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(54) Title: MULTI-POINT INJECTION SYSTEM FOR OILFIELD OPERATIONS

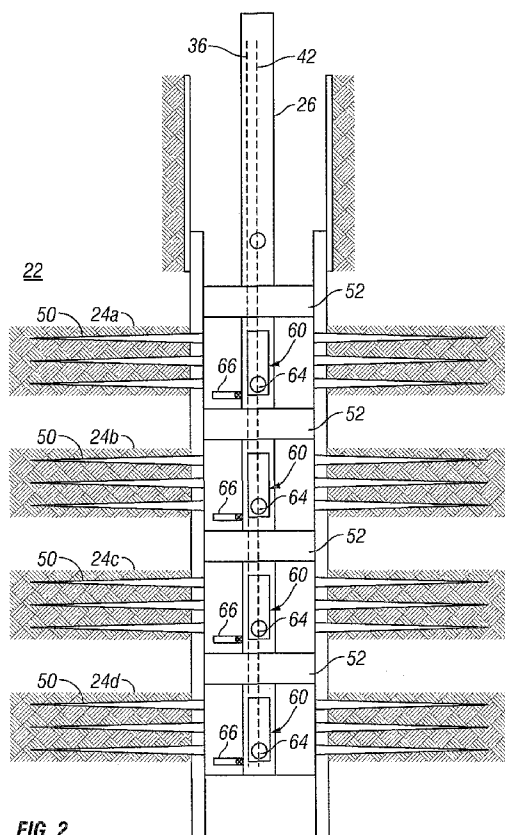


FIG. 2

(57) Abstract: A system monitors and controls the injection of additives into formation fluids recovered through a well may include a plurality of nozzles that receive the injection fluid from an umbilical disposed in a well. Each nozzle may have an associated flow control element that is configured to affect a flow of the injection fluid ejected through the associated nozzle. The umbilical may include one or more filters positioned in a first of two parallel conduits formed along the umbilical. An occlusion member restricts in a second of the two conduits. The occlusion member permits flow in the second conduit after a predetermined pressure differential exists in the second conduit. The system may include a plurality of pressure sensors disposed along the umbilical, and an injector unit that dispenses fluid into the umbilical. A controller operatively coupled to the injector unit operates the injector in response to measurements from the pressure sensors.



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TITLE: MULTI-POINT INJECTION SYSTEM FOR OILFIELD OPERATIONS

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BACKGROUND OF THE DISCLOSURE

1. Field of the Disclosure

[0001] This disclosure relates generally to oilfield operations and more particularly to an additive injection and fluid processing systems and methods.

2. Background of the Art

[0002] During hydrocarbon recovery operations, production tubing, pipelines, valves and related equipment may be exposed to substances that corrode, degrade or otherwise reduce their efficiency or service life. Thus, it may be advantageous to treat such equipment with corrosion inhibitors, scale inhibitors, paraffin inhibitors, hydrate inhibitors, demulsifiers, and the like, and mixtures thereof. The present disclosure provides, in part, enhanced additive injection systems and methods suitable for such uses.

SUMMARY OF THE DISCLOSURE

[0003] In aspects, the present disclosure provides a system for injecting an injection fluid in a well. The system may include a plurality of nozzles that receive the injection fluid from an umbilical disposed in a well. Each nozzle may have an associated flow control element that affects, influences, adjusts or otherwise controls a flow of the injection fluid ejected through the associated nozzle. In embodiments, the umbilical may include one or more filters. In one embodiment, a filter element may be positioned in a first of two parallel conduits formed along the umbilical. An occlusion member configured to restrict flow may be positioned in a second of the two conduits. The occlusion member may selectively restrict flow in the second conduit after a predetermined pressure differential exists in the second conduit. In further embodiments, the system may include a plurality of pressure sensors disposed along the umbilical, and an injector unit that dispenses fluid into the umbilical. A controller operatively coupled to the injector unit operates the injector in response to measurements from the pressure sensors.

[0004] In aspects, the present disclosure provides a method for injecting an injection fluid in a well. The method may include conveying injection fluid into the well using an umbilical that conveys the injection fluid, and injecting the injection fluid into two or more zones using nozzles. The method may include configuring the nozzles to receive the injection fluid from the umbilical; and affecting a flow parameter of the fluid in the nozzles using a flow control element associated with each nozzle. In aspects, the method may include filtering the fluid in the umbilical using one or more filters.

[0005] In aspects, the present disclosure provides a system for injecting an injection fluid in a well. The system may include an umbilical to convey the injection fluid in the well; a plurality of nozzles that receive the injection fluid from the umbilical; and a flow control element associated with each nozzle.

Each flow control element may control a flow of the injection fluid through the associated nozzle.

[0006] In aspects, the present disclosure provides a method for injecting an injection fluid in a well. The method may include conveying the injection fluid into the well using an umbilical; ejecting the injection fluid into the well using a plurality of nozzles; and controlling the flow of the injection fluid through each nozzle using a flow control element associated with each nozzle.

[0007] Examples of the more important features of the disclosure have been summarized rather broadly in order that the detailed description thereof that follows may be better understood and in order that the contributions they represent to the art may be appreciated. There are, of course, additional features of the disclosure that will be described hereinafter and which will form the subject of the claims appended hereto.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0008] For a detailed understanding of the present disclosure, reference should be made to the following detailed description of the one mode embodiments, taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, in which like elements have been given like numerals, wherein:

Fig. 1 schematically illustrates one embodiment of the surface components of an additive injection and monitoring system made according to the present disclosure;

Fig. 2 schematically illustrates one embodiment of the subsurface components of an additive injection and monitoring system made according to the present disclosure;

Fig. 3 schematically illustrates one embodiment of injector nozzles made according to the present disclosure; and

Figs. 4A and 4B schematically illustrate a filter according to one embodiment of the present disclosure.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE DISCLOSURE

[0009] Referring initially to **Fig. 1**, there is schematically shown one embodiment of an additive injection and monitoring system **10** (hereafter “system **10**”) made in accordance with the present disclosure. The system **10** may be deployed in conjunction with a facility **12** located at a surface **14** that services one or more production wells **16**. While a land well is shown, it should be appreciated that the teachings of the present disclosure may be applied to offshore operations that service subsea wells. Conventionally, each well **16** includes a well head **18** and related equipment positioned over a wellbore **20** formed in a subterranean formation **22**. The well bore **20** may have one or more production zones **24A-D** (**Fig. 2**) for draining hydrocarbons from the formation **22** (**Fig. 2**) (“produced fluids” or “production fluid”). A production tubular **26** may be used to convey the fluid from the production zones to the wellhead **18**. The production well **16** usually includes a casing **28** near the surface **14**. The wellhead **18** may include equipment such as a blowout preventer stack and valves for controlling fluid flow to the surface **14**. Wellhead equipment and production well equipment are well known and thus are not described in greater detail.

[00010] The system **10** may be utilized to introduce or inject a variety of chemicals or additives into the production well **16** to control, among other things, corrosion, scale, paraffin, emulsion, hydrates, hydrogen sulfide, asphaltenes, inorganics and other harmful substances. As used herein, the term “additive” generally refers to an engineered fluid that is formulated to perform a desired task. The additive(s) may be mixed with a base fluid such as water or oil to form what will hereafter be referred to as “injection fluid(s).” Injection fluid(s) may include liquids and / or gases. The system **10** may be configured to supply precise amounts of an additive or a mixture of additives to prevent, mitigate or otherwise lessen the harm caused by these substances. The system **10** may also be configured to periodically or

continuously monitor the actual amount of the additives being dispensed, determine the effectiveness of the dispensed additives, and vary the amount of dispense additives as needed to maintain one or more parameters of interest within predetermined ranges or at specified values.

[00011] It should be understood that relatively small amount of additives are injected into the production fluid during operation. Accordingly, considerations such as precision in dispensing additives may be more relevant than mere volumetric capacity. In embodiments, the flow rate for an additive injected using the present disclosure may be at a rate such that the additive is present at a concentration of from about 1 parts per million (ppm) to about 10,000 ppm in the fluid being treated. In other embodiments, the flow rate for an additive injected using the present disclosure may be at a rate such that the additive is present at a concentration of from about 1 ppm to about 500 ppm in the fluid being treated.

[00012] In one embodiment, the system 10 may include an additive supply unit 30, an injector unit 32, and a controller 34. The system 10 may direct the injection fluid into an umbilical 36 disposed inside or outside of the production tubular 26. The additive supply unit 30 may include multiple tanks for storing different chemicals and one or more pumps for pumping the additives. This supply of additives may be continuous or intermittent. The injector unit 32 selectively injects these additives into the production fluid. The injector unit 32 may be a pump such as a positive displacement pump, a centrifugal pump, a piston-type pump, or other suitable device for pumping fluid. The controller 34 may be configured to control the additive injection process by, in part, controlling the operation of the additive supply unit 30 and the injector unit 32. The controller 34 may control operations by utilizing programs stored in a memory 38 associated with the controller 34. The controller 34 may include a microprocessor 40 may have a

resident memory, which may include read only memories (ROM) for storing programs, tables and models, and random access memories (RAM) for storing data. The models and / or algorithms stored in the memory **38** may be dynamic models in that they are updated based on the sensor inputs. The microprocessor **40** may utilize signals from downhole sensors received via line **42** and programs stored in the memory **38**. Additionally, the controller **34** may transmit control signals to the injector unit **34** and other flow devices **44**, such as flow metering devices, via suitable lines **46**.

[00013] Referring now to **Fig. 2**, the wellbore **20** is shown as a production well using conventional completion equipment. The wellbore **20** includes multiple production zones **24A-D**, each of which that includes perforations **50** into the formation **22**. Packers **52**, which may be retrievable packers, may be used to provide zonal isolation for each of the production zones. Formation fluid **54** enters the production tubing **26** in the well **16** via perforations **50**. Each zone may include intelligent well completion equipment **60** that may be utilize to independently control flow at each of the zones **24A-D** during the life of the well. The equipment may include flow control devices **62** such as valves, chokes, seals, etc. that are configured to adjust, vary and control flow from the formation into the tubing. Additionally, the equipment **60** may be utilized to flow fluid from the tubing into the formation; e.g., to test or treat the zone.

[00014] Additionally, the well completion equipment **60** may include sensors **64** that measure parameters that may be useful in determining downhole conditions and determining the effectiveness of the additive being injected into the well. Representative sensors include, but are not limited to, a temperature sensor, a viscosity sensor, a fluid flow rate sensor, a pressure sensor, a sensor to determine chemical composition of the production fluid, a water cut sensor, an optical sensor, etc. Other illustrative sensors include sensors configured to determine a measure of

at least one of scale, asphaltenes, wax, hydrate, sulfites emulsion, foam or corrosion.

[00015] In embodiments, the well completion equipment **60** at two or more zones may include an injector nozzle **66** that receives an injection fluid from a common umbilical **36**. The umbilical **36** may be tubing, pipe, hose or other suitable device for conveying fluid. The injector nozzle **66** may be configured as generally tubular members that direct the injection fluid into an annular region **68** of the zones **24A-D** such that the injection fluid mixes with the production fluid **54** and enters the well completion equipment **60** and production tubing **26**. The injection fluid thereby treats the surfaces of the well completion equipment **60** and reduces the occurrence and / or magnitude of undesirable conditions such as scale build up, corrosion, etc. In one arrangement, the injector nozzle **66** may be positioned downhole of the perforations **50**. Additionally, one-way flow control elements **70**, e.g., check valves, may be utilized to ensure that fluid travels in only one direction.

[00016] Referring now to **Fig. 3**, in certain embodiments, the injector nozzles **66** may be configured to affect, influence or adjust one or more flow parameters for the injection fluids. Illustrative flow parameters include, but are not limited to, pressure differentials and flow rates. In some embodiments, the nozzles **66** may utilize an adjustable device that can control a magnitude, duration and / or frequency of a change to a flow parameter. For example, the nozzle **66** may include one or more elements that are responsive to a signal. The elements may throttle flow by reducing a cross-sectional flow area. Suitable signals include, but are not limited to, electrical signals, magnetic, signals and thermal signals. The elements may provide continuous or intermittent control over a flow parameter. Thus, in a sense, a flow parameter may be modulated.

[00017] In other embodiments, the nozzles **66** may utilize a fixed

configuration that has a fixed affect on a flow parameter. For example, in one arrangement, each nozzle **66** may include a uniquely or individually configured flow restriction element **72** that allows each nozzle **66** to adjust one or more flow parameters for the fluid being ejected into their respective zones. The flow restriction element **72** may be configured to vary a flow parameter or characteristic such as pressure. For ease of explanation, the flow restriction element **72** is shown as uniquely configured orifices **74A,B**. The orifices **74A,B** each have different dimensions, which generate different pressure drops across each orifice **74A,B**. The use of different pressure drops may be calibrated to ensure that each nozzle **66** dispenses a preset or pre-determined amount of injection fluid. The preset amount may be a specified amount, a minimum amount, a maximum amount or a range. The preset amount may be the same for each nozzle **66** or different for two or more nozzles. For instance, an upper zone may be separated by several hundred feet from a lower zone. Thus, the orifice for the nozzle at the upper zone may be smaller than the orifice for the nozzle at the lower zone to ensure that roughly the same amount of injection fluid is supplied into each zone. In other arrangements, the pressure drops may be calibrated to ensure that each nozzle **66** dispenses a different amount of injection fluid at each zone. It should be understood, therefore, that depending on a particular application, the flow restriction elements **72** may all have the same configuration, may include two or more elements of the same configuration, or may all have different configurations. Furthermore, the particular configuration for the nozzles may depend on the desired flow regime to be imposed on the injection fluid and / or the production flow at each zone.

[00018] It should be appreciated that orifices are only illustrative of flow restriction elements that may be utilized in connection with the present disclosure. For example, in certain embodiments, a valve having an adjustable or configurable biasing element may be utilized to selectively

restrict fluid flow. The spring force or power rating of the biasing element, which may be a spring element, may be varied to control or restrict fluid flow.

[00019] Referring now to **Figs. 4A & B**, there is shown an illustrative flow filtering device **80** that may be utilized along the umbilical **36** (**Fig. 2**) to remove particulates from the injection fluid that could otherwise clog the flow restriction elements **72** (**Fig. 3**). The filtering device **80** may be distributed along the umbilical **36**; e.g., at each production zone. In one embodiment, the filtering device includes a housing **82** in which are formed a first conduit **84** and a second conduit **86**. The conduits **84**, **86** may be configured to convey fluid flow across the housing **82** in a parallel fashion. The first conduit **84** may include a filter element **88** that is configured to remove particles larger than a specified size from the injection fluid. The filter media may include a spun filter, a woven filter, a mesh, screen, etc. The second conduit **86** may include a pressure activated occlusion member **90** that is displaced upon the application of a predetermined pressure or pressure differential. In one embodiment, the occlusion member **90** may include frangible elements **92** that connect to and hold stationary a piston-type head **94**. The piston head **94** may be configured to seal off or block flow in the second conduit **86**. During operations, injection fluid flows through along the first conduit **84** and through the filter element **88**. An exemplary flow path is shown with line **96**. The piston head **94** blocks flow across the second conduit **86**. Referring now to **Fig. 4B**, particles or debris removed by the filtering element **88** may accumulate to a point where flow across the filtering element **88** is substantially reduced. This reduced flow may increase the upstream pressure in the conduits **84** and **86**. Once the pressure reaches a predetermined level, the frangible elements **92** break and release the piston head **94**. The piston head **94** translates or slides along the conduit **86** and seats within a cavity **96** in a manner that the conduit **86** is not occluded or otherwise blocked. A passage **97** may be

used to evacuate or drain the cavity **96** as the piston head **94** enters the cavity **96**. Thus, the injection fluid bypasses the filter element **88** by flowing through the second conduit **86**. It should be appreciated when several flow filtering devices **80** are serially aligned along the umbilical, each may be successively bypassed. An exemplary bypass flow path is shown with line **98**.

[00020] It should be appreciated that the filtering device may be susceptible to numerous variations and modifications. For example, the filtering device **80** may connect to the umbilical **36** via suitable connections. To enable the testing of pressure in the filtering device **80** and / or the testing of pressure in the umbilical **36** above and / or below the device **80**, pressure testable connections may be provided at or near the connections between the filtering device **80** and the umbilical **36**. Additionally, in certain embodiments, a filtering device **80** may be configured such that a single supply line is split into two or more downstream exit lines. The exit lines may feed nozzles downhole or may connect to an outlet having a valve, a back check device or other such device. Additionally, the filtering device **80** may incorporate a back check to ensure fluid flows in a desired direction; i.e., prevent back or reverse flow. In certain variants, a filtering device may use two or more filter elements **94**. The filter elements **94** may be arranged in a serial or parallel fashion. In an illustrative serial arrangement, several filter elements are configured to have successively smaller filtering passages. Thus, for instance, a filter element closest to an inlet may have openings that block the passage of particles larger than a predetermined size. Each successive filter element may have smaller openings to trap successively smaller particles. Such an arrangement may be used to delay the pressure build-up that activates the pressure activated occlusion member **90**.

[00021] Referring now to **Figs. 1-4**, the system **10** may be operated in

a number of modes. In embodiments, the controller **34** may control the operation of the injector unit **32** by utilizing programs or algorithms stored in a memory **38** associated with the controller **34**. The microprocessor **40** utilizes signals from the sensors **64** to determine the appropriate amount of additive(s) to be dispensed into the wellbore. For example, the controller **34** may be programmed to alter the pump speed, pump stroke or air supply to deliver the desired amount of the injection fluid. The pump speed or stroke, as the case may be, is increased if the measured amount of the additive injected is less than the desired amount and decreased if the injected amount is greater than the desired amount. Exemplar modes, which may be utilized concurrently, are discussed below.

[00022] In one mode of operation, the controller **34** may receive signals from one or more pressure sensors **64** that are distributed along the umbilical **36**. The pressures sensors **64** may provide a measurement of the pressure drop at each nozzle **66** and also at a location upstream of all the nozzles **66**. Thus, the controller **34** may utilize algorithms to determine the flow rate of the injection fluid at each nozzle. Based on this determination, if needed, the processor **34** may revise the concentration of additives, vary the mixture of additives, vary the flow rates of the injection fluid, or take some other corrective action.

[00023] In another mode of operation, the controller **34** may receives signals from one or more sensors **64** indicative of a parameter of interest which may relate to a characteristic of the produced fluid. The parameters of interest may relate, for example, to environmental conditions or the health of equipment. Representative parameters include but are not limited to temperature, pressure, flow rate, a measure of one or more of hydrate, asphaltene, corrosion, chemical composition, wax or emulsion, amount of water, and viscosity. Based on the data provided by the sensors, the controller **34** may determine the appropriate amount of one or more

additives needed to maintain a desired or pre-determined flow rate or other desired condition.

[00024] Thus, it should be appreciated that what has been described includes, in part, a system that may periodically monitor the actual amounts of one or more additives being dispensed, determine the effectiveness of the dispensed additives, at least with respect to maintaining certain parameters of interest within their respective predetermined ranges, determine the health of the downhole equipment, such as the flow rates and corrosion, determine the amounts of the additives that would improve the effectiveness of the system, and then initiate one or more actions that cause the system to dispense additives according to newly computed amounts. In embodiments, the system may automatically take a broad range of actions to assure proper flow of hydrocarbons through production tubing, completion equipment, and / or surface pipelines to minimize the formation of scales, hydrates, asphaltenes, etc. Also, in embodiments, the system may be closed loop in nature and respond to the in-situ measurements of the characteristics of the treated fluid and the equipment in the fluid flow path.

[00025] It should be appreciated that what has been described also includes, in part, a system that may include an umbilical to convey the injection fluid in a well; a plurality of nozzles that receive the injection fluid from the umbilical; and a flow control element associated with each nozzle. Each flow control element may control a flow of the injection fluid through the associated nozzle. In arrangements, each flow control element may restrict a flow of the injection fluid through the associated nozzle to cause each nozzle to eject a preset amount of injection fluid. In some configurations, each nozzle may eject substantially the same amount of injection fluid. In embodiments, the flow control elements may include an orifice. Also, in arrangements, at least two flow control elements may have

different sized orifices. In certain configurations, the system may further include a plurality of pressure sensors disposed along the umbilical; an injector unit configured to dispense fluid into the umbilical; and a controller operatively coupled to the injector unit, the controller being configured to operate the injector in response to measurements from the pressure sensors. Additionally, at least one filter may be positioned in the umbilical. In such arrangements, the filter(s) may be positioned in the first conduit and an occlusion member that restricts flow in a second conduit. The occlusion member permits flow in the second conduit, which is parallel to the first conduit, after a predetermined pressure differential exists in the second conduit.

[00026] It should be appreciated that what has been described further includes, in part, a method that may include conveying the injection fluid into the well using an umbilical; ejecting the injection fluid into the well using a plurality of nozzles; and controlling the flow of the injection fluid through each nozzle using a flow control element associated with each nozzle. The method may further include restricting a flow at each nozzle to cause each nozzle to eject a preset amount of injection fluid. The method may also include ejecting substantially the same amount of injection fluid from each nozzle. The flow control elements may include an orifice. Also, at least two flow control elements may have different sized orifices. In applications, the method may also include disposing a plurality of pressure sensors along the umbilical; dispensing the injection fluid into the umbilical using an injector unit; and controlling the injector unit using a controller configured to operate the injector in response to measurements from the pressure sensors. In arrangements, the method may include filtering the injection fluid in the umbilical. In certain arrangements, the method may also include forming a first and second conduit along the conduit, wherein the injection fluid is filtered in the first conduit; restricting flow in the second conduit using an occlusion member; and displacing the occlusion member

to increase flow in the second conduit after a predetermined pressure differential exists in the second conduit.

[00027] While the foregoing disclosure is directed to the one mode embodiments of the disclosure, various modifications will be apparent to those skilled in the art. It is intended that all variations within the scope of the appended claims be embraced by the foregoing disclosure.

THE CLAIMS

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A system for injecting an injection fluid in a well, comprising:
an umbilical disposed in the well, the umbilical being configured to convey the injection fluid;
a plurality of nozzles configured to receive the injection fluid from the umbilical; and
a flow control element associated with each nozzle, each flow control element being configured to control a flow of the injection fluid through the associated nozzle.
2. The system of claim 1, wherein each flow control element is configured to restrict a flow of the injection fluid through the associated nozzle; wherein each flow restriction is selected to cause each nozzle to eject a present amount of injection fluid.
3. The system of claim 2, wherein each nozzle ejects substantially the same amount of injection fluid.
4. The system of claim 2, wherein the flow control element includes an orifice.
5. The system of claim 3, wherein at least two flow control elements have different sized orifices.
6. The system of claim 1, further comprising:
a plurality of pressure sensors disposed along the umbilical;
an injector unit configured to dispense fluid into the umbilical; and

a controller operatively coupled to the injector unit, the controller being configured to operate the injector in response to measurements from the pressure sensors.

7. The system of claim 1, further comprising:
at least one filter positioned in the umbilical.
8. The system of claim 7, further comprising:
a first and second conduit formed along the conduit, wherein the at least one filter is positioned in the first conduit; and
an occlusion member configured to restrict flow along the second conduit, the occlusion member being further configured to permit flow in the second conduit after a predetermined pressure differential exists in the second conduit.
9. A method for injecting an injection fluid in a well, comprising:
conveying the injection fluid into the well using an umbilical;
ejecting the injection fluid into the well using a plurality of nozzles; and
controlling the flow of the injection fluid through each nozzle using a flow control element associated with each nozzle.
10. The method of claim 9, further comprising restricting a flow at each nozzle using the associated flow control element; wherein the restrictions of flow cause each nozzle to eject a present amount of injection fluid.
11. The method of claim 10, further comprising ejecting substantially the same amount of injection fluid from each nozzle.
12. The method of claim 10, wherein the flow control element includes an orifice.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein at least two flow control elements have different sized orifices.
14. The method of claim 9, further comprising:
disposing a plurality of pressure sensors along the umbilical;
dispensing the injection fluid into the umbilical using an injector unit;
and
controlling the injector unit using a controller configured to operate the injector in response to measurements from the pressure sensors.
15. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
filtering the injection fluid in the umbilical.
16. The method of claim 15, further comprising:
forming a first and second conduit along the conduit, wherein the injection fluid is filtered in the first conduit;
restricting flow in the second conduit using an occlusion member;
displacing the occlusion member to increase flow in the second conduit after a predetermined pressure differential exists in the second conduit.

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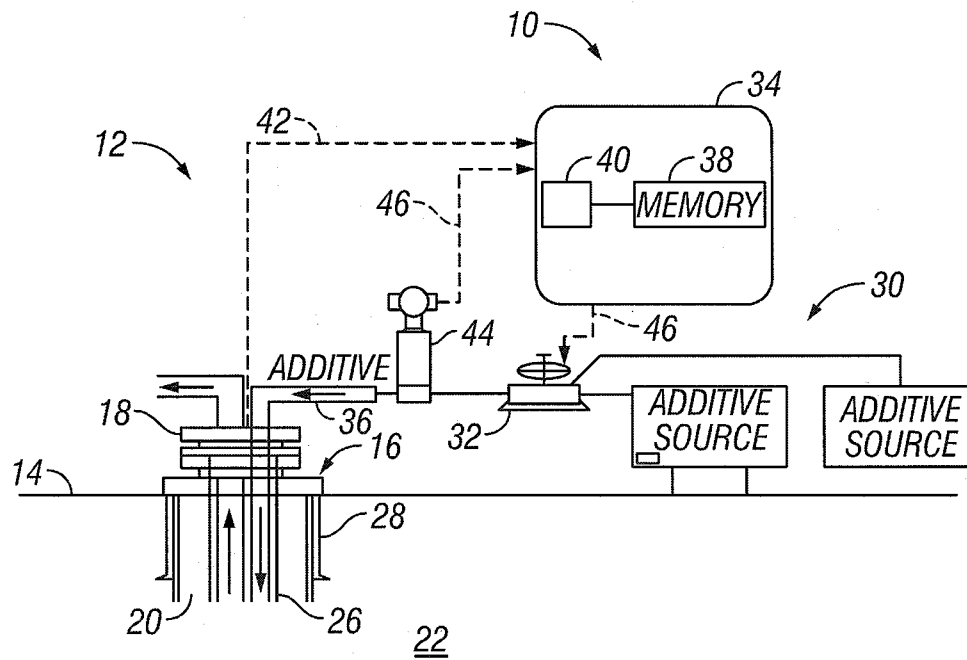


FIG. 1

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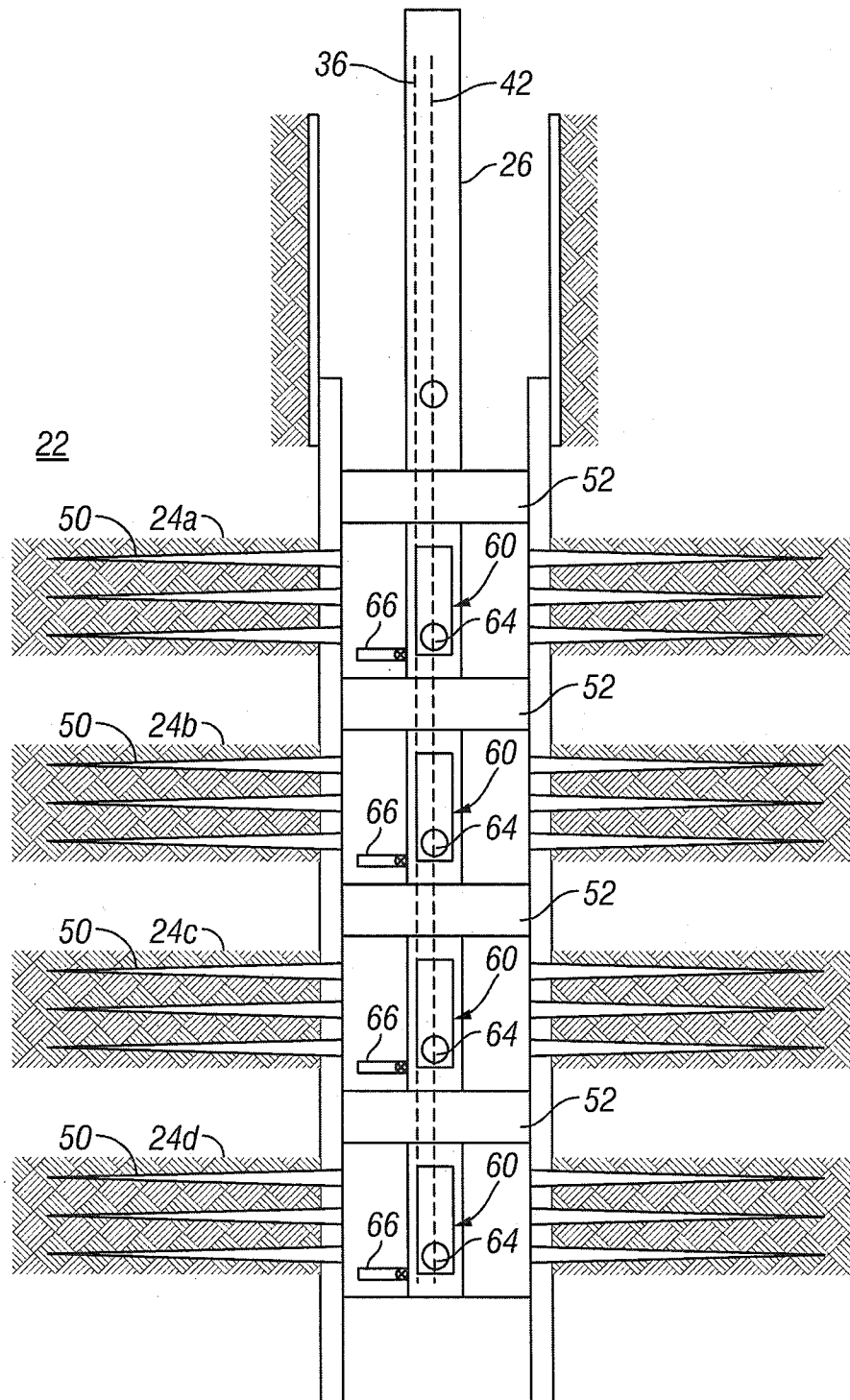


FIG. 2

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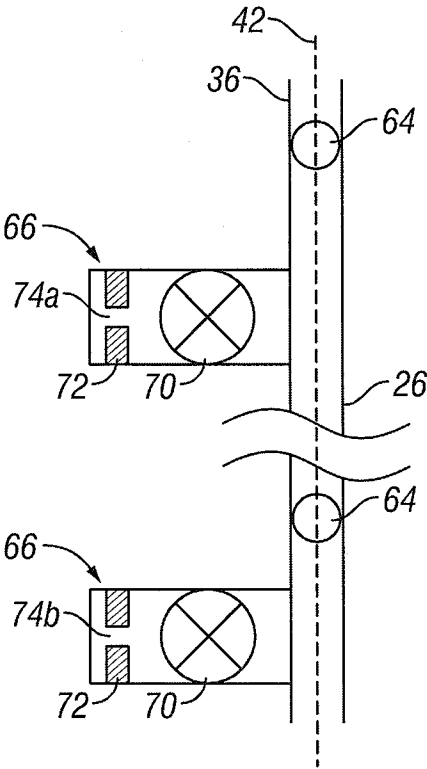


FIG. 3

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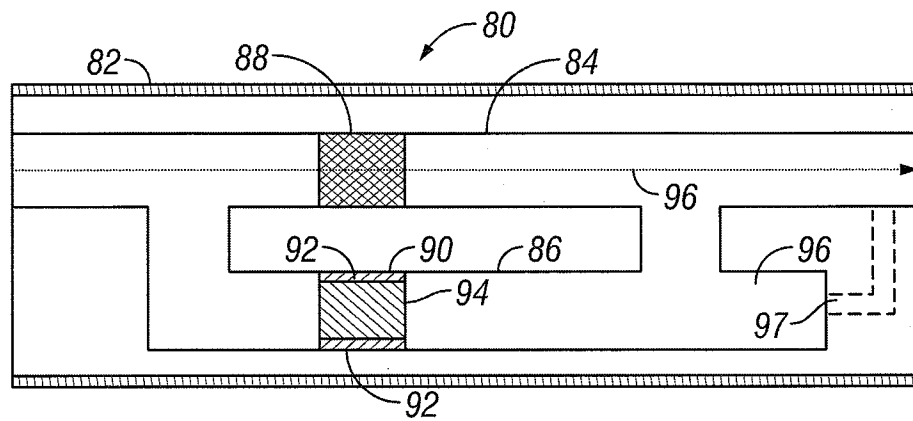


FIG. 4A

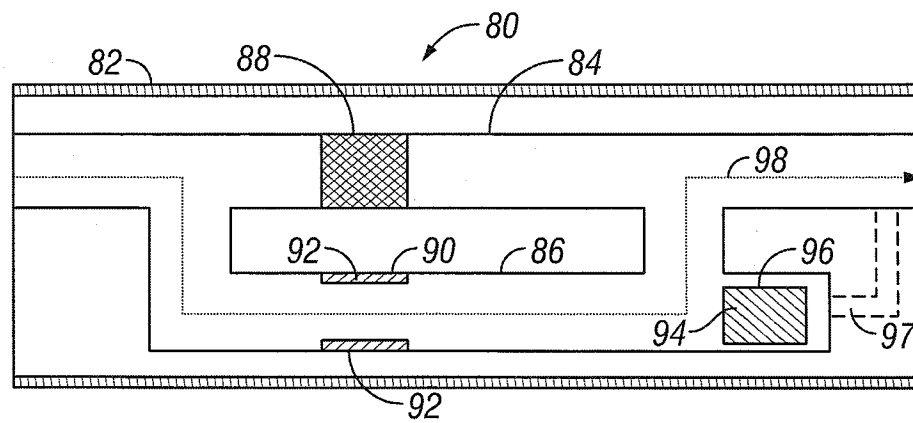


FIG. 4B