

MICROSEISMIC MONITORING DURING SHALE FIELD DEVELOPMENT

Peter M. Duncan

MicroSeismic, Inc., Houston USA
1300 W Sam Houston Pkwy S., Suite 200,
Houston TX USA 77042

Microseismic monitoring has become an important facilitator to the development of shale fields. As many as 5% of the hydraulic fracture treatments performed in the US are now monitored, with some operators opting to monitor every well as they develop their field. Driving the increased penetration of this technology is an appreciation of the complexity of shales. The response of the rocks is seen to vary from well to well and stage to stage. The need to monitor more wells at a lower unit cost has led to the deployment of permanent monitoring arrays.

Another important development is the extraction of more information from the data. The original analysis was more directed at getting a better frac design. Recent developments are directed at producing a better understanding of how the reservoir will perform as a result of the frac'ing. Such analysis consists first of extracting the failure mechanism of each microseismic event from the data as well as its magnitude. The nature of the failure mechanism is deterministic of the stress regime in the reservoir. The distribution of event magnitudes also appears to be diagnostic as to whether new fractures are being created or existing fractures are being reactivated.

Taking this analysis further, one can actually make estimates of the fracture planes that created the microseismic events. With an assignment of permeability, the fracture model can be upscaled to a grid model that then can be used in a reservoir production simulation model to begin predicting well and field performance.