Introduction to Plunger Lift

TOTAL ASSET MONITOR (TAM)

http://www.echometer.com/Software/Total-Asset-Monitor

"Optimizing Plunger Lifted Wells by Acoustically Tracing the Plunger Fall", Rowlan, McCoy, Podio, Hein, SWPSC 2001 "Plunger Lift Analysis, Troubleshooting, and Optimization", Rowlan, McCoy, Podio, Canadian Petroleum Society 2007-159 "Modified Foss and Gaul Model Accurately Predicts Plunger Rise Velocity", Rowlan, Lea, McCoy, SPE120636, 2009 "Measured Plunger Fall Velocity Used to Calibrate New Fall Velocity Model", Rowlan, McCoy, Lea, Nadkrynechny, Cepuch SPE164495

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Plunger Lift Deliquification of Gas Wells

Plunger Lift is a very economical Artificial Lift Method:

- Low initial investment
- Low recurring/maintenance cost
- Rig not required for installation
- Plunger lift costs do not increase with well depth

Uses well's pressure (Energy) to remove liquid loading

- Requires no outside energy source, if gas rate sufficient
- During Shut-in Period pressure must buildup to required minimum

Plunger Application

- Primarily used for Dewatering gas wells
- Superior Method to handle gassy wells
- Keeps tubing cleaned of paraffin deposits

Plunger Lift can be used to produce well to depletion; but other methods such as casing plunger and beam lift can pull the well to lower pressures.

1st Step is to Shoot Fluid Levels to Alert You to What is Downhole

@ 4750'
Tight Spot
in Tubing





Major Plunger Lift Components



<u>Controller:</u> Electronic-based system with control parameters to determine under what conditions to exert control by opening/closing the motor valve Transducer: Electronic device that emits an electronic signal to be converted within controller to engineering units Motor Valve: Diaphragm-operated device controlled by controller to open/close sales/tank line Lubricator/Catcher: Uppermost stopping point for plunger; acts as shock absorber; catcher is mechanical device that locks plunger in lubricator for removal and for inspection Arrival Sensor: Magnetic device strapped around lubricator to detect plunger arrivals... Vibration sensors have been used **Bumper Spring:** Shock absorber at plunger's deepest stopping point Plunger: Pig-type device that provides a seal between gas and liquid inside tubing to deliver fluid and gases to surface with differential pressure. The plunger travels entire length of tubing from catcher to bumper spring.



Low Cost Plunger Well Parts List

Key	ltem	Quantity
AC	plunger	1
AD	Bottom hole bumper spring assembly	1
AE	Seating nipple	1
BB	2" x 1" swedge	3
CC	Pressure control (fisher wizard?)	1
DD	Murphy Switch/High line delay	1
Α	Lubricator/catcher assembly	1
В	Kimray Motor Valve	1
С	Auto-cycle controller	1
D	2" x 8" nipple	3
E	2" TEE	5
F	1" ball valve	3
G	2" x necessary length nipple	15
Н	2" ball valve	5
	flanged master valve	1
J	1/4" x 2" pipe nipple	3
ĸ	2" bull plug with 1/2" tap	1
L	press. Gauge or gauge tap w/tee	1
М	press. Gauge or guage tap	1
N	Kimray (meco) 664s regulator	1
0	Fisher 51R Regulator	1
Р	Drip pot	1
Q	1/2" x 2" pipe nipple	2
R	1/2" TEE	1
S	1/2" valve (fully opening)	1
Т	1/2" pressure gauge or guage tap	1
U	1/4" valve	1
V	~15 feet: 1/4" SS Tubing & fittings	5

New Technology for Analyzing Plunger Lift





Equipment on Well



PLUNGER LIFT SURVEY ANSWERS THE FOLLOWING WELL PERFORMANCE QUESTIONS:

- Where is the plunger? Surface? In or above the liquid? On Bottom?
- What is the depth to the top of the liquid in the Tubing?
- What is the producing and Static BHP?
- Is liquid in the casing annulus above the tubing intake?
- What are the casing and tubing pressures during the operational cycle?
- Does tubing gas/liquid pressure push liquid out of tubing?
- What is the maximum production rate available from the well?
- What is the gas flow rate? From Formation? Annulus? Flowline?
- What is the gas gravity?
- Are there restrictions to plunger fall in the tubing?

PLUNGER OPERATION CYCLE

Record High Speed Acoustic, Tubing & Casing Pressure

- [A] Valve Closes, Shut-in Begins and Tubing Pressure Starts Increasing
- 1. Plunger hits Liquid
- 2. Plunger on Bottom
- [B] Valve Opens, Unloading Begins
- 3. Liquid Arrives, Tubing Pressure at Minimum
- 4. Plunger Arrives, After-flow begins Tubing Pressure Maximum Spike
- [C] Valve Closes, Cycle Repeats



What does a Plunger Controller Control?

1. Off Time (Length of Shut-in)

- Elapsed time valve is closed (No Sales)
- Maximum allowed time, or required casing pressure build up

2. On Time (Length of Flow)

- Elapsed time valve is open (Gas sold)
- Liquid is Unloaded from well
- Gas is produced and well loads up with next liquid slug

Plunger Controller acts as an on/off switch for Control Motor Valve.

Control Options:

Elapsed Time, Pressure Differential, Pressure Set Point, Load Factor, Flow Rate, Plunger Speed And/OR Foss and Gaul

Manual On/Off Timer

- Controls based on preset times to close or open valve
- Set times are usually conservative
- Controller doesn't automatically adjust as well conditions change
- Operator makes adjustment to adjust on and off times

Automated On/Off based on Plunger Speed

- Easiest to use in wells with packers
- Makes automatic adjustments based on plunger arrival time
- Can make proportional adjustments
- Less time consuming for operators

<u>Combination Automated On/Off plus Pressure Monitoring</u>

- Monitors flow rates, pressure differential, and plunger speed
- Afterflow determined by comparing current flow rate to critical rate
- Shut in time determined by monitoring casing, tubing, or line and when pressures sufficient, based on calculations, well is allowed to open

Controller should help maximize production.

Conventional Plunger Cycle

Plunger lift operation cycle can be divided into three parts:

- 1) <u>Shut-in</u>: Surface valve closed, flow shut-in, plunger falls down the tubing. Goal of the operator or controller is to try to achieve Shut-in of the well for the shortest amount of time possible, But long enough for plunger to reach bottom. And long enough for the pressure to build high enough to bring the plunger back to surface.
- 2) <u>Unloading</u>: Surface valve open and pressure stored in the casing lifts the accumulated liquid and plunger to the surface
- 3) <u>After-flow</u>: Surface valve open and well continues to flow after plunger reaches the surface. Plunger held at surface by differential pressure from flow of gas up the tubing. Well is producing gas. Most liquid produced from the formation tends to fall back, accumulating at the bottom of the tubing. The goal of the operator or controller is to Flow the well only until the well begins to load with liquids.

Thanks: Dan Phillips and Scott Listiak

How Does Conventional Plunger Lift Work



Pressures During Normal Well Cycle



Conventional Plunger Cycle [A] – [B] ~ Shut-in

- Surface valve closes to Shut-in well, when afterflow time period ends or control parameters are met; controller is in off cycle and plunger falls to bumper spring at bottom of well.
- CP pressure builds during fall and build-up period (if needed)

[B] – 4 ~ Unloading

- When surface control parameters are met controller enters on cycle opens valve and exhausts [tubing pressure] TP \rightarrow LP [line pressure] to create differential pressure across plunger
- Plunger acts as interface between liquid slug CP-TP and higher pressure gas below that drives plunger upward
- CP-LP pressure then lifts liquids and plunger to surface.

4 – [C] ~ Afterflow

• Sensors record plunger's arrival and afterflow time period starts.

 When afterflow time period ends or control parameters are met; controller returns to off cycle. Back to Shut-in Step (above)). 14

Plunger Controller acts as an on/off switch to Control Motor Valve.





Liquid Arrives During Unloading



Plunger_3CyclesFromStatic

←

Unloading begins when Controller opens motor valve between tubing and flow line.



Plunger_Normal Cycle

Operational Benefits of Plunger Tracking

- 1. Plunger lift program takes the guess work out of setting fall times.
- 2. Accurate fall time measured from the time the plunger begins fall to the time the plunger hits the seat nipple or bottom hole spring.
- 3. Increased gas production with less shut-in time.
- 4. After-flow can be set by monitoring pressure to determine when casing pressure starts to rise then well loading begins. Use Foss & Gaul!
- 5. Save time by ensuring all plunger runs are made and maximize sales time.

Take Guess Work Out of Setting Shut-in Time



Plunger 3CyclesFromStatic

20

Count Collars for Fall Velocity & Depth





Normal Fall Velocity [During Shut-in]



Shut-in Begins When the Flow Line Motor Valve Closes (Flow down flow line stops)



Shut-in Begins When the Flow Line Motor Valve Closes (Flow down flow line stops)



Pick Beginning of Shut-in When Tubing Pressure Just Starts to Increase 25

0.3 Min of Pressure & Acoustic Data Shows 0.2 psi Pressure Wave Created at Collar # 112



Minimize Unnecessary Shut-in Time



Gas Properties Determined by Fall

Troubleshooting by Tracking Plungers

- 1. Find holes in tubing of Gas wells or Plunger Lift wells by monitoring tubing and casing pressure while using acoustic to determine depth as plunger is falling.
- Releasing plunger from the lubricator catcher, causes
 2 to 3 psi drop in the tubing pressure as differential pressure is used to support plunger while falling.
- 3. Tubing pressure will increase by 2 to 3 psi, when plunger falls by a hole or stops. There "may" be a decrease in casing pressure.
- 4. Collars can be counted from the time the plunger starts falling to the time the pressure increases.
- 5. Procedure determines depth to stuck plunger or hole.

When Shut-in Begins the Tubing Pressure I I Drops as Plunger Starts to Fall

Plunger weight (8 lbs) / Area of 2-3/8"

PS

Shut-in Begins and Tubing Pressure Instantly Drops as Plunger Starts to Fall

Pressure Drop = Weight / Area Plunger weight (8 lbs) / Area of 2-3/8" 31

Tubing & Casing Pressure React to Plunger Falling in Well

Tubing Pressure Change Helps to Identify Downhole Problems

Hole in Tubing

- 1) Hole was 156 jts from surface or 5054' based on 32.4' joint lengths
- 2) Hole measured with micrometer to be 0.160" by 0.125".

Analysis Plots Shows Depth to Hole

Gas Flow Rates During Cycle

Know Where the Plunger Is

- 1. Plunger Lift Tracking increases safety of plunger lift operations by knowing where the plunger is in the tubing.
- 2. If a plunger is not going to bottom and the well is pressured up, then the plunger could surface dry at a very high velocity.
- 3. High Velocity Can damage equipment!
- 4. Arrival at high velocity can cause equipment damage and could result in exceeding the mechanical integrity limits of the lubricator

Wireless

Gas Gun on

Tubing

Wireless Gas Gun OR Pressure Sensor on Casing

- Click "Pick Well" and Double Click Well name for the well where data is to be acquired.
- Use Create... to create a New Well if one does not exist.
- 3. Be sure to enter at least: daily production rates, tubing & casing sizes, average joint length, tubing & S/N depth and formation depths.

F2 Liquid Level	Identify Se	nsors	F10 Start Acquisition
P3 Dynamometer CBE	Select Sensors:	Tubing: Tubing Acoustic Identify Wireless Gas Gun Attached to Tubing	Sample Rate: 30 Hz
F11 History F12 Utilities	Optional: Modify Optional: Modify Optional Sensor <u>Attached to:</u> Sal	Tubing Pressure psi(g) Select Sensor Close WRFG magsol WRFG magsol Attach	y Wireless Gas Gur ssure Transducer ed to Casing
F1 Help	or Other		41 Time Range: 60 sec

Obtain Zero Offset on Pressure Transducer

Must Stop Preview To Begin Acquiring Plunger Lift Data

Tap "F10" or Click Start A	cquisition Button
Select Sensors:	Tubing: Sample Rate: 30 Hz
Tubing:	Tubing Acoustic Preview Tubing Pressure psi(g)
Acquire Acoustic Acquire Pressure Casing:	Preview
WRFG magsol	Casing Acoustic Preview
Optional: Modify	Casing Pressure psi(g) Preview
	44 Time Range: 60 sec

Real Time Data is displayed in Lower right-hand box. The Real Time Data is copied to the lower left-hand and upper graphs when the default Delta Time Axis time period elapses (Set at 60 seconds)

Begin Acquisition one minute+ before opening/closing of motor valve

Note: Reco after clickir until the St	rding of the incoming data ng on the Start Acquiring bu op Acquiring button is click	on the hard drive begins utton. Recording continues ced.	F10 (Stop
Test Info 🥑	10/08/2016 04:01:49PM 10/	08/2016 04:25:56PM		PLift History Report
Begin Time	4:25:57 PM End Time 5:0	Field Cycles 05:30 PM Duration 00:39:33	Sample Rate	30 hz
Select Senso	Tubing:	Tubing Acoustic -3.9 Tubing Pressure 118.7 psi(g)	Expand	acquisition
	Casing:	Casing Acoustic 4.8 Casing Pressure 237.8 psi(g) Annotate	Switch ba between the Tubir Acoustics	ack & forth displays of ng, Casing & 📝 s Data Range: 🔊 sec

During the Shut-in time period while the plunger is falling, monitor the graphics on the Tubing, Casing and Acoustics Expanded View

Click Annotate button to identify Key Events during Acquisition

10/08/2016 04:01:49PM 10/08/2016 04:25:56PM S PLift History
Test Info Comments: Comment/Description of the test should be entered Report
Field Cycles
Begin Time 4:25:57 PM End Time 5:52:23 PM Duration 01:26:26 Sample 30 hz
Select Sensors: Stop acquisition? Ves No Tubing: Utubing Pressure 135.0 psi(g)
Casing:
Acquire one or more cycles from valve open to next time valve opens or from valve close to close.

Long Term Plunger Acquisition Test

Plunger Lift Data is Saved Every 5 Minutes to the Hard Disk. Max of 5 minutes Lost If Sensor Stops or TAM Prematurely Terminates.

Internal Lithium Batteries Acquire Data Continuously for Approximately 12 hrs

For Long Term Acquisition Protect Laptop and Base Station from Elements, Damage, & Theft

Deep Cycle Battery with Auto Adapter Keeps Laptop and Base Station Powered

Tracking Plunger Benefits

- 1. Tracking system minimizes the need for wire line.
- 2. A plunger can be dropped and tracked to the seat nipple or collar stop. The collars can be counted to be sure the plunger is at the seat nipple or bottom hole spring.
- 3. Save time by quickly identifying holes and eliminating the need to drop standing valve and pressure testing tubing before you pull it.
- 4. Quickly identify a spring or plunger that is not going to bottom.