On the Zilio family farm in Villafranca Padovana, one of the largest dairy farms in Italy, the collaboration with Balchem and the addition of ReaShure-XC and NiaShure helped push performance even higher.

Choline and Niacin Help Improve a Top Italian Herd

What do real Italian farmers do when milk price doesn’t adequately cover their efforts? Simple: they choose to produce more milk, making the herd perform even better and giving their cows the opportunity to truly express their genetic potential. Reaching this milestone on a small operation is complex but on a farm like the Zilio family’s, where 1,100 cows produce 35 thousand litres per day, the task is really challenging.

Technological nutrition

On the other hand, the Zilios love challenges, and collaborating with Balchem to refine the ration for their 2,300 Frisians is paying off. “Three years ago,” recalls Alex Zilio, “we already had good performance on farm. However, our family is always looking for continuous improvement. When Balchem specialists presented ReaShure, we understood we could take advantage from its use at the feed bunk to improve performance and reduce dysmetabolism in post-partum.” The first ration tests immediately gave the effect the Zilios had hoped for, and this encapsulated choline came right into their rations, leading to a significant increase in production and a 67% reduction in mastitis in the first 30 days of lactation.

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To Stefano Vandoni, technical service manager at Balchem ANH, EMEA, this was no surprise. ReaShure is backed by more than forty scientific studies, all confirming the positive effects on cows from the dry period to the lactation phase. And as of 2021, an enhanced version of the product is available on the EMEA market: ReaShure-XC, which is characterized by double concentration compared to the previous version.

Room also for niacin
But the Zilios did not stop here and, satisfied with the improvements obtained from the introduction of choline, they decided to make room for another Balchem-branded technology: NiaShure, encapsulated niacin. Mario Pirondini, technical manager of Agrovit, (Balchem’s Italian distributor) sees the synergistic action of the two supplements as a valuable tool to prevent fatty liver and ketosis, which is particularly efficient in the case of cows with an elevated body condition in dry period. “We are open to new ideas, but they must work. And I must say” – Alex Zilio comments – “that thanks to Balchem expertise, and the inclusion of ReaShure-XC and NiaShure in the ration, we saw an increase in milk production of about 2.4 liters/head/day, without forgetting the significant reduction of post-partum events such as retained placenta, dislocation of the abomasum and metritis.” The Zilios also saw culling rates fall and health status of calves improve. In the last three years the farm brought about 150 more heifers to calving. The best testimony for any product is a herd that runs well and produces a lot of excellent milk – the real recipe for performance all breeders need. *

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