

LESOTHO METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES (LEKALA LA TSA BOLEPI)



Ten-Day Agrometeorological Bulletin

21st – 31st March 2004



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

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Highlights

- ❑ Good rains generally received.
- ❑ Normal cumulative rainfall reached at most reporting stations.
- ❑ Late planted crops likely to be affected by frost.
- ❑ Wet conditions expected.

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WEATHER SUMMARY
21st – 31st March 2004

The central interior has been under the influence of a surface trough during the last dekad of March. The Indian Ocean high pressure ridge was also dominant over the northeastern parts of the sub-region. This resulted in isolated thundershowers during that period. However, on the 30th, the surface trough deepened and was also supported in the upper levels by the upper air trough and as a result, widespread thundershowers with hailstorms occurred. Temperatures were generally mild to warm.

RAINFALL SITUATION
21st – 31st March 2004

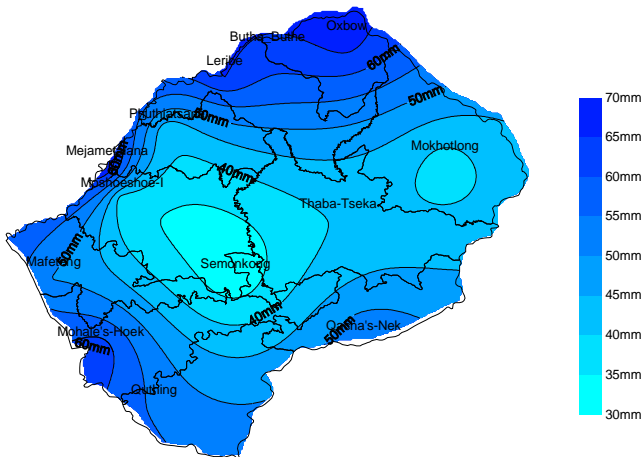


Fig.1: Actual rainfall distribution for the 3rd dekad of March 2004

Good rains were generally received throughout the country. However, the central to northeastern regions received the least rainfall that ranged from 30mm to 45mm. Otherwise the remainder of the country received substantial rainfall ranging from 49.8mm to 73.6mm (see table 1 and fig.1).

Cumulative Rainfall from 1st Sept 03 to 31st March. 04

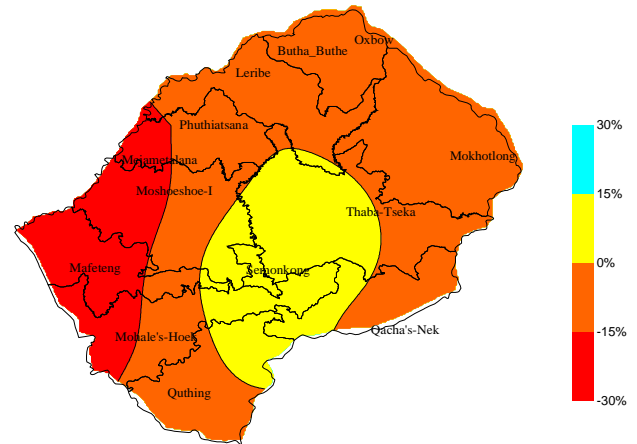


Fig.2: Cumulative rainfall departure from normal since 1stSept 03 to 31st March 2004

Most reporting stations have now reached normal cumulative rainfall since 1st Sept 03 to 31st March 04 (see table 1 and fig.3). Only a few reporting stations have registered below normal cumulative rainfall. The percentage departure from normal still depicts a generally improved rainfall situation although the south western remains the least improved as it has experienced little rainfall (see fig.2). However, a generally improved soil moisture accumulation is evident to support winter cropping.

TEMPERATURE
21st – 31st March 2004

Slightly above normal temperatures were registered countrywide (see table 1- under temperatures). Nevertheless, low temperatures were still registered which have the tendency to suppress crop performance and therefore delay crop maturity.

CROP STAGE AND CONDITION
21st – 31st March 2004

Due to substantial rains received during the dekad in review, there has been an improvement in crop condition as the crop water requirement was met. Crops (maize, sorghum) performance in some

places is relatively satisfactory. Nevertheless, late planted crops in general are likely to be affected by frost before maturing as some of them are still at early grain filling stage. However, Crop stage varies from grain forming to wax maturity with poor to good conditions.

Summer wheat is at wax maturity to full maturity with poor to good condition.

DEKADAL OUTLOOK**1st – 10th April 2004**

The first half of the dekad is expected to be dominated by a surface trough and frontal systems, while the last half is anticipated to be under the influence of the Indian Ocean high pressure system. As a result, wet conditions are expected especially during the first half. Temperatures will be generally mild during the day and cool at night.

Table 1

		Rainfall and Temperature Summaries										
		Rainfall (mm)					TEMPERATURE (°C)					
		21 - 31 March			Sept 03 to 3rd Dek Mar 04							
STATION	ALT.	Actual	Normal	Rain	(Cumulative Act.& Nor. r/f)	Cum.%Dept.	Minimum	Maximum	Dekadal	Dekadal	Deviation	
NAME	(M)	R/Fall	R/Fall	Days			Actual	Normal	Lowest(Day)	Highest (Day)		Mean
Butha-Buthe	1770	62.1	33.0	4	631.6	640.2	-1	8.5(27)	26.5(27)	17.5	16.4	1.1
Leribe	1740	65.1	21.9	4	555.2	553.6	0	-	26.5(21)	17.8	16.5	1.3
Mafeteng	1610	49.8	30.5	7	389.6	539.0	-28	6.5(25)	25.0(27,29)	17.2	16.3	0.9
Maseru Airport	1530	73.6	31.2	5	427.8	544.3	-21	7.5(25)	26.4(27)	18.2	17.0	1.2
Mohale's hoek	1600	62.9	31.9	7	450.6	585.8	-23	7.0(25)	26.8(22)	17.8	17.2	0.6
Mokhotlong	2200	37.6	21.2	5	469.4	509.0	-8	5.5(25)	24.2(28)	15.2	13.4	1.8
Ox-Bow	2600	67.3	48.6	7	843.4	967.4	-13	1.2(27)	18.2(28)	11.2	9.0	2.2
Phuthiatsana	1750	41.4	29.7	6	512.7	601.0	-15	8.9(25)	25.2(27)	17.6	16.6	1.0
Qacha's Nek	1970	55.3	31.7	6	632.2	654.6	-3	7.6(25)	24.6(28)	16.3	15.5	0.8
Quthing	1740	54.0	32.0	7	529.5	566.2	-6	7.6(25)	25.5(27)	17.4	16.2	1.2
Semonkong	2458	31.4	29.5	5	592.7	533.0	11	3.6(26,28)	21.5(27)	13.2	12.4	0.8
Moshoeshoe I	1628	37.4	34.7	5	438.5	596.1	-26	8.5(25)	25.4(27)	17.7	N/A	N/A
Thaba-Tseka	2160	40.3	20.5	5	511.3	489.8	4	6.0(25)	22.4(28)	14.6	13.6	1

Fig.2

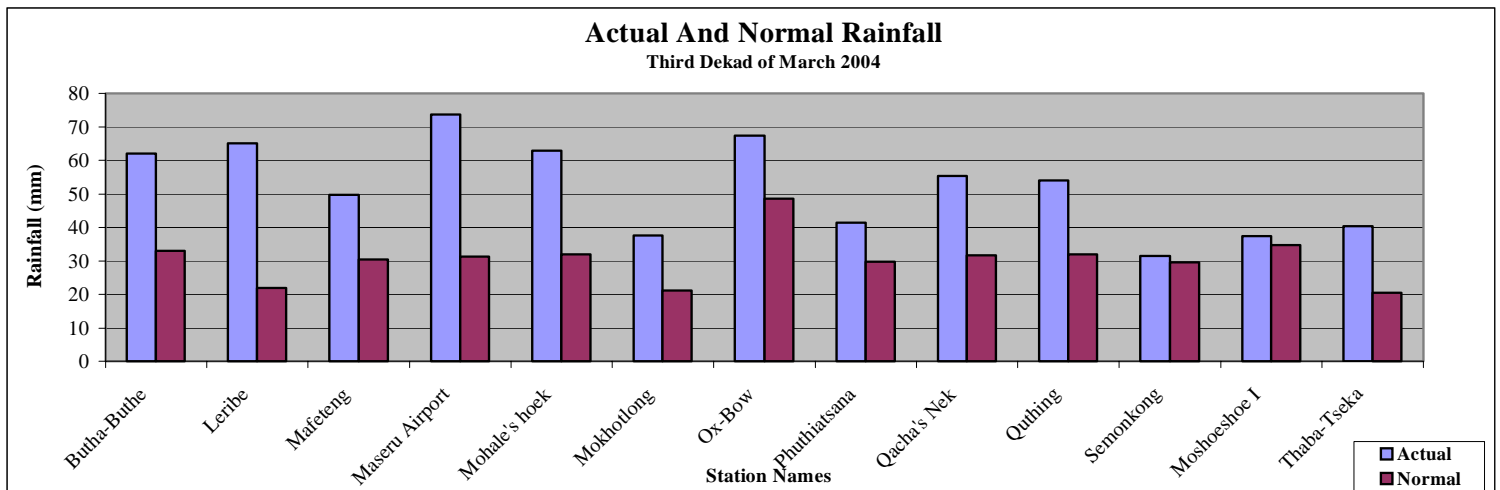
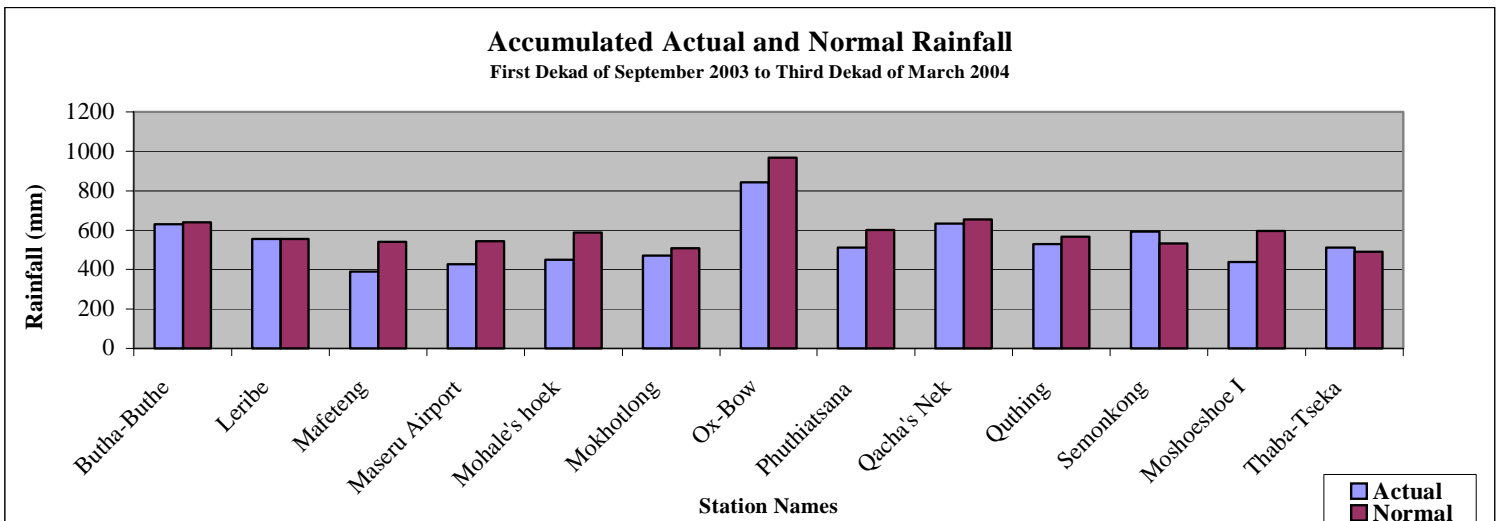


Fig.3



Glossary

Dekad : Ten day period

Normal: Average figure over a specific time period.

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

Cum. Stands for cumulative.

Act. & Nor. R/f stands for Actual and Normal Rainfall

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And it is

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Comments and Contributions would be highly appreciated.