Closure Stress Gradient Estimation of the Marcellus Shale from Seismic Data

Joel Starr, *EQT Production, Pittsburgh, US*

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Abstract

The closure stress is the stress needed to hold open a fracture in rock once it has been created. Understanding closure stress is important when developing a gas shale like the Marcellus in the Appalachian Basin. It determines the existence of stress barriers, the extent of the expected drainage area, the type of proppant needed, etc. As such, it affects the completion design and drilling targets. Closure stress is commonly assumed to be equivalent to the minimum horizontal stress and can be calculated using the uniaxial stress equation. This equation has several parameters and has been expanded to account for tectonic strain and anisotropic tectonic strain (Theircelin and Plumb 1994). However, the goal of this presentation is to simplify this equation and limit the parameters to something that can be estimated readily from seismic data. This presentation makes the case that in the Appalachian Basin, estimating Poisson's ratio is sufficient to understand the changes in the stress gradient of the Marcellus shale relative to the surrounding layers both vertically and laterally.

Biography

Joel Starr is the Principal Geophysicist for EQT Production in Pittsburgh PA. He received a B.S. in Geology from Juniata College in 1985 and an M.S. in Geophysics from the University of New Orleans in 1990. He has worked in the Gulf of Mexico, South America, North Sea and Arabian Gulf. He spent too much time in West Africa and not enough time in Australia. Joel contributed to the development the Ocean Bottom Seismic acquisition technique in the early 1990's as well as several methods for processing multi-component data. He holds five patents and multiple publications in the SEG and EAGE.