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Agro-Met Monthly Update

January 2007

Date of issue: February 2008

Highlights

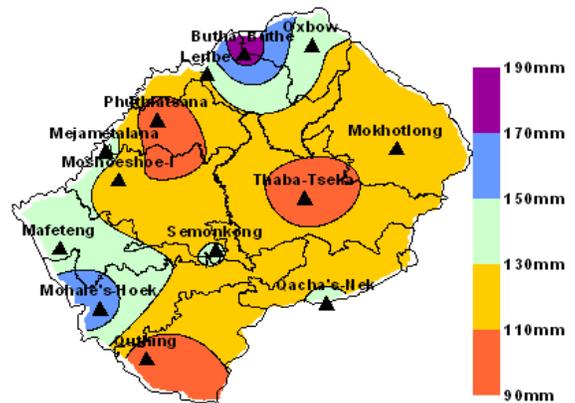
1. Below normal rainfall received in most parts of the country
2. Below normal monthly mean temperatures experienced at most places
3. Crops at vegetative to tasselling stages

Rainfall

Monthly Actual Rainfall

The monthly rainfall for January 2008 was normal at most places of the country. Phuthiatsana became the only area to record below normal monthly rainfall. The last dekad of the month was predominantly dry countrywide except in Mokhotlong. That made the month under review to be the wet month at Mokhotlong following two successive months of reduced rainfall (November-December 2007). The bulk of rainfall at Mokhotlong fell during the last dekad, as the first two dekads of the month were dry.

Map 1 and Table 1 shows both temporal and spatial distribution of rainfall.

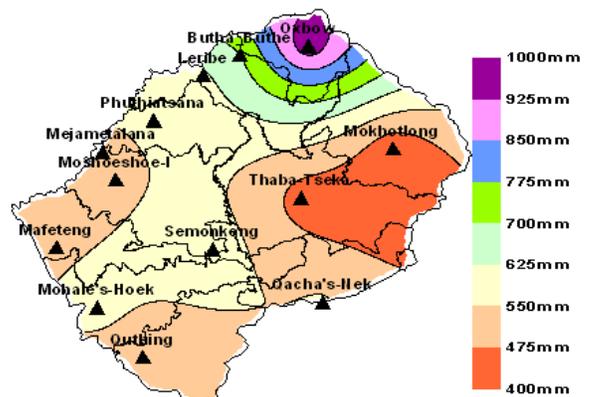


Map 1: January 2008 Monthly Rainfall

Cumulative Rainfall since September 2007

Cumulative rainfall percentage departure from normal for the period September 2007 to January 2008 ranges from normal to above normal. There was a general decrease in percentage departure from normal countrywide during the last dekad of the month except in Mokhotlong.

The highest and lowest cumulative rainfall amounts are at Butha-Buthe (696.1mm) and Mokhotlong (418mm) respectively (see Map 1 & Table 1).



Map 2: September 07-January 08 Cumulative Rainfall

Temperatures

The mean monthly temperatures were below normal in most parts of the country. Above normal mean temperatures were mostly experienced in the highlands (Table 1). Monthly mean temperatures deviations from normal range from -0.6°C at Moshoeshoe 1 to 0.6°C at Mokhotlong (see Table 1).

The lowest daily temperature of the month was 4.5°C recorded at Semonkong on the 9th while the highest daily temperature of the month was 33°C at Quthing (3rd).

Crop Stage and Conditions

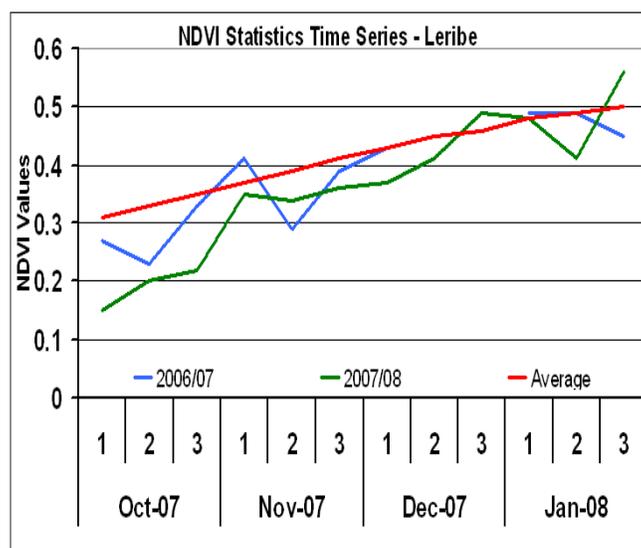
There were some occurrences of hailstorms at various parts of the country during the month of January 2008. Their intensities varied from place to place. The most destructive hailstorm was on the 4th January 2008, which was more intense at some parts of Mafeteng. Region extending from Mafeteng to Quthing was affected by series of hailstorms but at different scales in that day. Not less than 750 houses were destroyed. Power lines were destroyed too and trees uprooted. Cost implication was high in those communities. Some crops were badly affected by either flooding water and/or hail especially where the storm center traversed.

Maize and sorghum stages range from vegetative stages to tasselling and conditions are good. However, waterlogging hampered with weeding and that made some farmers to continue to weed knee-high crops at the present moment. Winter wheat in the lowlands is harvested while summer wheat in the highlands is at vegetative stages.

Water and Livestock Conditions

Water resources have improved and are normal countrywide.

The graph below shows how NDVI has performed since September 2007 at Leribe. The trend is similar in most parts of the country. Included in the graph are the values for the average values and the 2006/07 season. Good index means that levels of greenness on the ground are good and thus may imply better pasture conditions and therefore good livestock conditions



Weather Outlook (February – March 2008)

Generally, there is a high likelihood of normal rainfall over the country. In addition much of the Lowlands including central and southern parts of the country are likely to receive even above average rainfall, and the northern parts including

parts of the eastern Highlands will on the contrary have a possibility of receiving below normal rainfall. Temperatures are expected to be slightly above average with occasional cold spells.

Table 1.

Station	ALT. (M)	December			Cumulative R/Fall since September 07 – January 08			Temperatures		
		Monthly R/Days	Monthly R/fall		Actual	Normal	% Dep. from Normal	Monthly Mean		Deviation
			Actual	Normal				Actual	Normal	
Butha-Buthe	1770	16	186.1	119	696.1	474.3	47	19.7	20.2	-0.5
Leribe	1740	19	130	120.7	617.2	410.9	50	20.4	20.7	-0.3
Mafeteng	1610	10	141.6	112.1	534.1	365.6	46	20.8	20.6	0.2
Mejametalana	1530	16	146.4	111.9	525.1	375.1	40	21.3	21.8	-0.5
Mohale's Hoek	1600	13	167.2	112.7	579.7	383.8	51	20.9	21.2	-0.3
Mokhotlong	2200	12	114.4	112.3	418	372	12	18.3	17.7	0.6
Moshoeshoe 1	1628	15	110.4	120.6	534.3	410.3	30	20.7	21.3	-0.6
Ox-Bow	2660	*	*	182.2	*	697.1	*	*	12.7	*
Phuthiatsana	1750	16	95.1	128	572	429.8	33	20.7	21.2	-0.5
Qacha's Nek	1970	13	135	144	559.3	456.2	23	18.5	18.4	0.1
Outling	1740	8	91.5	104	485.5	422.3	15	21.2	21.1	0.1
Semonkong	2458	14	132.3	101	590.3	367.8	60	15.8	15.9	-0.1
Thaba-Tseka	2160	19	99	103	440.4	366	20	17.2	17.2	0

NB: * means that there was no data for that station.

