After centuries of research, scientist discovered what makes holes in Swiss cheese, allowing them to actually manipulate it.

(Newswire.net -- May 29, 2015) -- After hundred of years, scientist figured out why the characteristic Swiss cheese has holes in it, and determined why the number of holes has slowly decreased throughout the years, BBC News reported.

Reportedly, scientists from Agroscope, a state-run center for agricultural research in Switzerland, tested the holes found in cheeses such as Emmental and Appenzell. They find out that the holes are made because tiny bits of hay are present in the milk, which is used to make the cheese.

Scientists discovered in a series of tests that adding different amounts of hay dust to the milk resulted in a variation of holes in cheese, so they figured out the way to control the number of holes present.

The findings also explain why the holes have been declining over the last 15 years. According to a report, a modern technique of milking a cow with a hermetically sealed machine, prevents hay from getting into the milk which directly resulted in less quantity and smaller sized holes in the cheese.

Agroscope spokesman Regis Nyffeler told the AFP that the “disappearance of the traditional bucket” used during milking has caused the difference in cheese holes.

According to Nyffeler, the milking machines “completely did away with the presence of tiny hay particles in the milk,” which resulted in less holes.

Throughout the years, there have been different theories as to why Swiss cheese has holes in it.

The first who connected the phenomenon with the gas is American William Clark, who published a study claiming the holes were caused by carbon dioxide released by bacteria present in the milk.

There are others, not so scientific, but widely spread explanations, for example that cheese-loving mice eat their way in cheese, making holes.

Now we know it is actually caused by hay particles in the milk.