

# LESOTHO METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES (LEKALA LA TSA BOLEPI)



## Ten-Day Agrometeorological Bulletin

21<sup>st</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup> December 2003



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

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## Highlights

- ❑ Rainfall situation improved significantly.
- ❑ Near normal Temperatures were experienced.
- ❑ Hail damage to crops in some areas.
- ❑ Harvesting of wheat has commenced.
- ❑ Rainfall improvement to continue in the next dekad.

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**WEATHER SUMMARY**21<sup>st</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup> December 2003

Rainfall situation improved significantly during the last dekad of December. This was due to the low pressure system that was dominant over the interior for the first half of the dekad. Temperatures were generally warm.

**RAINFALL SITUATION**21<sup>st</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup> December 2003

The rainfall experienced in the 3<sup>rd</sup> dekad of December is normal to above normal in all the stations in the country. Ox-Bow and Phuthiatsana recorded the highest rainfalls of 69.0mm and 50.8mm respectively (see table1). Summer crops may benefit positively from the good rains registered countrywide.

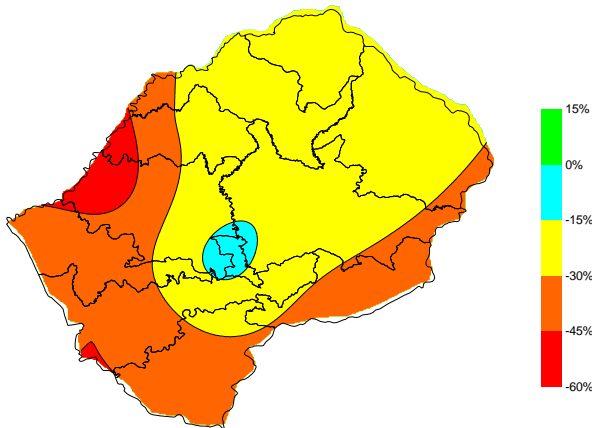
**Accumulated rainfall- 1<sup>st</sup> Sept to 31<sup>st</sup> Dec**

Fig.1: Cumulative Percentage Rainfall Departure from normal since 1<sup>st</sup> Sept to 3<sup>rd</sup> dek. Dec 03.

Although all the stations recorded good rains, cumulative rainfall since 1<sup>st</sup> September 2003 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2003 is still below normal. Semonkong is the only exception with near normal cumulative rainfall (see fig 4), this is evidenced by the small percentage rainfall departure from normal (see fig 1).

**TEMPERATURE**21<sup>st</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup> December 2003

The country experienced near normal temperatures. Mokhotlong, Quthing and Ox-Bow recorded above normal temperatures with temperature deviations of 2.1<sup>o</sup>C, 1.2<sup>o</sup>C and 1.2<sup>o</sup>C respectively. Maximum temperatures were very high in some days as temperatures of above 30<sup>o</sup>C were recorded for majority of the stations.

Some of the stations over the highlands had minimum temperatures dropping below 0<sup>o</sup>C on the 27<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> of December 2003 and this impacted negatively on the summer crops.

**CROP STAGE AND CONDITION**21<sup>st</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup> December 2003

Crops (maize, sorghum, wheat) especially over the highlands and foothills are at vegetative stage. Over the lowlands where planting was seriously hampered by the dry spells, quite a limited amount of land was planted. Hail damage to summer crops and fruit trees was reported at some places around the country. There were also reports of mild frost occurrence over the highlands. However, crop condition in general is poor to fair. Nevertheless, rains that were received during the dekad in discussion are expected to bring significant change to crops that had suffered water stress.

Harvesting of wheat has commenced in some areas.

**DEKADAL OUTLOOK**01<sup>st</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> January 2004

Rainfall situation is still expected to continue to improve during the first dekad of January, especially during the last half whereby isolated to scattered thundershowers are anticipated. Temperatures will remain warm to hot during this period.

**SEASON OUTLOOK**

January - March 2004

There is still a high likelihood of below normal to normal rainfall to occur during this season.

Table 1

Rainfall and Temperature Summaries												
		Rainfall (mm)						TEMPERATURE (°C)				
		Total From Sept. 03 to 3rd Dek Dec. 03										
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
Mafeteng	1610	29.4	24.0	4	162.2	233.6	-30.6	5.0(28)	31.0(21)	19.1	20.1	-1.0
Maseru Airport	1530	25.0	26.1	4	99.4	254.1	-60.9	6.7(27)	33.5(21)	21.1	20.7	0.4
Mohale's hoek	1600	41.6	33.0	3	148.7	267.7	-44.5	4.5(27)	32.6(21)	20.4	20.8	-0.4
Mokhotlong	2200	29.1	30.4	5	175.8	241.1	-27.1	5.0(27)	28.0(21)	18.4	16.3	2.1
Ox-Bow	2600	69.0	57.4	6	364.6	494.9	-26.3	-1.4(27)	22.0(21)	12.9	11.7	1.2
Phuthiatsana	1750	50.8	33.7	3	182.6	276.9	-34.1	6.0(27)	32.9(21)	20.6	20.2	0.4
Qacha's Nek	1970	40.8	41.8	6	177.5	304.0	-41.6	5.0(27)	28.1(24)	17.5	17.9	-0.4
Quthing	1740	49.0	27.8	4	148.8	267.5	-44.4	12.0(27)	32.4(21)	21.0	19.8	1.2
Semonkong	2458	33.1	28.9	4	232.1	254.1	-8.7	-0.2(27)	27.7(21)	15.2	16.1	-0.9
Moshoeshoe I	1628	37.2	31.1	4	131.8	279.7	-52.9	6.8(27)	33.4(21)	21.1	N/A	N/A
Thaba-Tseka	2160	26.4	31.7	6	196.9	244.2	-19.4	N/A	N/A	17.1	17	0.1
Leribe	1740	30.9	31.7	6	193.6	252.0	-23.2	6.2(27)	32.5(21)	20.3	20.0	0.3

Fig.3

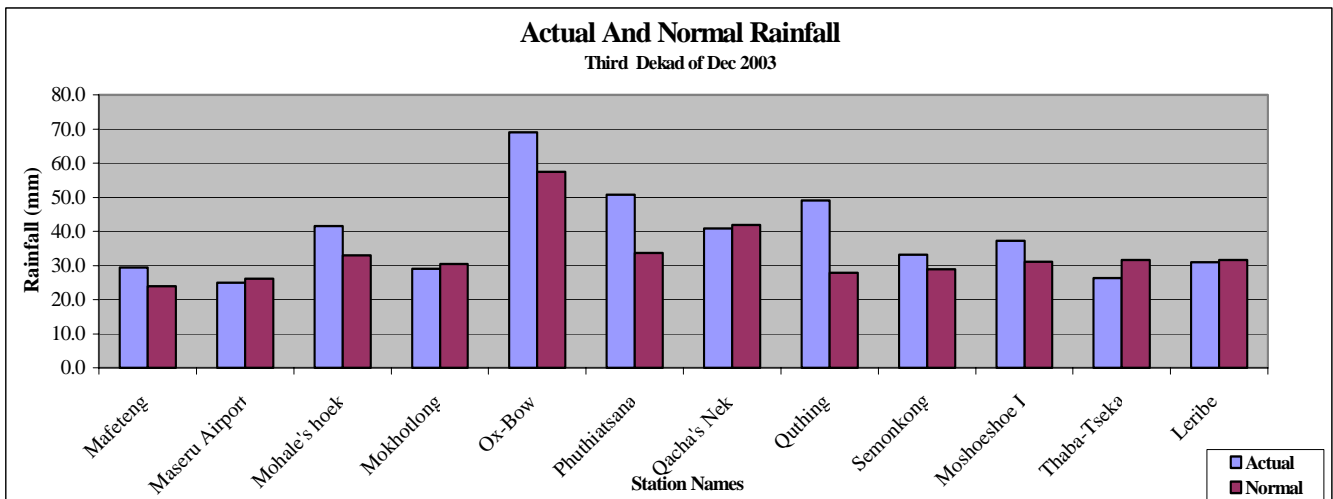
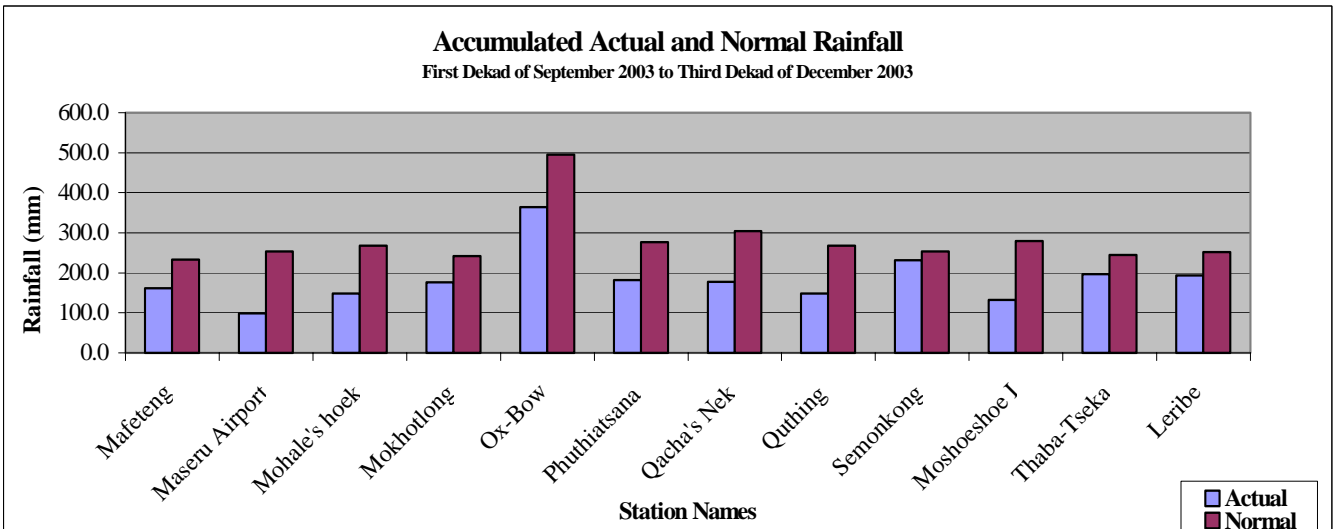


Fig.4



## Glossary

Dekad : Ten day period

Normal: Average figure over a specific time period.

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

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.