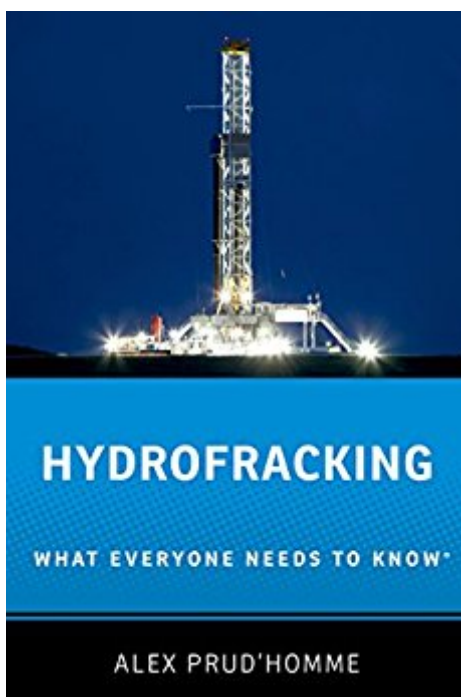


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Hydrofracking: What Everyone Needs To Know?



Synopsis

Constantly in the news and the subject of much public debate, fracking, as it is known for short, is one of the most promising yet controversial methods of extracting natural gas and oil. Today, 90 percent of natural gas wells use fracking. Though highly effective, the process-which fractures rock with pressurized fluid-has been criticized for polluting land, air, and water, and endangering human health. A timely addition to Oxford's What Everyone Needs to Know? series, Hydrofracking tackles this contentious topic, exploring both sides of the debate and providing a clear guide to the science underlying the technique. In concise question-and-answer format, Alex Prud'homme cuts through the maze of opinions and rhetoric to uncover key points, from the economic and political benefits of fracking to the health dangers and negative effects on the environment. Prud'homme offers clear answers to a range of fundamental questions, including: What is fracking fluid? How does it impact water supplies? Who regulates the industry? How much recoverable natural gas exists in the U.S.? What new innovations are on the horizon? Supporters as diverse as President Obama and the conservative billionaire T. Boone Pickens have promoted natural gas as a clean, "21st-century" fuel that will reduce global warming, create jobs, and provide tax revenues, but concerns remain, with environmental activists like Bill McKibben and others leading protests to put an end to fracking as a means of obtaining alternative energy. Prud'homme considers ways to improve methods in the short-term, while also exploring the possibility of transitioning to more sustainable resources-wind, solar, tidal, and perhaps nuclear power-for the long term. Written for general readers, Hydrofracking clearly explains both the complex science of fracking and the equally complex political and economic issues that surround it, giving readers all the information they need to understand what will no doubt remain a contentious issue for years to come. What Everyone Needs to Know? is a registered trademark of Oxford University Press.

Book Information

File Size: 1804 KB

Print Length: 208 pages

Publisher: Oxford University Press; 1 edition (November 8, 2013)

Publication Date: November 8, 2013

Sold by:Â Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B00FSAE23I

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Not Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #340,882 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #18

inÂ Books > Engineering & Transportation > Engineering > Energy Production & Extraction > Fossil Fuels > Natural Gas #19 inÂ Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Engineering & Transportation > Engineering > Chemical > Petrochemical #22 inÂ Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Engineering & Transportation > Engineering > Civil > Environmental > Mining

Customer Reviews

"Fracking," or more technically, hydrofracking is the process of injecting water and chemicals through deep, lateral wells into shale and other rock strata under high pressure to push out and recover natural gas. In "Hydrofracking: What Everyone Needs to Know," author Alex Prud'homme presents a balanced view of what the process is, its effects upon the environment, its costs and its benefits. Early in the book, a map of the United States shows the major "plays," as they are known, where there exist massive quantities of natural gas -- and frequently oil as well. The United States, China, Libya, Russia, Algeria and certain other parts of the world have been richly blessed with such reserves. The recovery of natural gas deep in the ground from these plays is an industry still very much in its infancy. Fracking is changing the world as these reserves are discovered and exploited. Prud'homme comes across as essentially neutral or undecided in the relative merits of fracking. This is a great benefit to understanding his book. The benefits of recovering large reserves of fossil fuels previously unknown or previously impossible to exploit must be measured against costs. Costs include contamination of ground water; the contamination of surface water streams, lakes and ponds; the inadvertent release of methane gas into the air around well-pad sites; the use of tremendous quantities of water; the difficulty of treating frackwater waste; forest fragmentation; noise; the cost of building and maintaining road networks through previously roadless areas.

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