurs a huge water footprint, requiring up to 300 L of water to create 1 L of beer, though 94–98% of that water is designated for agricultural purposes before the brewing process even begins. More and more breweries are taking steps to become more sustainable regarding their water usage, which means process optimization and more efficient practices. To this end, key quality parameters of the water used in brewing such as alkalinity, hardness, and pH value have to be determined.

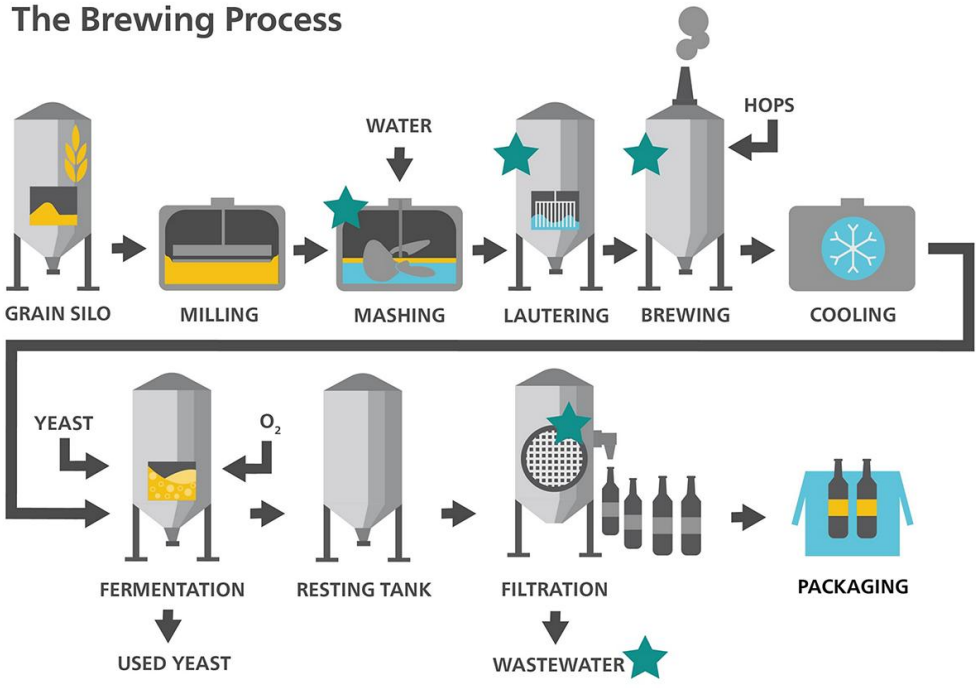

Figure 1. Online hardness monitoring during the beer brewing process (noted by green stars).

Alkalinity in water is due to the presence of compounds such as carbonates, bicarbonates, and hydroxides which raise the pH of the water and buffer it against further pH change. Hardness constituents in water are usually calcium and magnesium ions (Ca^{2+} and Mg^{2+}). They are mainly present as hydrogen carbonates and sulfates or, in rare cases, as chlorides. Hardness is balanced to a large degree by the alkalinity.

The temperature and the composition of the water used in the initial stages of the brewing process is especially important for optimal extraction of starches from the milled grains. Temperature changes during mashing can adversely affect the fermentability of the sugars because of a narrow working temperature range (55–72 ° C) for the enzymatic starch conversion processes. The pH of the water is not only important for mashing, but also in the lautering process, where some make-up water is needed for sparging (rinsing the sugar from the spent grains). If the pH of the mash or sparge water exceeds 5.7, the resulting beer will have an astringent mouthfeel due to excess tannin extraction from the grain husks. After lautering comes the boiling process where hops are added to the wort (the sugary liquid precursor to beer), and again, if the pH is above 5.7, excess tannins can be introduced. Pale ales are especially influenced by any pH changes. Pale ales do not contain roasted malts which naturally acidify the mash, so the process must be more closely monitored for the proper pH, hardness, and alkalinity.

In order to extract the proper compounds, keep the pH within specifications, and brew the same flavors over multiple batches, both alkalinity and hardness of the process and make-up water must be monitored and kept at proper levels. The Metrohm Process Analytics 2060 and 2035 Process Analyzers (Figures 2 and 3) are ideally suited for the fully automatic execution of these important analyses, as well as additional parameters like pH or conductivity. The process analyzer can send an alarm to the plant control system if alkalinity or hardness levels are not optimal, signaling the distribution control to correct the water chemistry, ensuring consistent product quality.

Figure 2. 2060 Process Analyzer.

APPLICATION

These are titrimetric methods for the online analysis of alkalinity and hardness in process and make-up water for breweries.

Alkalinity is determined in an acid/base titration with hydrochloric acid (HCl) and a standard solution using a combined pH-glass electrode. Results are calculated based on the first inflection point. The alkalinity is expressed as mg/L calcium carbonate ($CaCO_3$). When measuring both free and total alkalinity, the values are obtained from the first and second inflection points.

For hardness determinations, Ca^{2+} and Mg^{2+} form stable complexes with EDTA at pH 10. In this application, Ca^{2+} and Mg^{2+} can be determined by potentiometric titration using an ion-selective electrode (Cu-ISE). Results are expressed in mg/L Ca^{2+}. Other methods are also available for determining total and Mg^{2+} hardness.

Additionally, inline pH sensors can be connected to the 2060 Process Analyzer to guarantee a fully integrated system, leading to better process control.

Figure 3. 2035 Process Analyzer.

Table 1. Brewery measurement parameters for water

Parameters	Range [mg/L]
Alkalinity ($CaCO_3$)	0–110
Hardness (as Ca^{2+})*	8–200

CONCLUSION

Alkalinity, pH value, and hardness play crucial roles during the brewing process. Out-of-specification values impair the extraction of starches and can negatively affect the taste of the beer. Close monitoring of the process and make-up water is therefore required, which is made possible by implementing a 2060 or 2035 Process Analyzer from Metrohm Process Analytics in the brewery for optimal water chemistry around the clock.

RELATED APPLICATION NOTES

AN-PAN-1029: Peracetic acid (PES) as disinfectant for PET bottles
AN-PAN-1031: Hydrogen peroxide as delousing agent in salmon farms
AN-PAN-1049: Online determination of bromate and other disinfection byproducts in drinking & bottled water with IC

BENEFITS FOR TITRATION IN PROCESS

- **Improved product quality** and manufacturing efficiency
- **Ensure regulatory compliances** for process and make-up water
- **Detect process upsets** via automated analysis

CONTACT

メトロームジャパン株式会社
143-0006 東京都大田区平和島6-1-1
null 東京流通センター アネックス9階
metrohm.jp@metrohm.jp

CONFIGURATION

2060 Process Analyzer

2060 Process Analyzerは、無数のアフリケーションに対応するオンライン湿式化学アナライサーてす。このフロセスアナライサーは、「ヘーシックキャヒネット」と呼はれる中核フラットホームによって構成される新たなモシュラー式コンセフトを提供するものてす。

ヘーシックキャヒネットは、2つの部分から構成されます。上部はタッチスクリーンと産業用PCを含みます。下部には、実際の分析のためのハートウェアか格納されるフレキシフルな湿式部か含まれます。基本湿式部の容量か分析課題を解決するのに充分てない場合、最も困難なアフリケーションても解決てきる充分なスヘースを確保するため、ヘーシックキャヒネットを4つまての追加湿式部キャヒネットに拡張することか可能てす。追加キャヒネットは、各湿式部キャヒネットを、アナライサーの稼働時間を増加させる内蔵式 (非接触式) レヘル検出を有する試薬キャヒネットと組み合わせるという方法によってコンフィクレーションすることかてきます。

2060 Process Analyzerは様々な湿式化学技術を提供します: カール フィッシャー滴定、光度測定、直接測定、および標準追加メソットてす。

フロシェクトのすへての要求を満たすへく (もしくはお客様のすへての必要性を満たすため)、頑丈な分析ソリューションを保証するためのサンフルフレコンティショニンクシステムをこ利用いたたくことも可能てす。弊社は、冷却や加熱、減圧、脱気、ろ過なとのような、いかなるサンフルフレコンティショニンクシステムても提供することかてきます。

2035 Process Analyzer - Potentiometric

2035 フロセスアナライサーては、電位差滴定およびイオン選択性測定において特別な滴定試薬および電極を使用します。2035 フロセスアナライサーのこの装置のハリエーションは、その上、メトロームの高性能電極によるイオン選択性分析に適しています。この精確な標準添加物の方法は、難しいサンフル物質の分析に理想的てす。

分析装置の電位差測定におけるこの装置のハリエーションは、市場て提供されている測定方法の中ても最も精確な結果を出します。1000を超える既製のアフリケーションにより、滴定も、ほほ全ての産業分野において最も頻繁に使用される数百の成分の分析方法の一つに数えられ、酸塩基分析から電気めっき浴の金属濃度測定に至るまて幅広く提供されています。

滴定は、今日使用されている中ても最も一般的てある、完全な化学メソットの一つてす。その方法はシンフルて、キャリフレーションも不要てす。

このコンフィクレーションに含まれる滴定の種類:

- 電位差滴定
- 光ファイハー技術による比色滴定
- カールフィッシャー滴定メソットによる水分測定