

Barnett Shale Blog

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New Barnett Shale study sees production through 2030

The Barnett Shale can be expected to produce about 44 trillion cubic feet over its lifetime, more than three times its production to date, and will still be a significant producer in 2030, according to a new study by the Bureau of Economic Geology at the University of Texas at Austin. After peaking at about 2 trillion cubic feet a year in 2011, the field will see "slowly declining production" that by the year 2030 is still about 900 billion cubic feet a year. The BEG used data through 2010 from 15,000 wells in the big North Texas field and assumes future natural gas prices averaging \$4 per 1,000 cubic feet.

Even though the productivity of the field varies greatly, the study found, "there are still many locations to drill in the better rock," according to a news release describing the study's findings. Scott Tinker, director of the BEG and one of the study's principal investigators, said "drilling the better rock won't last forever, but there are still a few more years of development remaining in the better rock quality areas," according to the release. The study forecasts another 13,000 wells drilled in the field through 2030 after the study's cut-off date, a figure that includes about 2,900 wells drilled in 2011 and 2012.

The BEG said its method of estimating production from shale wells "should offer a more accurate method of forecasting production declines in shale gas wells," a point of dispute between some producers and skeptics such as Houston geologist Art Berman. As the study notes, its estimate "falls in between some of the more optimistic and pessimistic predictions of production from the Barnett." The BEG's release on the study says it "reaffirms the transformative, long-term impact of shale and other unconventional reservoirs of oil and gas on U.S. energy markets." It quotes Tinker as comparing shale gas reserves development as "potentially analogous to offshore oil in terms of impact."

The BEG's release on the study is [here](#). The *Star-Telegram* reported on some of the report's findings earlier, focusing not just on Tinker's forecasts but also individual well productivity. The BEG's release does not address its findings on the average Barnett well's cumulative production over its lifetime, called the estimated ultimate recovery, or EUR. A link to that report is [here](#).

-- Jim Fuquay

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