vidently some subscribers to loaddata.com are under the impression that we have a ballistics lab with pressure barrels for every cartridge imaginable, hundreds of powders and thousands of bullets, so are able to whip up any sort of obscure data in a day or two. I wish it were so. That would be a pretty awesome toy. Unfortunately, nobody this side of Bill Gates can afford such a setup, and even Bill would up the subscription price a little.

Instead, what we offer is as complete a listing of published loading data as possible. Some of it comes from Handloader magazine, but the rest comes from any reliable source possible, which mostly means data worked up by powder and bullet people. In order to duplicate this amount of data, you'd have to spend hundreds of dollars on manuals – and then purchase the updated versions every few years.

Unfortunately, even this massive amount of loading data (now approaching 100,000 loads) has its limits. For instance, you will not find any data for the .300 W ighted Pegasus Improved, or any other wildcat so obscure that nobody with a pressure lab has worked up any loads.

You will also not find data for more recent powders in some older cartridges. As an example, a subscriber e-mailed in the other day, saying that we needed to update our data for the .219 Zipper, especially with Hodgdon's Varget powder. Well, this just ain't going to happen until Hodgdon's lab decides to buy a pressure barrel (about $800) and work up some Varget loads for a cartridge that isn't even loaded by any ammunition manufacturer anymore. Or some staff writer at Handloader gets a wild hair to write up the .219 Zipper, because 173 people still handload for it in the continental United States.

In other words, it ain't going to happen. We're pretty much stuck with .219 Zipper data from a few decades ago.

Similarly, you won't find data for some suitable powders in the .264 Winchester Magnum. This is because the .264 is hard on barrels, and the bullet and powder companies aren't spending $800 on new .264 barrels when the phone's ringing off the hook for data on the latest short-fat-beltless magnum.

Now, I did write a piece on handloading the .264 for Handloader a couple of years ago, trying four of the newer powders. But data will always be limited, because for every .264 reloader there are 10,000 .300 Winchester Magnum reloaders. Handloading data, like most commodities, responds to the laws of supply and demand.

However, if you have a handloading problem that can't be solved by the listed loads, we will try to help. The tougher questions get forwarded to me, and I do what I can, in part thanks to a library that has a few really obscure sources of handloading data. I also have a lot of experience with various powders and cartridges, and often can suggest a few starting loads if you can supply the case dimensions of the round you're working with.

For instance, I suggested the .219 Zipper owner could safely use data for either Hodgdon or IMR 4895 with some newer powders, such as Ramshot TAC and Hodgdon Varget. TAC's burning rate is very similar to IMR-4895, but TAC is less temperature-sensitive and a little cleaner burning. Varget is a little slower, so using IMR-4895 data is safe.

Sometimes, however, even I am stumped, usually because the cartridge in question is so obscure that there's no starting point to even guess at safe loads. We are also not the repository for data for every obsolete powder in the universe, so can't help you with the 10 pounds of Moon Zoom 1912 you bought at a garage sale. But about 95 percent of the time I can at least come up with some suggestions as to where to start. Along with almost 100,000 loads, that's what loaddata.com can do for you.