

## Application Note

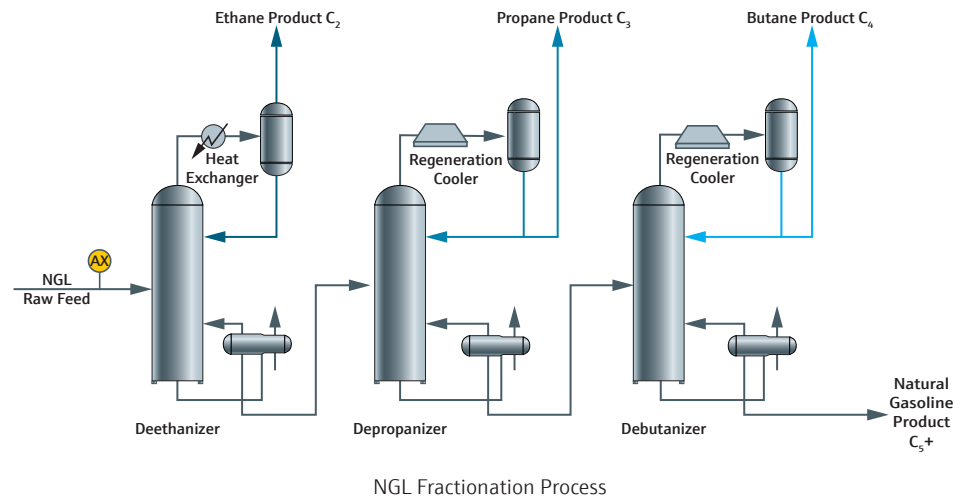
# Water measurement in Y-grade NGL fractionation feed

**Industry:**  
Natural Gas Processing  
Application Note 35001

### Key Points

- Fast response to H<sub>2</sub>O concentration changes
- Laser-based measurement is highly selective and accurate for H<sub>2</sub>O in Y-grade
- Non-contact laser measurement avoids fouling and corrosion for reliable long-term operation
- Low maintenance and OPEX costs – no frequent change out of sensor in direct contact with process stream

**Fractionation and recovery of NGLs** Natural gas from some geological formations contains natural gas liquids (NGLs); ethane, propane, butane and a mix of C<sub>5</sub>+ liquid condensates. Once methane in the raw natural gas is separated in a Demethanizer the remaining NGLs can be recovered using a cryogenic turbo expander yielding a mixed Y-grade stream. The Y-grade mixture can be fed to a fractionation unit to separate and recover individual NGL products.



**Measurement of H<sub>2</sub>O to meet specifications** Y-grade and NGL product streams have a moisture specification set by customers or pipelines based on the intended use and downstream processing. Contaminants including H<sub>2</sub>O, CO<sub>2</sub>, and H<sub>2</sub>S are measured in Y-grade and NGL fractionation products to ensure specifications are met and documented as required in tariff and sales agreements between suppliers, carriers and end users. Specifications and contracts typically state that Y-grade and NGL fractionation products shall not contain free or entrained water.

**SpectraSensors' solution** SpectraSensors tunable diode laser absorption spectroscopy (TDLAS) analyzers have proven effective for monitoring H<sub>2</sub>O in Y-grade feed to NGL fractionation units. TDLAS analyzers have an exceptionally fast response to changes in H<sub>2</sub>O concentration, an important performance characteristic for measuring H<sub>2</sub>O in Y-grade feed entering a fractionation unit, or at custody transfer points. Laser and detector components are isolated and protected from process gas and contaminants avoiding fouling and corrosion and ensuring stable long-term operation and measurements in the field.

## Application Data

Target Component (Analyte)	H <sub>2</sub> O in Y-grade NGL Fractionation Feed
Typical Measurement Range	0-50 ppm*
Typical Repeatability	±2 ppm**
Measurement Response Time	1 to ~60 seconds
Principle of Measurement	Tunable Diode Laser Absorption Spectroscopy
Validation	Certified blend of H <sub>2</sub> O in Nitrogen

\* Consult factory for alternate ranges.

\*\* Repeatability is based on a single stream composition with minimal variation and which falls within the table below. If the stream composition varies, the factory should be consulted for specification.

## Typical Background Stream Composition

Component	Minimum (Mol%)	Typical (Mol%)	Maximum (Mol%)
Methane (C <sub>1</sub> )	0	1	1.5
Ethane (C <sub>2</sub> )	35	45	55
Propane (C <sub>3</sub> )	30	36	45
Butane (C <sub>4</sub> )	0	12	20
C <sub>5</sub> +	0	5	6
Carbon Dioxide (CO <sub>2</sub> )	0	100 ppm	500 ppm
Hydrogen Sulfide (H <sub>2</sub> S)	0	40 ppm	500 ppm

The background stream composition must be specified for proper calibration and measurement performance. Specify the typical composition, along with the minimum and maximum expected values for each component, especially H<sub>2</sub>O, the measured component. Other stream compositions may be allowable with approval from SpectraSensors.