



Photo Courtesy of USDA/ARS

Virginia Holsinger

Dairy Product innovations

U.S. PATENT NO. 6,258,391: Application of high pressure carbon dioxide for accelerated manufacture of hard cheese

Inducted in 2025 Born: March 17, 1937 Died: Sept. 4, 2009

Primary Connections:

- USDA-Agricultural Research Service (ARS): Research Leader, Dairy Products Research Unit, 1974-99; Analytical Chemist, 1958-74

Education:

- College of William and Mary: B.S., Chemistry, 1958
- Ohio State University: Ph.D., Food Science and Nutrition, 1980

Key Memberships/Awards:

- Institute of Food Technologists: Fellow, 1996
- Women in Science and Engineering: Lifetime Achievement Award, 1995
- USDA-ARS Distinguished Scientist of the Year Award, 1992

Virginia Holsinger made healthier dairy products accessible worldwide. Her research on enzymes and digestion advanced the dairy industry, improved nutrition in American schools and international food donation programs, and created the foundation for Lactaid® brand products, making milk digestible by those with lactose intolerance.



Full Bio: <https://www.invent.org/inductees/virginia-holsinger>

Things You Should Know:

- Holsinger was born in 1937 in Washington, D.C.
- She created the foundation for Lactaid brand products, making milk digestible by those with lactose intolerance.
- Contributing to healthier school lunches, Holsinger's team developed a reduced-fat mozzarella cheese that became part of the USDA's National School Lunch Program.
- Her team also created a stable, less expensive nonfat dry milk replacement product for international food donation programs, as well as a grain blend that could be mixed with water to create a porridge for use in emergency situations like famines or droughts.
- After working as an analytical chemist for the USDA-Agricultural Research Service (ARS) Dairy Products Laboratory since 1958, she became the research leader for the ARS Dairy Products Unit in 1974, where she remained until her retirement in 1999.
- A member of the Institute of Food Technologists since 1972, Holsinger was active in the Dairy Technology Division, which she chaired in 1991.
- She was awarded the Distinguished Service Award of the ARS Division of Agricultural and Food Chemistry in 1986.
- Holsinger had one U.S. patent.