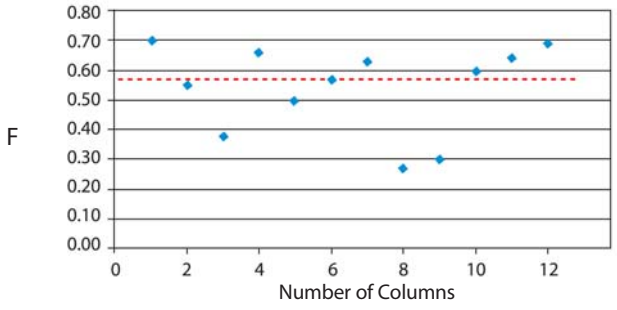
In order to evaluate flow restriction reproducibility, Restek is introducing a new factor: the flow restriction factor (F). This factor is based on the retention time of an unretained marker compound, as measured on both coated and uncoated tubing using the same backpressure setting (Equation 1). For quality control purposes, methane is used as the marker when evaluating porous polymer columns and helium is used for testing Rt®-Msieve 5A columns.

Flow restriction factor determination can be used both to assess the degree of column restriction and to evaluate the reproducibility of the column coating process. Percent flow restriction can also be calculated (Equation 2). Figure 3 shows typical results for PLOT columns manufactured using a conventional process. Because of the difference in flow restriction, individual columns have very different flow characteristics. In contrast, Figure 4 shows results for columns made using the new PLOT column process (Rt®-QS-BOND, bonded porous polymer). Clearly, the new manufacturing process results in greater consistency in both column coating thickness and flow restriction; which, in turn, results in more stable retention times and better performance in Deans switching and related flow switching techniques.

Figure 3 Traditional PLOT columns show significant flow variability, indicating inconsistent column coating thicknesses.



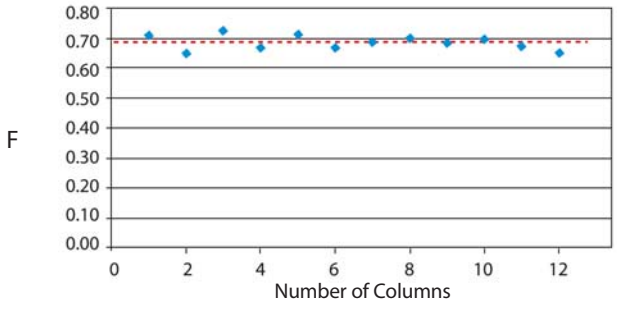
Equation 1 Flow restriction factor (F) is used to demonstrate coating consistency.

$$F = \frac{t_{R1} \text{ of unretained component (uncoated tubing)}}{t_{R2} \text{ of unretained component (coated column)}}$$

t_R = retention time

Note, F values will always be <1 as the coated column always has more restriction than the uncoated column.

Figure 4 New PLOT columns from Restek offer consistent flow resistance, giving more reproducible results column-to-column.



Equation 2 Percent flow restriction of coated column.

$$\% \text{ restriction} = (1 - F) \times 100$$

In summary, Restek's new PLOT column manufacturing process produces exceptionally robust PLOT columns, featuring concentric stabilized coating layers. These new columns have more consistent flow resistance and are recommended for applications sensitive to variation in retention time or flow. These columns are a significant advance in PLOT column technology and are ideal for more efficient, reproducible analyses of permanent gases, solvents, and hydrocarbons.