

LESOTHO METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES (LEKALA LA TSA BOLEPI)



Ten-Day Agrometeorological Bulletin

21st – 30th April 2004



Issue No.21/2003-04

Vol.3

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

Contents

Weather Summary
Page 1

Rainfall Situation
Page 1

Temperature
Page 1

Crop Stage and Condition
Page 1

Dekadal Outlook
Page 2

Rainfall and Temperature Summaries
Page 3

Glossary
Page 4

Highlights

- Dry weather conditions prevailed during the dekad.
- No rainfall recorded.
- Decline in rainfall accumulation, so is the soil moisture accumulation.
- Crops showing signs of drying.
- Dry condition expected.

The Director
Lesotho Meteorological Services
Agrometeorological Section
P.O. Box 14515
Maseru 100, Lesotho

TEL: (+266) 22324374/22324425
FAX: (+266) 22325057/22350325
E-mail: agrometeorology@lesmet.org.ls
<http://www.lesmet.org.ls>

WEATHER SUMMARY
21st – 30th April 2004

The last dekad of April was dry. This was due to the high pressure system that was dominant over the sub-region during the period and resulted in the subsidence of dry air over the region. Temperatures were generally mild except during the first two days of the dekad.

RAINFALL SITUATION
21st – 30th April 2004

NORMAL RAINFALL PLOT FOR 3rd DEKAD OF APRIL

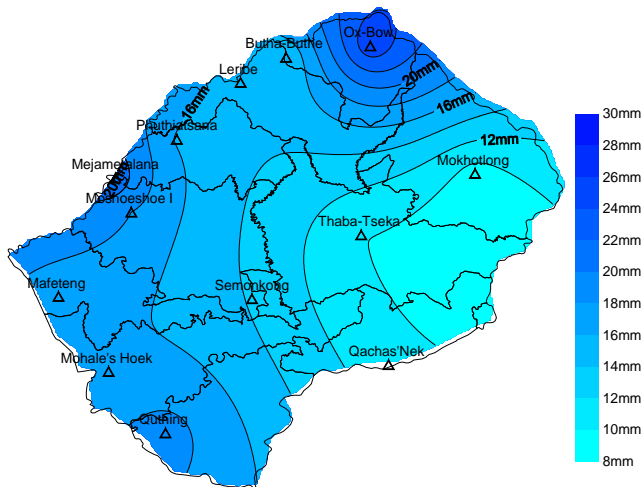


Fig.1: Normal rainfall Plot

A remarkable decrease in rainfall was experienced over the entire country during the dekad under discussion where absolutely no rainfall was registered (see fig.3).

However fig 1 shows normal rainfall pattern for the 3rd dekad of April which depicts that rainfall could still be expected during this time. The analysis indicates significant rainfall over the northern tip, the western strip and the southern extreme with rainfall amounts ranging from 19mm to 25.6mm, with the remainder of the country registering 9mm to 18mm and the northeastern

sector (Mokhotlong) registering the lowest (see fig 1).

CUMULATIVE RAINFALL FROM 1ST SEPT 03 TO 30TH APRIL. 04

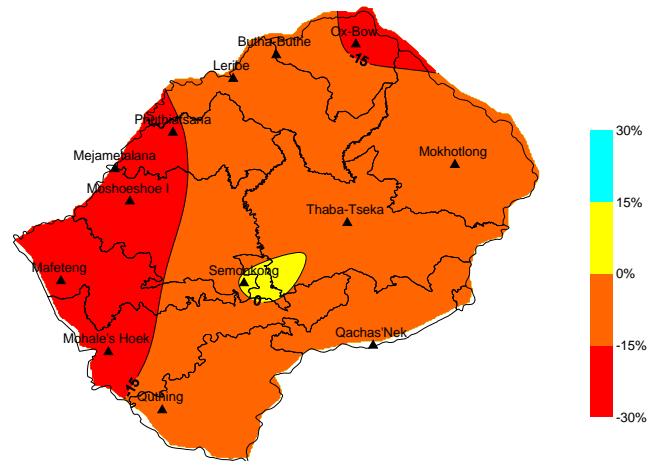


Fig.2: Cumulative rainfall departure from normal since 1stSept 03 to 20th April 2004

Total rainfall from Sept 03 to April 30th reflects normal to below normal rainfall (see fig 4). It is evident that there is a decline in rainfall accumulation, so is the soil moisture accumulation as a result of minimal or no rainfall experienced during the last two dekads (3rd dek April inclusive). These conditions are indicated in the percentage rainfall departure analysis (fig 2) where the central and the northern tip have experienced a significant reduction.

TEMPERATURE
21st – 30th April 2004

Above normal temperatures were registered at most reporting stations, this is shown by the positive temperature deviations attained during the dekad under review. Nevertheless, still very low temperatures, which did not favour crop development, were registered.

CROP STAGE AND CONDITION21st – 30th April 2004

Some crops were reported to have been affected by frost at some places in Thaba-Tseka, Quthing and Semonkong especially those that were still at tender stages. However, there seem to be some gradual deterioration on maize crop resulting from exposure to low temperatures. This has caused crop to show signs of drying up while still at developing stage hence no further development can be expected under this condition.

On the other hand, sorghum though not planted in plenty still stands the chance of reaching maturity, however, there are some crops that are still at younger stages.

Summer wheat is reported to be at maturity stage and at some places harvesting has commenced. The crop is at poor to fair condition.

DEKADAL OUTLOOK01st – 10th May 2004

The high pressure system is still to continue to cause subsidence of dry air over the central interior. It is expected to weaken towards the end of the dekad. As a result, dry weather condition is still expected to prevail during the first dekad of May, however, light isolated showers can be expected towards the end of the dekad. Day time temperatures will remain mild but they are expected to drop below zero at night. Hence frost can be expected any time during this dekad especially over the high lying areas.

Table 1

		Rainfall and Temperature Summaries										
		Rainfall (mm)						TEMPERATURE (°C)				
		21 - 30 April			Total From Sept.03 to 3rd Dek April 04			21 - 30 April				
STATION NAME	ALT. (M)	Actual R/Fall	Rain days	Normal R/Fall	Cum. Act. & Nor. R/f		Cum. % Dept. from Normal	Minimum Lowest (day)	Maximum Highest (day)	Dekadal Mean	Dekadal Normal	Deviation
					Actual	Normal						
Butha-Buthe	1770	0	0	14.0	653.4	696.7	-6	4.0(21)	23.5(25)	13.7	12.9	0.8
Leribe	1740	0	0	15.4	582.3	609.2	-4	3.5(23)	23.2(25)	13.8	12.9	0.9
Mafeteng	1610	0	0	16.9	437.4	605.1	-28	3.4(22)	23.0(25,30)	13.0	13.1	-0.1
Maseru Airpor	1530	0	0	21.4	454.9	612.4	-26	4.7(23)	24.9(25)	15.0	13.1	1.9
Mohaleshoek	1600	0	0	16.0	504.1	653.7	-23	4.8(23)	24.0(25)	14.0	13.4	0.6
Mokhotlong	2200	0	0	9.1	480.8	545.7	-12	1.5(30)	22.3(24)	12.2	10.0	2.2
Moshoeshoe I	1628	0	0	18.0	497.8	669.8	-26	4.9(25)	24.0(24)	14.3	N/A	N/A
Ox-Bow	2600	0	0	25.6	878.6	1059.0	-17	-4.5(27)	16.7(25)	6.9	5.6	1.3
Phuthiatsana	1750	0	0	15.8	543.8	658.9	-17	5.0(23)	23.0(24)	14.5	13.5	1.0
Qacha's Nek	1970	0	0	10.9	646.5	698.5	-7	5.6(30)	23.4(25)	14.0	12.7	1.3
Quthing	1740	0	0	19.0	582.6	634.3	-8	6.1(21,22)	23.6(25)	14.8	12.7	2.1
Semonkong	2458	0	0	13.8	638.2	634.3	1	-1.5(30)	19.7(25)	8.7	8.9	-0.2
Thaba-Tseka	2160	0	0	10.1	525.7	525.6	0	2.1(21)	20.9(25)	12.0	10.5	1.5

Fig.3

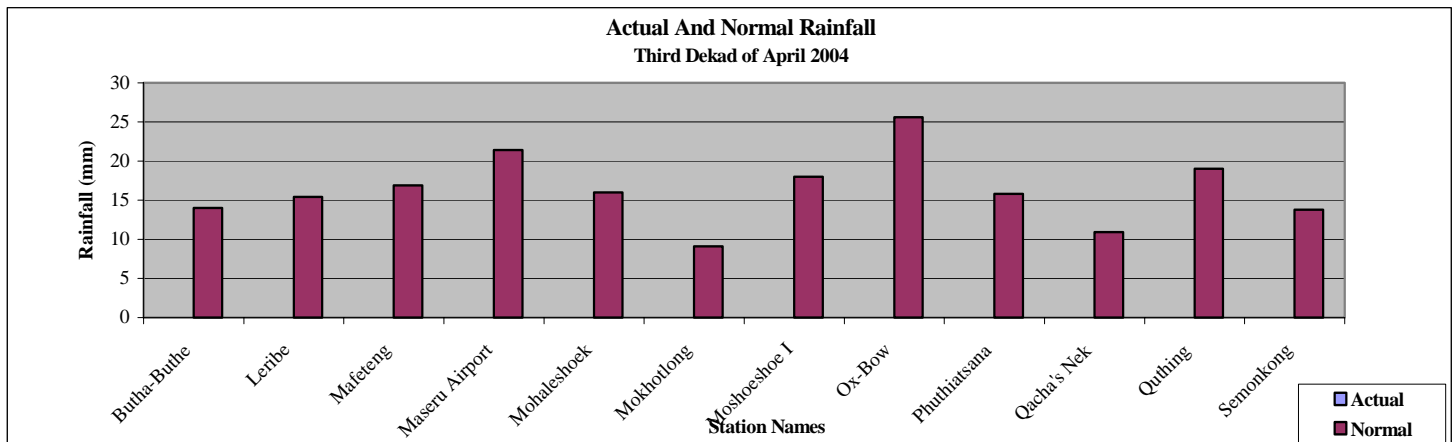
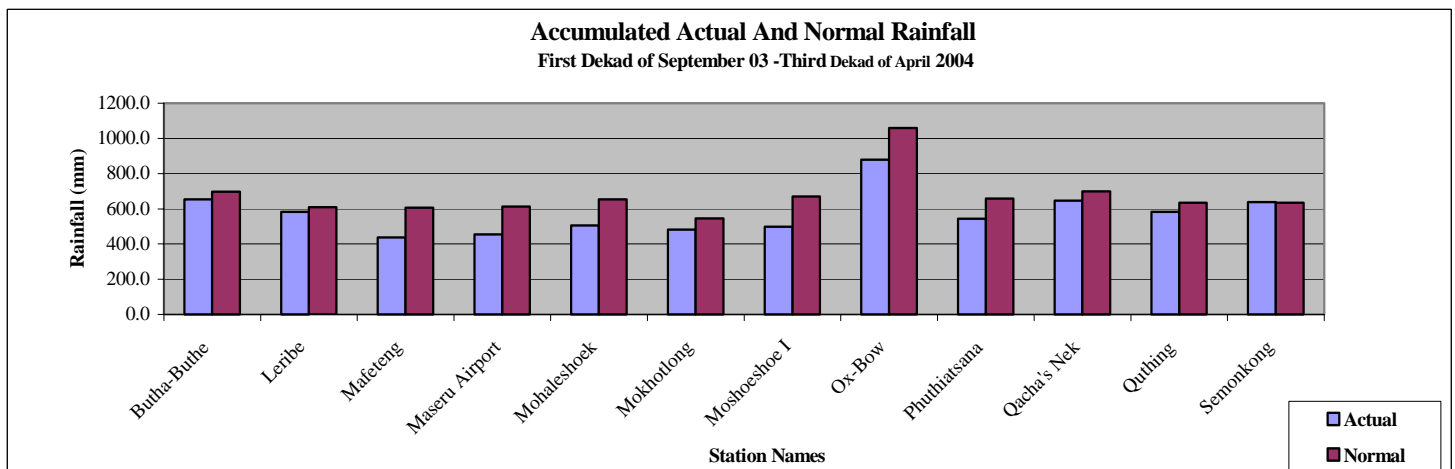


Fig.4



Glossary

Dekad : Ten day period

Normal: Average figure over a specific time period.

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

Cum. Stands for cumulative.

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

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

And it is

Produced by the

Lesotho Meteorological Services as a contribution to the

National Early Warning Unit for Food Security.

The Unit is coordinated by the Disaster Management Authority in the

Prime Minister's Office.

Comments and Contributions would be highly appreciated.