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Agro-Met Monthly Update:

December 2009

Date of issue: January 2009

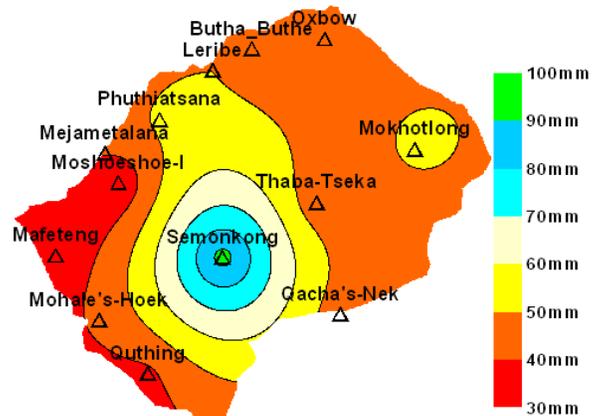
Highlights

1. Dry weather prevailed during the month of December 2009
2. Normal to above normal mean temperatures experienced during the month

Rainfall

Monthly Actual Rainfall

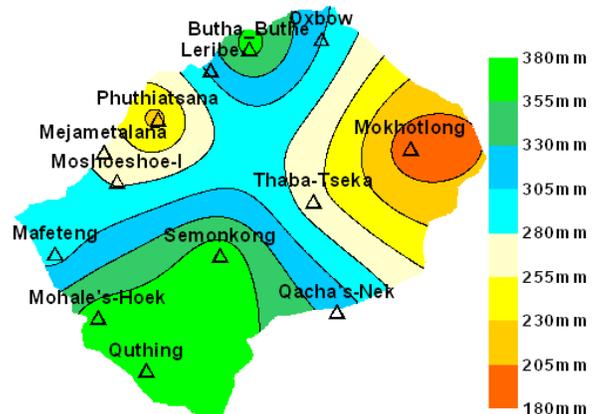
December 2009 was dry. Monthly rainfall was below normal in all parts of the country with the exception of Semonkong where monthly rainfall was normal. Map 1 depicts spatial distribution of the monthly rainfall. The highest monthly rainfall was 94.6mm at Semonkong while the lowest monthly rainfall was 30.3mm at Moshoeshoe 1 International Airport.



Map 1: December 2009 Rainfall

Cumulative Rainfall since September 2009

Cumulative rainfall for the period September – December 2009 is largely normal. It is above normal and below normal at few places. Map 2 reflects that the north eastern parts of the country (areas around Mokhotlong) have lowest cumulative rainfall. But the southern parts of the country have highest cumulative rainfall. The cumulative rainfall percentage departure from normal is gradually decreasing from the high surplus values obtained during the beginning of the season.



Map 2: Sept - Dec 09 Cumulative Rainfall

Temperatures

Monthly mean temperatures were largely normal, but above normal at few places. Mean monthly temperatures deviations from normal range from 1.1°C (Phuthiatsana) to 2.1°C at Mokhotlong. The highest daily maximum temperature of the month

was 33.1°C that was recorded on the 19th at Phuthiatsana. High temperatures were conclusive due to dry weather that prevailed during the month.

Crop Stage and Conditions

Crops are at various stages ranging from early vegetative to late vegetative stages countrywide. Weeding and other field operations are in progress. Dry weather that prevailed during the month made crops not to meet their water requirements at some places, but on the other hand it allowed for field operations to be carried out effectively. But generally crop's conditions are generally satisfactory.

entire rainfall season (October 2009, up to March 2010). Nevertheless, the north and eastern parts are highly likely to receive above normal to normal rainfall in October to December 2009. It is expected that there will be significant reduction of rainfall in these areas during the period of January to March 2010; where below normal rainfall will be experienced.

Seasonal Forecast (October 09 – March 10)

There is a high likelihood of the country to receive below normal rainfall especially in the west and southern parts of the country. The areas in the south west and in the south are expected to receive below normal rainfall for

Compared to the year 2008/09 rainfall season, the year 2009/10 rainfall season is highly likely to experience less rainfall occurrences and lengthy dry spells which are likely to have negative impacts in agriculture, water and other weather sensitive sectors.