Do you know the difference between dry and wet natural gas? While largely unrecognized but commonly referenced, dry and wet natural gas serve uniquely distinct purposes in our everyday lives and our economy places different values for each.

**Dry Natural Gas** is almost completely methane. The higher the methane concentration within the gas, the drier it is. According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA), dry natural gas is what remains after all of the liquefied hydrocarbons (hexane, octane, etc.) and non-hydrocarbon (helium, nitrogen, etc.) impurities are removed from the natural gas stream. The five largest dry gas-producing states are Texas, New Mexico, Louisiana, Oklahoma and Wyoming.

When natural gas is discussed in the media, they are typically referring to dry gas. Dry gas is typically used in heating and cooling systems and for electrical power generation. Once compressed, dry gas can be used as vehicle fuel.

**Wet Natural Gas** contains less than 85% methane and has a higher percentage of liquid natural gasses (LNG’s) such as ethane and butane. The combination of LNG’s and liquefied hydrocarbons give it the “wetness.” LNG’s are separated from the methane and sold as individual compounds. The five highest-yielding wet gas states include Pennsylvania, Texas, Louisiana, Oklahoma and Colorado.

LNG’s like butane can be used in refrigeration and freezing systems, in torches for cooking purposes and as fuel for lighters and grills. When burned, both wet and dry natural gas produce fewer emissions than coal or oil.

Although proved reserves of wet natural gas began moderately increasing in the late 1990s, volumes grew dramatically in the mid-2000s due to the intensifying of horizontal drilling programs.

“Exploration and production (E&P) market participants that contributed to a recent market survey believe [dry] gas prices have bottomed out and 87% of survey respondents predicted [dry] natural gas prices would stay the same or increase over the next two years or increase by 10% or more in the next five years. Until then, E&P companies are moving away from dry gas and are focusing instead on liquid-rich plays, such as wet gas and shale oil.”

- Mining Weekly Online - Feb. 2013