

LESOTHO METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES (LEKALA LA TSA BOLEPI)



Ten-Day Agrometeorological Bulletin

1 – 10 December 2008



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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 experienced during the dekad.
- ❑ Torrential rains recorded at Quthing.
- ❑ Cumulative rainfall improving.
- ❑ Hot temperatures experienced during the dekad.
- ❑ Planting still in progress.

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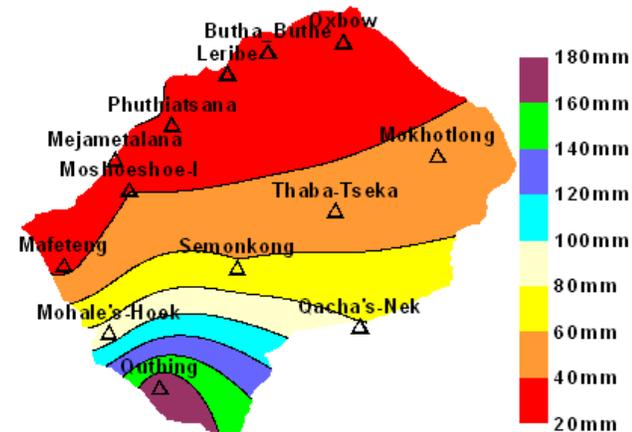
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DEKADAL WEATHER SUMMARY

There was a low-level convergence of moisture associated with the passage of cold fronts over the southern interior of the subcontinent. That resulted to considerable rainfall in the south. Low-level moisture advection induced by the Indian Ocean Anticyclone over the southeastern parts also resulted in enhanced rainfall activities over those areas. Other areas observed relatively low rainfall amounts as the surface interior trough remained shallow and unable to draw the required moisture from the tropics into the interior of the sub-continent

RAINFALL SITUATION

Spatial distribution of rainfall was very variable during the first dekad of December 2008. Southern parts of the country recorded above normal rainfall while northern parts received below normal dekad rainfall (see Map 1). Localized torrential rains that were accompanied by strong winds were experienced at Quthing on the 2nd of the month where about 85mm was recorded. That led to destruction of properties and some fields were waterlogged (see pictures at the end of the bulletin).



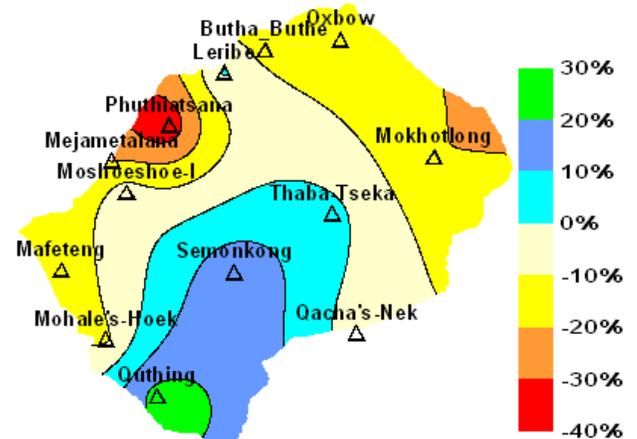
Map 1: Dekadal Rainfall for December Dekad 1, 2008

Rain days ranged from three days at Mafeteng to six days at Quthing, Semonkong and Qacha’s Nek.

Cumulative Percentage Rainfall Departure from Normal

There has been a tremendous improvement in cumulative rainfall in the southern and eastern parts of the country. It is above normal at Quthing and

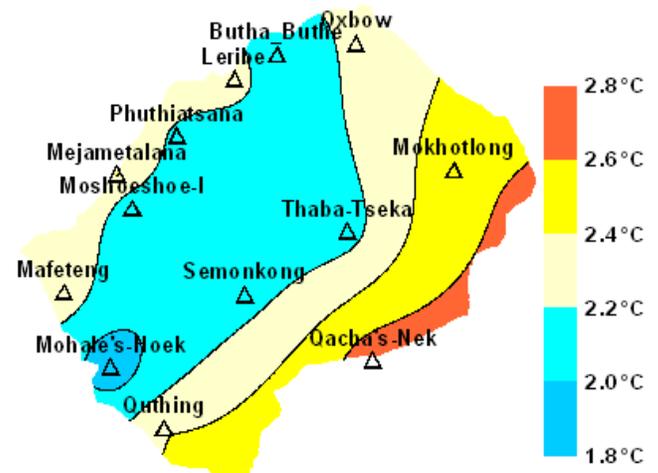
normal at other places except at Phuthiatsana where it still remains at below normal (see Map 2). Improvements in the south were due to heavy downpours of rainfall experienced during the dekad under review.



Map 2: Cumulative Rainfall % Departure from Normal

TEMPERATURE

The period under review was hot. Mean temperatures ranged from normal to above normal. Mean temperature deviation from normal ranged from 1.9°C at Mohale’s Hoek to 2.7°C at Qacha’s Nek. The highest daily maximum temperature was 31.2°C on the 9th and 10th.



Map 3: Dekadal Mean Temperature Deviation from Normal

RAINFALL ANOMALIES

Rainfall performance during the month of November had been largely normal to above normal countrywide. However, there were times when rainfall was bad at some places. That was a complete contrast of the preceding four months (see Fig 3).

CROP STAGE AND CONDITIONS

There is good soil moisture that facilitates agricultural activities. Planting is still in progress at most parts of the country despite growing fear that those crops are likely to be affected by frost later in the season. Crop conditions range from germination to vegetative stage. There is a possibility of weeding at some places.

Wheat grown in winter is at maturing and ready for harvest.

Vegetation cover shows signs of gradual improvements from dekad to another especially in the highlands. That would mean that rangelands are

recovering and therefore livestock would be expected to be going from strength to strength.

Water resources have improved at most parts of the country and conditions should be normal.

DEKADAL OUTLOOK

11 – 20 December 2008

Isolated to scattered rain with thundershowers is anticipated in the coming ten days. Temperatures will be warm to hot.

Fig.1

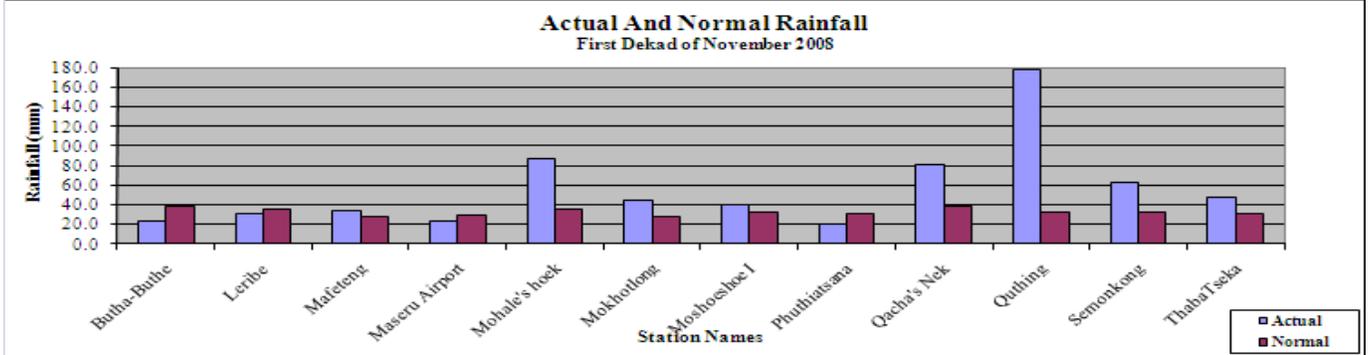


Fig.2

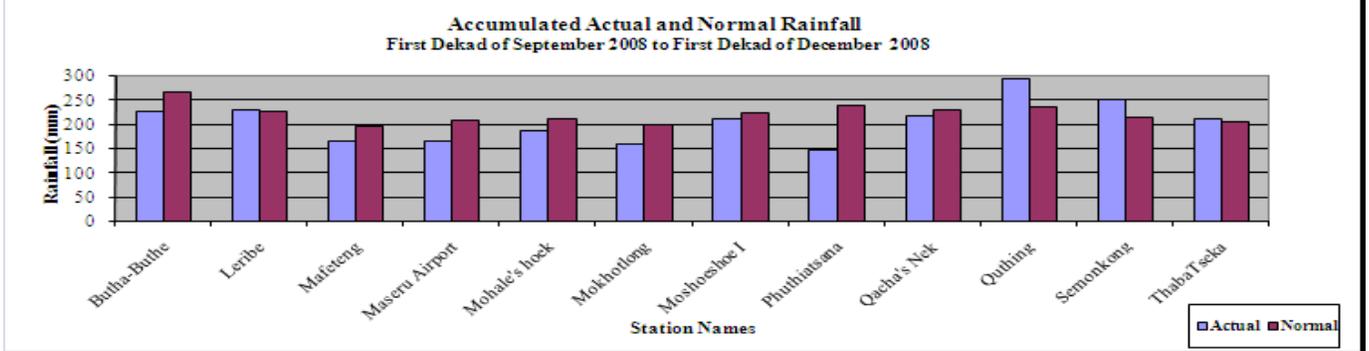
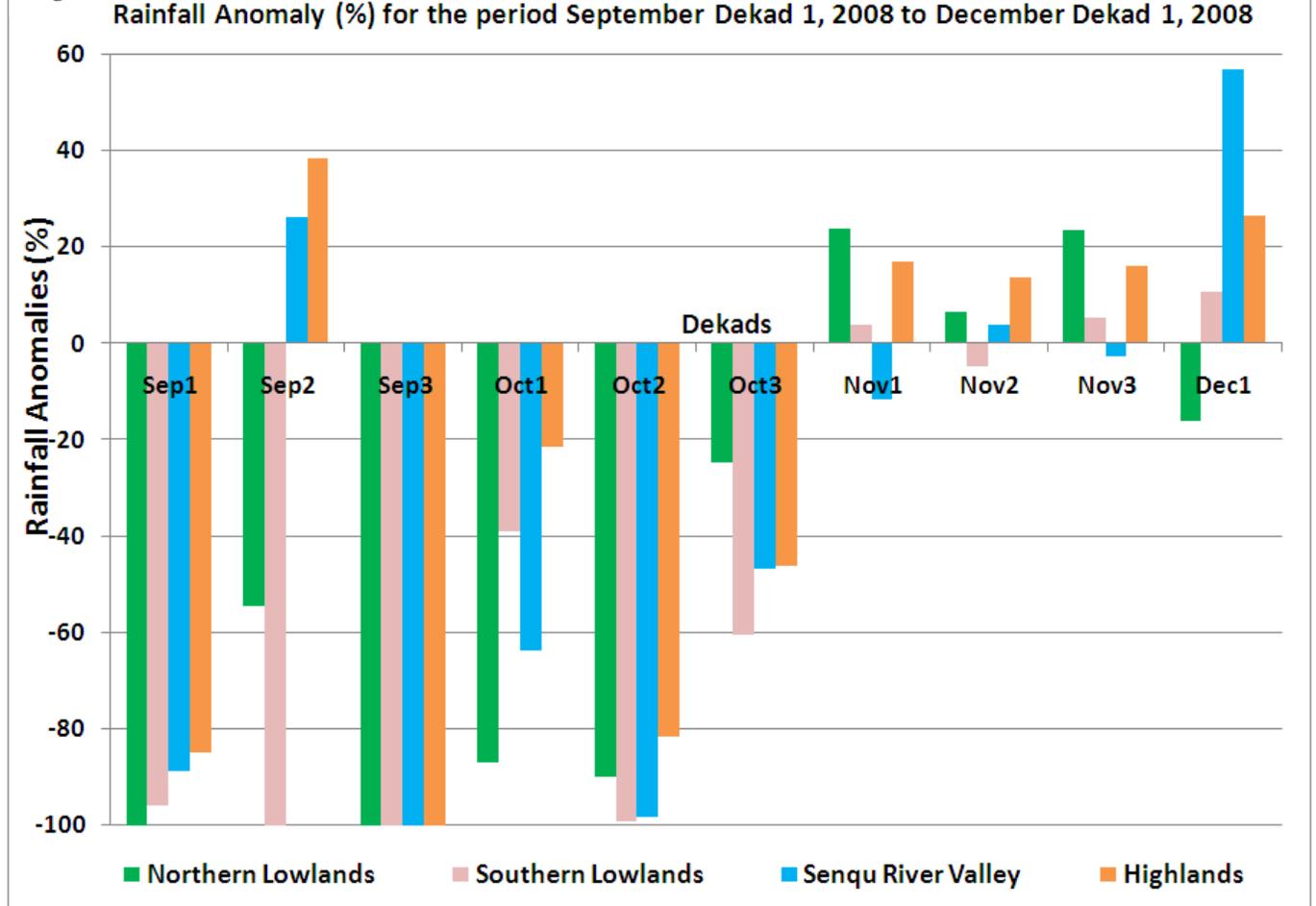


Fig.3





Impact of heavy rainfall at Quthing on the 2nd December 2008.