Claims

[Claim 1]

A method for producing cheese or a cheese-like food, the method comprising:

(1) using at least one raw material selected from the group consisting of an animal raw material and a plant raw material, wherein the animal raw material is at least one raw material selected from the group consisting of raw milk, cow milk, buffalo milk, sheep milk, and goat milk, or at least one processed product selected from the group consisting of a hydrolysate, a powder, and a fraction thereof, and wherein the plant raw material is at least one plant raw material selected from the group consisting of a hydrolysate, an emulsion, a powder, and a fraction obtained from a raw material derived from at least one plant selected from the group consisting of beans, nuts, and grains;

(2) a step including (2-1), (2-2), or (2-3):

(2-1) after the step (1), adding a Penicillium spore to the raw material, then preparing a coagulum, and then finely dividing the coagulum,

(2-2) after the step (1), preparing a coagulum from the raw material, then adding a Penicillium spore to the coagulum, and finely dividing the Penicillium spore-added coagulum, or

(2-3) after the step (1), preparing a coagulum from the raw material, then finely dividing the coagulum, and adding a Penicillium spore thereto,

wherein the Penicillium is at least one type of Penicillium selected from the group consisting of Penicillium roqueforti, Penicillium glaucum, Penicillium stilton, Penicillium gorgonzolae, and Penicillium aromaticum; and

(3) after the step (2), further proliferating a Penicillium hypha in the coagulum and substantially coalescing the coagulum, wherein

the step (3) comprises coalescing coagula having different degrees of ripeness.

[Claim 2]

The production method according to claim 1, wherein the step (2) comprises finely dividing the coagulum into approximately two or more equal parts.

[Claim 3]

The production method according to claim 1, wherein the step (2) comprises finely dividing the coagulum to produce the coagulum having a surface area approximately two or more times a surface area per weight of a final product cheese or cheese-like food.

[Claim 4]

The production method according to any one of claims 1 to 3, wherein the step (2) comprises at least one step of finely dividing the coagulum selected from the group consisting of shredding the coagulum, dicing the coagulum, cutting the coagulum into strips, crushing the coagulum, and randomly cutting the coagulum.

[Claim 5]

The production method according to any one of claims 1 to 4, wherein the step (3) comprises coalescing a ripened portion where Penicillium spore is formed and a portion where Penicillium spore is not formed and further forming Penicillium spore in the coagulum.

[Claim 6]

The production method according to claim 5, wherein the ripened portion where Penicillium spore is formed corresponds to a blue portion of blue cheese that exhibits a color of the Penicillium spore, indicating that the Penicillium has sufficiently proliferated, and the portion where Penicillium spore is not formed corresponds to a white portion of blue cheese that indicates a portion where the Penicillium has not sufficiently proliferated, or a portion where the Penicillium has proliferated but only a hypha is present and no spore is formed.

[Claim 7]

The production method according to claim 1, wherein the step (3) comprises blending the coagula having different degrees of ripeness; and pressing or pressurizing, and then molding the coagulum blend.

[Claim 8]

The production method according to claim 1, wherein the step (3) comprises substantially coalescing a sporulated coagulum and a non-sporulated coagulum, and the sporulated coagulum preferably includes sporulated coagula having different degrees of ripeness.

[Claim 9]

The production method according to claim 7, wherein the coagula having different degrees of ripeness are optionally finely divided or shredded, and substantially coalesced to adjust a degree of ripeness of the coagulum blend.

[Claim 10]

The production method according to claim 8, wherein a degree of ripeness in the sporulated coagulum is changed by further ripening the sporulated coagulum, for example, through raising the ripening temperature or extending the ripening period, to change the taste of the coagulum.

[Claim 11]

The production method according to claim 8, wherein the sporulated coagulum has a high degree of ripeness such that the cheese or cheese-like food exhibits a taste of a long-term ripened blue cheese though an appearance of the blue cheese is substantially the same.

[Claim 12]

The production method according to claim 1, wherein a period of the method for producing the cheese or cheese-like food is shorter than 3 months, preferably from 1 week to 2 weeks.

[Claim 13]

The production method according to claim 1, wherein the step (2) comprises ripening the coagulum at 25°C for 7 days or for 14 days to form Penicillium spores on the coagulum surface.

[Claim 14]

The production method according to claim 1, wherein the method produces blue cheese by controlling a degree of ripeness in a short period from 1 week to 2 weeks.