

LESOTHO METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES (LEKALA LA TSA BOLEPI)



Ten-Day Agrometeorological Bulletin

21st – 28th February 2006



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

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Highlights

- ❑ Above normal rainfall received.
- ❑ Rains and thundershowers occurred.
- ❑ Relatively good cumulative rains received.
- ❑ High vegetation cover.
- ❑ Temperatures expected to remain warm.

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WEATHER SUMMARY

During this dekad the sub-region was still dominated by the trough. However, it was relatively weak compared to previous dekads except on the 23rd and the 25th when it was slightly deeper. As a result, isolated thundershowers occurred during this period, except on the 23rd and on the 25th, when scattered to widespread rains and thundershowers occurred.

RAINFALL SITUATION

The rainfall registered during this third dekad of February 2006 was far above normal dekad rainfall throughout the country, except in Quthing where only 9.4 mm recorded. The highest dekad rainfall of 94.5mm was registered at Oxbow. Rain days varies between 3 to 7 days. The rainfall received is enough to sustain crops at any stage of their growth.

Cumulative percentage rainfall departure from Normal

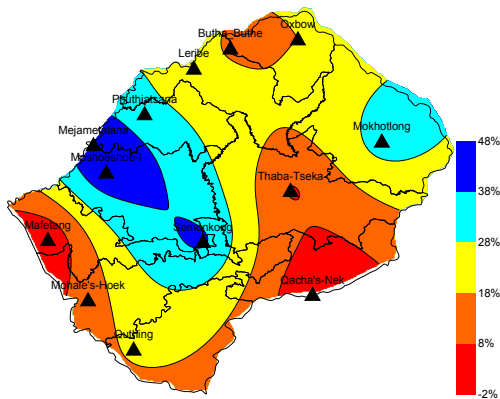


Fig.1: Cumulative rainfall departure from normal since 1st Sept to 28th February 2006.

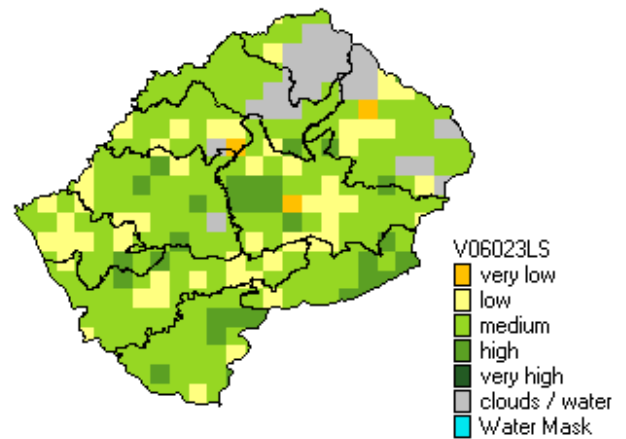
Relatively good actual cumulative rainfall was registered during this dekad. The percentage of normal rainfall map above depicts that the country received normal to above normal rainfall. These widespread substantial amounts of rain received over the whole country ranged from 7% to 47% of normal rainfall.

TEMPERATURE

The temperatures were slightly below normal dekadal temperatures in some parts of the lowlands, and slightly above normal dekadal temperatures were registered in some parts of the highlands. The highest temperature of 28^oC was registered at Maseru Airport on the 22nd and the lowest dekadal temperature of 7.4^oC was recorded at Oxbow on the 28th. The temperatures and the sunshine were favourable to crops, especially at these stages (flowering and grain filling) of their growth.

VEGETATION

Figure 2



The degree of greenness is medium to high with some patches of low scattered throughout the country. There are also some clouds in the highlands indicating that rains are yet to fall. These high degree of greenness indicates that the crops and the pastures have improved due to good rains received recently.

CROP STAGE AND CONDITION

Agricultural activities during this dekad is centered on weeding of maize and preparing land for Winter wheat, especially in the lowlands. The heavy rainfall that was experienced over the entire country improved the agriculture scenario. However, this heavy rainfall was in some cases harmful to crops as they were submerged. Besides this, little change is expected in as far as

the crop (maize) that was waterlogged because rainfall is expected to decrease a little.

DEKADAL OUTLOOK

1st – 10th March 2006

The weak trough is still anticipated to be dominant and few weak frontal systems are also expected to traverse over the sub-region during this forecast period. Few thundershowers and rains are expected and rainfall situation is

anticipated to decrease slightly for this period. Temperatures will remain generally warm.

Seasonal Outlook March – May 2006

Rainfall situation is expected to be near average for the period March – May 2006. Therefore, this implies that rains are anticipated to perform better than last year during the same period.

Table 1

Summaries													Rainfall and Temperature												
STATION NAME		ALT. (M)		Rainfall (mm)						Temperature (°C)						Deviation									
				21 - 28 Feb 2006			Total From Sept 05 to 3rd Dek Feb 06			21 - 28 Feb 2006															
				Actual R/Fall	Rain Days	Normal R/Fall	Actual	Normal	%Dept. from Normal	Minimum Lowest(Day)	Maximum Highest (Day)	Dekadal Mean	Dekadal Normal												
Butha-Buthe	1770	36.5	4	23.7	684.8	587.7	17	15.0(22, 25,26)	26.5(22)	19.9	17.8	2.1													
Leribe	1740	77.7	5	26.7	-	-	-	13.4(24)	26.8(22,28)	19.7	19.8	-0.1													
Mafeteng	1610	25.5	3	25.6	449.3	460.1	-2	14.0(24,28)	26.8(28)	19.6	19.8	-0.2													
Maseru Airport	1530	47.5	3	22.7	682	467.7	46	15.1(26)	28.0(22)	20.3	20.7	-0.4													
Mohale's hoek	1600	28.0	4	30.1	550.1	486.4	13	10.8(26)	27.0(28)	20.4	20.2	0.2													
Mokhotlong	2200	61.0	7	20.5	607.4	455.2	33	10.6(28)	24.8(23,28)	17.2	17	0.2													
Moshoeshoe I	1628	70.6	5	33.1	767.5	522.2	47	14.6(26)	26.3(23)	19.8	20.1	-0.3													
Ox-Bow	2600	94.5	6	33.1	987	836.4	18	7.4(28)	19.4(22)	13.1	12.1	1													
Phuthiatsana	1750	52.7	6	24	697.7	530.9	31	15.0(27)	27.3(28)	20.2	20.2	0													
Qacha's Nek	1970	49.5	6	27.4	571.8	576.5	-1	12.6(22)	26.0(27)	18.4	17.5	0.9													
Quthing	1740	9.4	3	30.2	636.7	530.9	20	15.0(26)	26.4(22)	20.4	20	0.4													
Semonkong	2458	83.9	7	23.9	629.7	450.3	40	8.9(28)	22.7(22)	15.6	15.1	0.5													
ThabaTseka	2160	46.7	7	23.6	492.4	459.4	7	11.1(28)	24.3(22)	16.5	16.6	-0.1													

Fig.3

Actual And Normal Rainfall
Third Dekad of February 2006

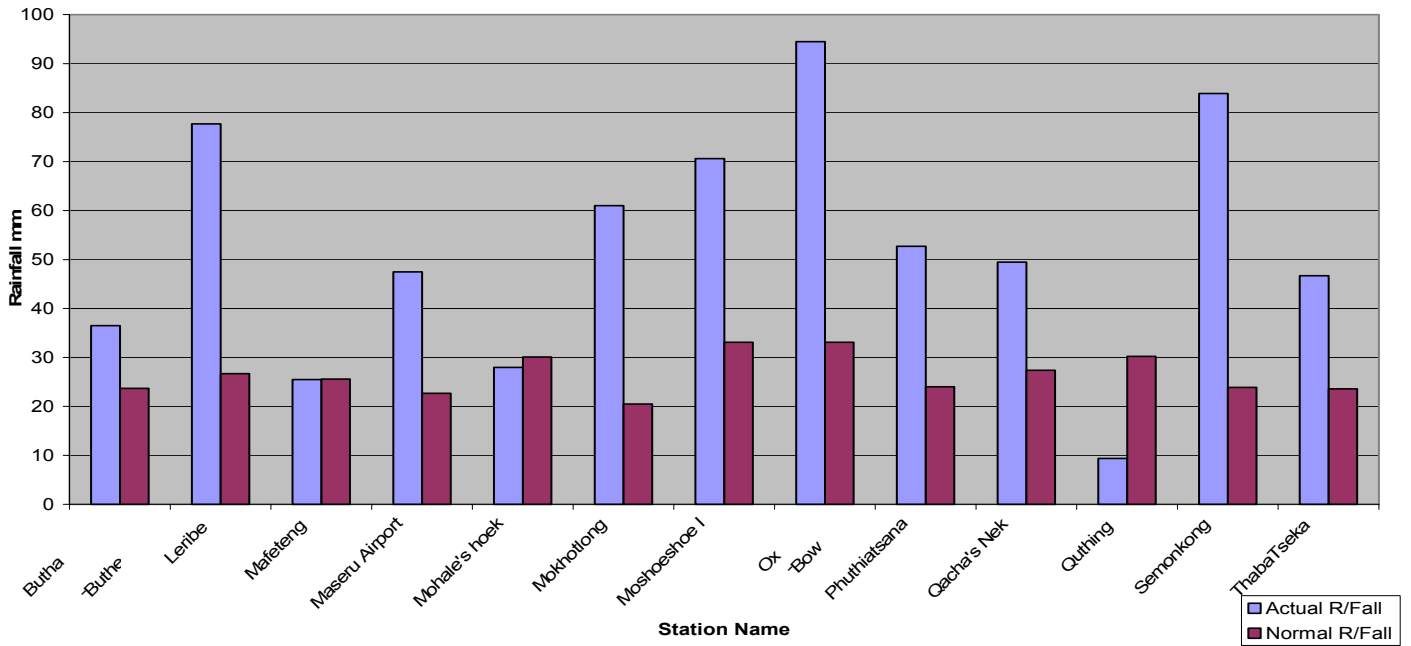
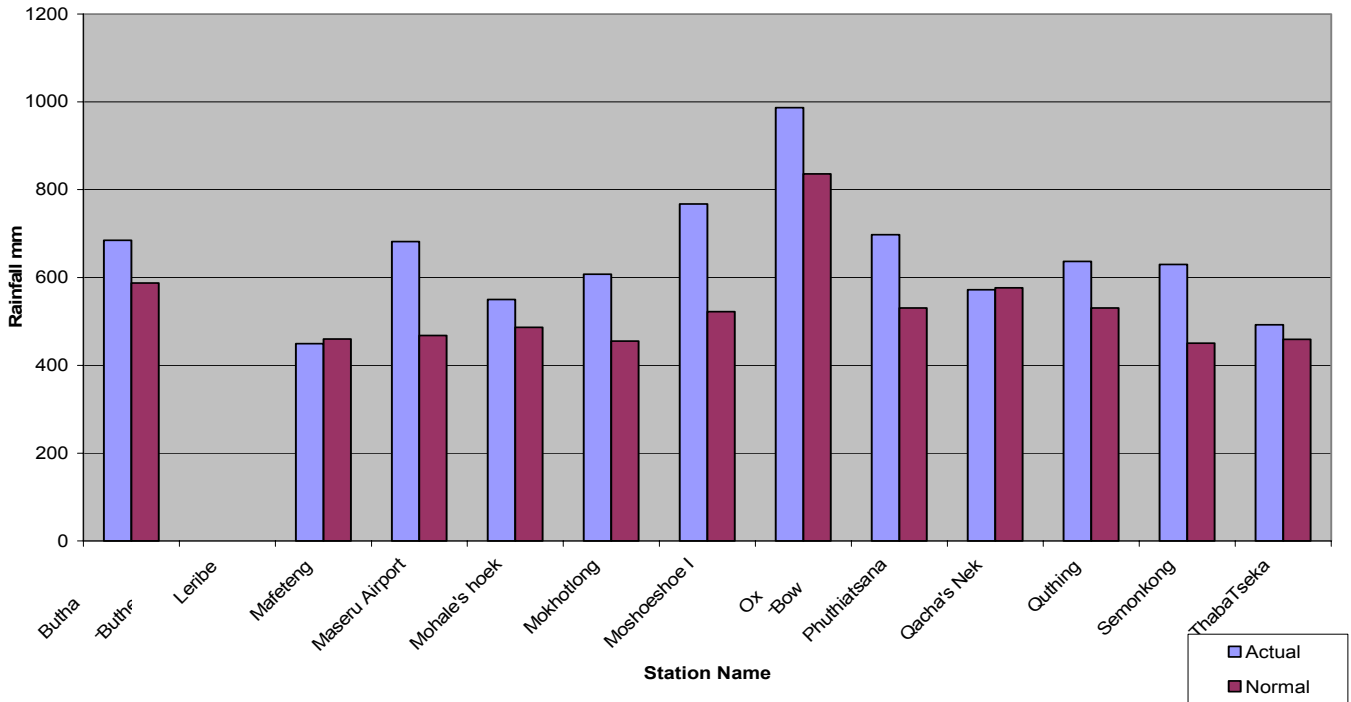


Fig.4

Accumulated Actual and Normal Rainfall
First Dekad of September 2005 to Third Dekad of February 2006



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.