

LESOTHO METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES (LEKALA LA TSA BOLEPI)



Ten-Day Agrometeorological Bulletin

1st -10th April 2006



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*...dedicated to the agricultural community
... aimed at harmonizing agricultural activities with weather and climate*

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Highlights

- ❑ Below normal rainfall received.
- ❑ Light thundershowers occurred.
- ❑ Below to above normal cumulative rains received.
- ❑ Decrease in vegetation cover.
- ❑ Temperatures expected to decrease.

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WEATHER SUMMARY

The previous dekad was generally dominated by a shallow trough which was situated over the central interior. However rainfall was very little due to lack of moisture over the region. Light thundershowers only occurred on the 3rd, 7th and 9th at Qacha’s Nek, Semonkong and Oxbow respectively. Rainfall situation improved on the last dekad. This was caused by the deepening of the trough..

RAINFALL SITUATION

Even though the wet conditions persisted over the country in the first three months of this year 2006, the decrease in rainfall is witnessed during this dekad (see table 1). Below normal rainfall was registered in all parts of the country and other received no rainfall at all. Highest dekadal rainfall of 13.5mm was registered at Quthing and the nil rainfall was registered at Mafeteng and Phuthiatsana.

Cumulative percentage rainfall departure from Normal

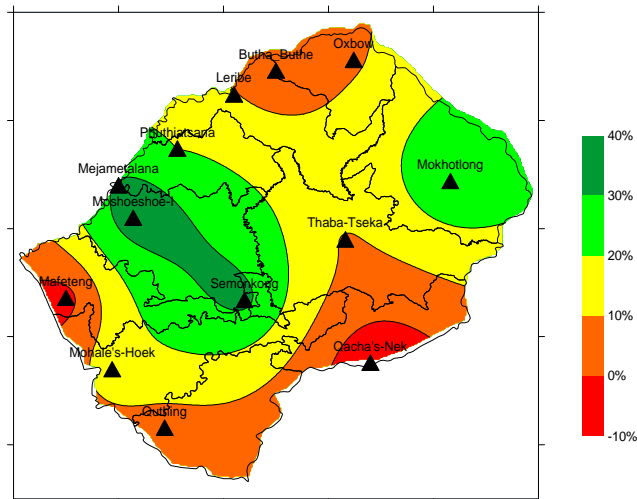


Fig.1: Cumulative rainfall departure from normal since 1st Sept to 10th April 2006.

Cumulative rainfall received since September 2005 to first dekad of April 2006 is slightly below normal to above normal throughout the country. Mafeteng and Qacha’s Nek are the only stations with cumulative rainfall deficits of -4% and -9% respectively. Generally cumulative ranges between 16% and 36%. This indicates that

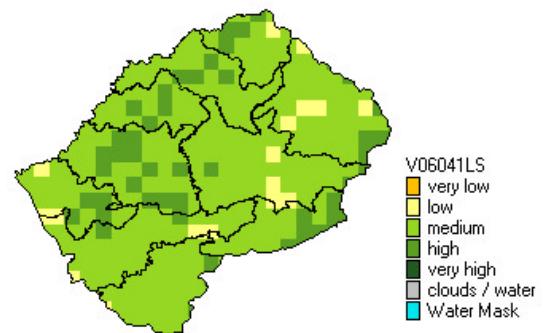
there is sufficient moisture in the soil, hence Winter production may be high.

TEMPERATURE

Qacha’s Nek and Mafeteng are the only stations which registered temperatures slightly below average with negative deviations of -1.2 and -0.9 respectively. The rest of the country temperatures above normal. However, temperatures have generally started decreasing , as the season progresses into Winter season and some stations registered below 0^oC. This in turn depresses performance rate of the crops. Highest temperature of 26.8^oC was registered at Phuthiatsana on the 2nd, while the lowest temperature of -1.2^oC was recorded at Semonkong on the 9th.

VEGETATION

Figure 2



The degree of greenness is dominated by medium to high greenness with some small patches of low at scattered in the highlands some parts of the lowlands. The degree of greenness has degraded when the above map is compared with the maps of previous dekads. This may imply that summer wheat has reached maturity and is at harvesting stage. At some places especially in the highlands maize and sorghum have been damaged by frost. Otherwise the crops (maize and sorghum) are at ripening stage.

CROP STAGE AND CONDITION

Flowering, grain-filling and ripening stages are currently taking place within maize and sorghum. This indicates that some crops are still young and they are at the risk of being caught by early frost before reaching their full maturity, especially in the highlands where frost damages crops very early. Nevertheless, some other crops at their maturity stage, especially beans. Due to heavy rains received over the last two months, some crops were waterlogged, as a result they are now turned yellowish because of too much moisture in the soil. The pastures have improved a lot as a result, livestock is expected to improve too.

DEKADAL OUTLOOK

11th – 20th April 2006

The shallow trough is still anticipated to oscillate over the sub-region. As a result, light to moderate rains and thundershowers can be expected during this forecast period. Temperatures are expected to begin decreasing, however frost patches are anticipated to occur the next dekad, especially in the highlands.

Seasonal Outlook April - June 2006

Rainfall situation is still anticipated to be near average (normal) for the period April – June 2006. Temperature will be slightly above average nevertheless there will be those occasional days when temperatures will drop significantly. This will be due to passage of cold fronts over the region.

Table 1

Summaries		Rainfall and Temperature						Temperature (°C)				
STATION	ALT.	Rainfall (mm)			Total From Sept05 to 1st Dek April 2006			1 - 10 April 2006				
		Actual	Normal	Rain Days	Actual	Normal	%Dept. from Normal	Minimum	Maximum	Dekadal	Dekadal	
NAME	(M)	R/Fall	R/Fall	Days	Actual	Normal	Normal	Lowest(Day)	Highest (Day)	Mean	Normal	Deviation
Butha-Buthe	1770	6.3	28.8	2	774.1	741.5	4	2.5(5)	25.5(2)	16.1	15.8	0.3
Leribe	1740	2.6	26.1	1	759.0	641.4	18	7.8(7)	25.7(2)	16.6	16	0.6
Mafeteng	1610	0.0	25.7	0	564.0	588.1	-4	5.2(9)	25.2(2)	15.7	16.6	-0.9
Maseru Airport	1530	0.5	23.7	1	776.2	591.6	31	8.4(9)	26.5(2)	17.7	16.9	0.8
Mohale's hoek	1600	16.5	24.7	2	703.7	606.3	16		26.2(2)		16.6	
Mokhotlong	2200	3.3	15.6	1	704.1	546.7	29	4.3(9)	23.5(3)	14.6	13.3	1.3
Moshoeshoe I	1628	2.8	16.2	1	885.6	651.6	36	7.7(9)	25.3(2)	16.9	16.9	0.0
Ox-Bow	2600	13.2	34.7	2	1116.7	1028.1	9	0(7)	18.6(2)	9.6	8.6	1.0
Phuthiatsana	1750	0.0	28.5	0	788.4	657.6	20	8.4(9)	26.8(2)	17.7	16.9	0.8
Qacha's Nek	1970	11.4	19.8	4	634.2	694.1	-9	6.6(9)	25(6)	16.1	17.3	-1.2
Quthing	1740	13.5	27.6	1	706.6	673.5	5	8(9)	25.5(2)	17.7	16.2	1.5
Semonkong	2458	0.2	20.5	1	738.9	557.5	33	-1.2(9)	21(6)	11.7	11.6	0.1
ThabaTseka	2160	0.1	14.5	1	600.1	549.9	9	4(9)	22.9(3)	14.1	13.3	0.8

Fig.3

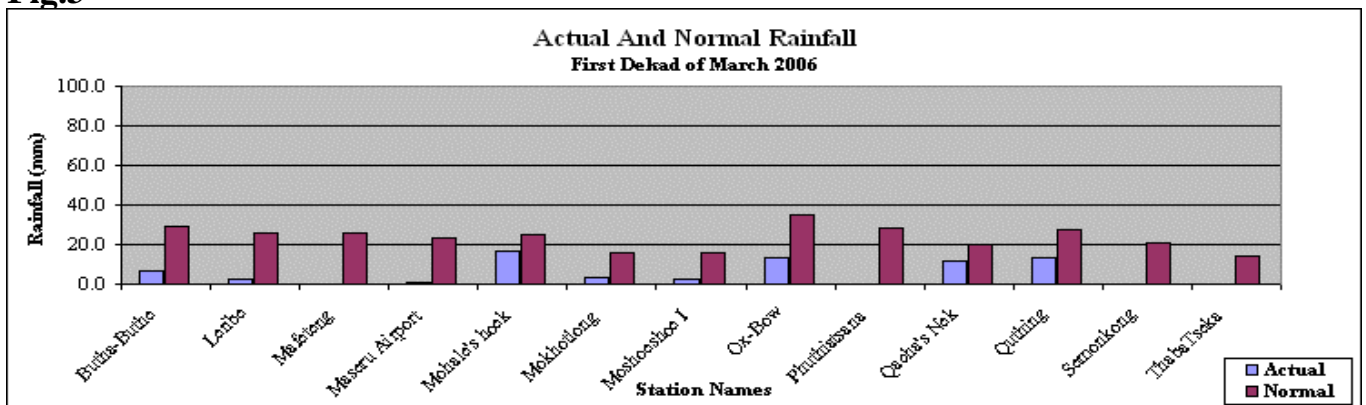
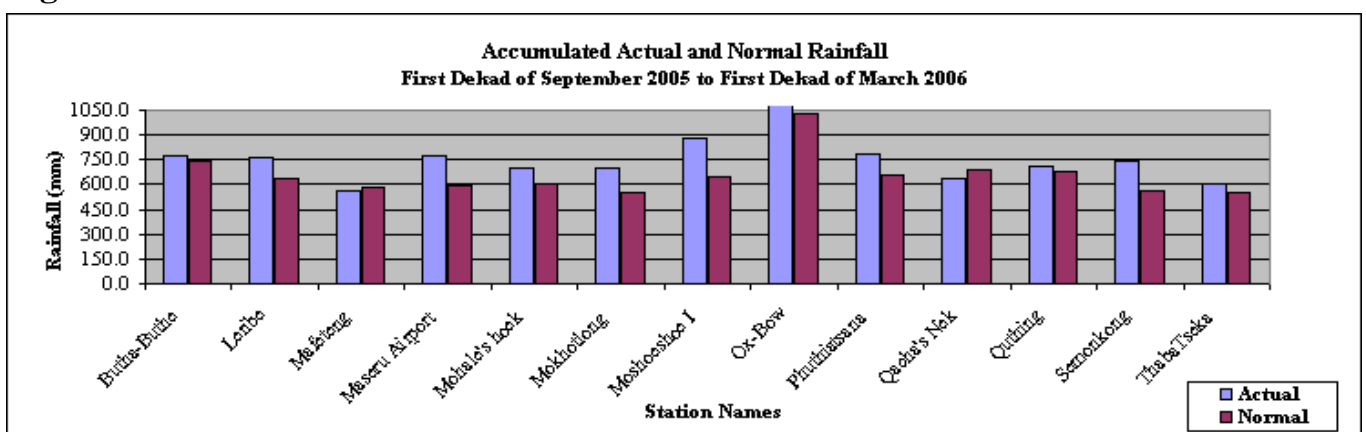


Fig.4



Glossary

Dekad : Ten day period

Normal: Average figure over a specific time period.

% Rainfall Departure from Normal: $(\text{Actual Rainfall} - \text{Normal Rainfall}) / \text{Normal Rainfall} \times 100$

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And it is

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Comments and Contributions would be highly appreciated.