

## EXPERIENCE WITH BST

Dale Sauls  
Con-Dale Dairy  
Anthony, FL

We began using Posilac® in February 1994, treating all cows 9 weeks or more in milk with a Body Condition Score of 2.8 or higher. Pregnant cows 200 or more days-since-last-bred were not treated. Initial production figures were very encouraging with whole herd production up over 10 pounds and a 2-3 pound increase in whole-herd dry matter intake (DMI). Some of the initial production increase is attributed to the good body condition of the herd, with many cows having the reserves to milk it off their back. We soon realized we were not getting the needed response from many of the early lactation cows, nor were we seeing an increase from many of the high production animals. Early lactation cows do not respond well to Posilac® when DMI is a luxury. The number of days to first treatment was changed to 100 days-in-milk on cows and 120 days-in-milk on heifers, as heifers reach their peak in DMI later than cows. High production cows milking over 110 lbs and heifers milking over 95 lbs were not treated until either their production started dropping or we noticed an increase in their body condition. This usually occurred by 140 days-in-milk. Again, we only saw a significant response to Posilac® after DMI has peaked.

By starting treatment at 100-140 days-in-milk, we have noticed less of an impact on reproduction in our herd. Posilac® actually prolongs the time period available to get cows pregnant, and helps to keep mid to late lactation cows from getting overconditioned. The monsoon of 1994 had a significant effect on our herd. Our lot conditions were at their absolute worst. Body condition scores dropped from the cows walking through mud. Milk production and reproduction suffered. New cases of mastitis hit an all time high. This contributed to lower production on some cows in their following lactation. We have not experienced any significant herd health problems from the use of Posilac®, although all higher production animals need to be watched and monitored closely as a health related production drop in these cows is usually significant. A good foot trimming program helps encourage these cows to stand at the feed bunk longer. Our cull rate has increased during the past year, largely due to parlor pressure and bunk space availability as well as increased mastitis from last summers rain and lot conditions. Some other observations with Posilac® is that we get a higher percentage response in cows than heifers.

Higher production animals seem to have a lower percentage response.

Some cows that abort or twin in the dry lot can have their lactation saved by the use of Posilac® in early lactation. This can be true for heifers also. We noticed the production starting to drop after day 12 post treatment, so we are treating cows every 12 days. At least a 4 pound increase in production is necessary to cover added cost. From March 1994 to February 1995 we shipped 2,312 pounds more milk per cow than the previous 12 month period. This resulted in \$115 net income per head over the cost of Posilac® and additional feed.

In the future we will concentrate on using Posilac® in mid-lactation with most cows starting treatment in the 130-150 days-in-milk range. Because of lower body condition, it is doubtful we will ever see the level of response to Posilac® we initially achieved. But we hope to see a 7-pound increase in treated cows.