

LESOTHO METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES (LEKALA LA TSA BOLEPI)



Ten-Day Agrometeorological Bulletin

21st –31st March 2006



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

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Highlights

- ❑ Slightly below normal to above normal rainfall received.
- ❑ Isolated to scattered rains occurred.
- ❑ Relatively good cumulative rains received.
- ❑ Temperatures expected to remain warm.

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WEATHER SUMMARY

Temperatures generally remained warm during the day, but cool at night. Although day temperatures were generally warm during this period, they were cool in the first few days. The rainfall situation in most places was just below normal, except for a few places that have daketal rainfall above normal. These include Mohale’s Hoek which has improved by more than 100% from normal (see fig. 2 below).

RAINFALL SITUATION

Wet conditions persisted over the country in the first two months into the third month of this year 2006. Slightly below normal to above normal dekadal rainfall distribution shows that, the current dekad received good rainfall throughout the country. Mohale’s Hoek, Oxbow and Quthing are the only stations which registered high rainfall amounts of 77.0mm, 59.9mm and 44.6mm respectively (see table 1 and fig.3). The amount of rainfall received is enough to promote crop development towards ripening.

Cumulative percentage rainfall departure from Normal

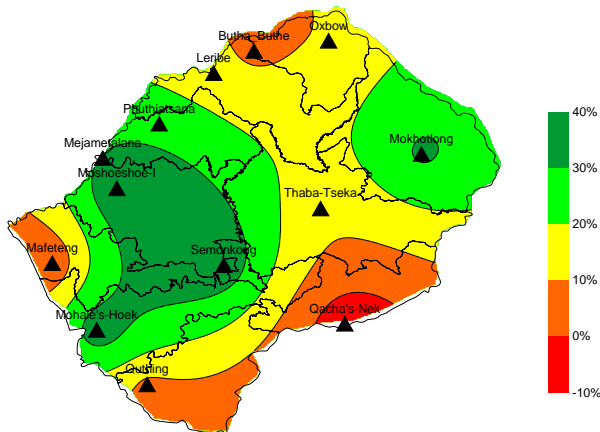


Fig.1: Cumulative rainfall departure from normal since 1st Sept to 31st March 2006.

Relatively good actual cummulative rainfall was registered during this dekad. The percentage of normal rainfall map above depicts that the country received normal to above normal

rainfall, except Qacha’s Nek which had deficit cummulative rainfall of 8%. These widespread substantial amounts of rain received over the whole country ranged from 7% to 39% above normal rainfall.

TEMPERATURE

The whole country attained negative temperature deviations that were attributed to drop in day temperatures that occurred during this dekad. This in turn depresses performance rate of the crops. Highest temperature of 25.0⁰C was registered at Maseru Airport on the 21st, while the lowest temperature of -0.2⁰C was recorded at Oxbow on the 30th.

CROP STAGE AND CONDITION

Grain-filling to ripenig is taking place especailly within maize and this shows crops are still young, they may be at the risk of being caught by frost before maturing. However, there are crops that are at full maturity. Due to heavy rains received over the last two months (January and February) and improved agricultural scenario; harvesting is expected to be good as compared to last year at the same time. However, at some places around Mphaki in Quthing crops were permanantly damaged by frost before reaching maturity.

DEKADAL OUTLOOK

1st – 10th April 2006

The forecast period is expected to receive some rains and temperatures will slightly drop.

Seasonal Outlook April - June 2006

Rainfall situation is still expected to be near average for the period (April – June 2006). Temperatures will be slightly above average however, there will be occasional days, which will be very cold due to passage of cold fronts over the region.

Table 1

Rainfall and Temperature												
Summaries												
		Rainfall (mm)						Temperature (°C)				
		21 - 31 Mar 2006			Total From Sept05 to 3rd Dek Mar 06			21 - 31 Mar 2006				
STATION	ALT.	Actual	Normal	Rain			%Dept. from	Minimum	Maximum	Dekadal	Dekadal	
NAME	(M)	R/Fall	R/Fall	Days	Actual	Normal	Normal	Lowest(Day)	Highest (Day)	Mean	Normal	Deviation
Butha-Buthe	1770	32.4	42.7	3	767.8	712.7	8	8.0 (28)	22.8 (22)	16.3	16.8	-0.5
Leribe	1740	15.2	33.7	2		615.3		7.7 (26)	23.6 (26)	16.1	17.2	-1.1
Mafeteng	1610	27.3	31.7	3	564.0	562.4	0	6.2 (28)	22.0(21,22,23,26)	15.0	16.6	-1.6
Maseru Airport	1530	29.4	36.7	3	775.7	567.9	37	4.3 (25)	25.0 (21)	16.4	18.0	-1.6
Mohale's hoek	1600	77.0	29.6	5	687.2	581.6	18	7.8 (29)	23.2 (24)	16.5	17.2	-0.7
Mokhotlong	2200	29.3	22.4	7	700.8	531.1	32	5.0 (30)	21.7 (23)	13.4	14.6	-1.2
Moshoeshoe I	1628	29.8	39.7	5	882.8	635.4	39	8.0 (30)	23.2 (22)	15.7	17.6	-1.9
Ox-Bow	2600	59.9	51.2	7	1103.5	993.4	11	-0.2 (30)	21.2 (31)	9.2	9.6	-0.4
Phuthiatsana	1750	18.8	32.6	2	788.4	629.1	25	7.5 (29)	24.8 (26)	16.8	17.8	-1.0
Qacha's Nek	1970	13.1	30.5	5	622.8	674.3	-8	4.9 (28)	22.3 (26)	13.5	15.6	-2.1
Quthing	1740	44.6	34.6	4	693.1	645.9	7	8.6 (28)	25.0 (24)	16.1	17.3	-1.2
Semonkong	2458	34.8	31.1	5	738.7	537.0	38	1.8 (26)	18.7 (23)	10.7	12.6	-1.9
ThabaTseka	2160	25.3	19.1	5	600.0	535.4	12	4.6 (28)	19.9 (23)	12.3	14.3	-2.0

Fig.2

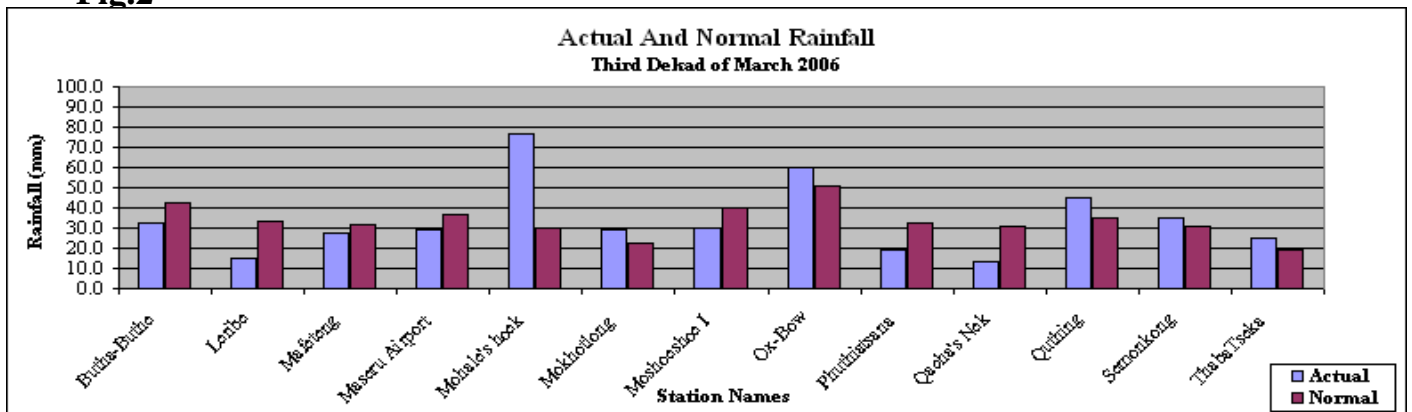
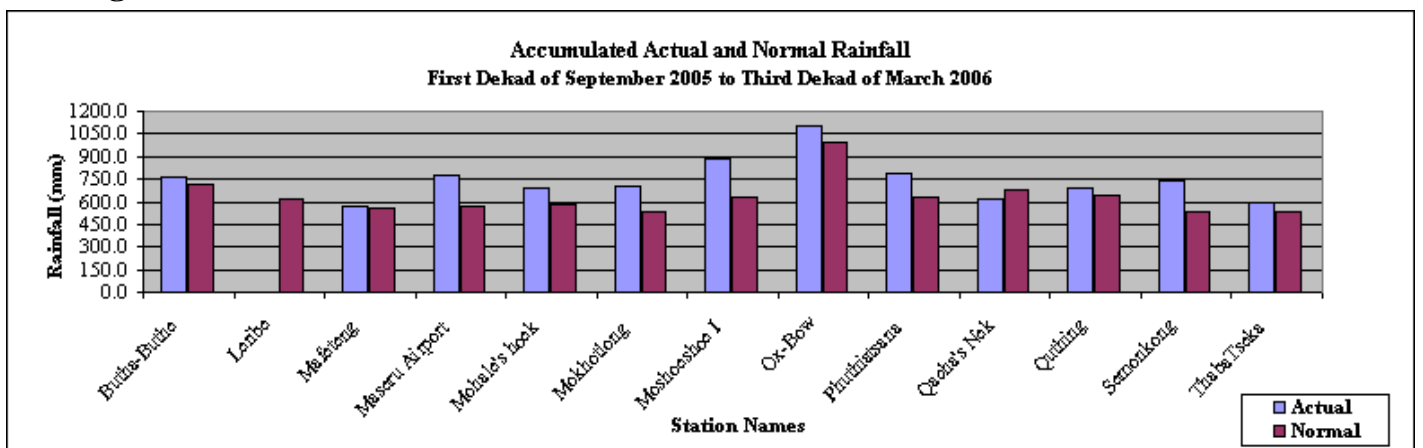


Fig.3



Glossary

Dekad : Ten day period

Normal: Average figure over a specific time period.

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

This Bulletin is issued during the Summer Cropping Season (October – April).

And it is

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Comments and Contributions would be highly appreciated.