

# LESOTHO METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES (LEKALA LA TSA BOLEPI)



## Ten-Day Agrometeorological Bulletin

1<sup>st</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> March 2007



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

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## Highlights

### Last Dekad Review

- ❑ Very dry weather conditions prevailed.
- ❑ Hot weather conditions occurred.
- ❑ Prospects of poor summer crops yield.

### Next Dekad Preview

- ❑ Hot temperatures expected.
- ❑ Dry weather conditions expected.

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**WEATHER SUMMARY**

1 – 10 March 2007

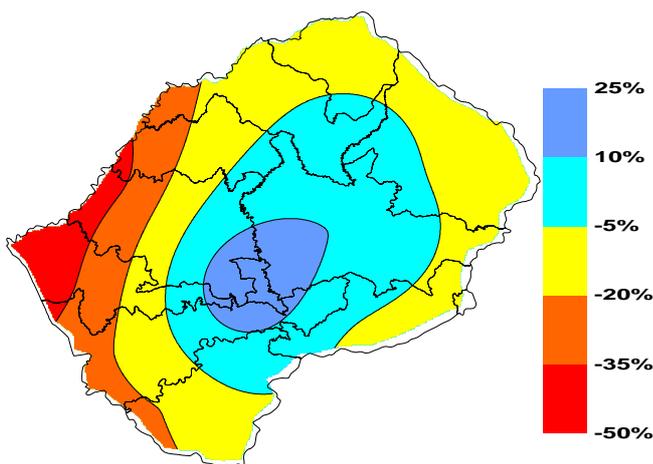
The dekad began with dry conditions improving from 03<sup>rd</sup> – 05<sup>th</sup> where scattered thundershowers were experienced due to the passage of a weak cold front over the southern tip of the sub-continent. Since then the interior trough remained shallow and was coupled with the ridging high after the passage of the front, as well as the tropical cyclone (Gamede) on the south-western Indian ocean. Therefore, the subcontinent was denied any moisture influx resulting into dry and only partly cloudy conditions.

**RAINFALL SITUATION**

The dekadal rainfall registered during this first dekad of March 2007 was below normal throughout the country with the exception of Oxbow and Qacha’s Nek (see table 1 and fig.2). Only some showers were registered in all parts of the country with poor distribution because places like Maseru and Phuthiatsana received rainfall far below normal. The first dekad of March 2007 follows a series of consecutive dry dekads since January 2007.

Rain days varied between 2 at Phuthiatsana and 6 days at Butha-Buthe and Oxbow.

**Cumulative percentage rainfall departure from Normal**



**Fig.1: Cumulative rainfall departure from normal since 1<sup>st</sup> Sept to 10<sup>th</sup> March 2007.**

The percentage departure from normal rainfall map above depicts that the country has so far

received below normal cumulative rainfall. The poor substantial amounts of rain received over the whole country ranged from 284mm at Maseru to 452.3mm at Mokhotlong. Semonkong is the only area with above normal cumulative rainfall with the percentage departure of 25%. The percentage departure from normal of cumulative rainfall experienced a considerable fall since commencement of the current calendar year. The western parts of the country are the most affected by huge deficits in cumulative rainfall.

**TEMPERATURE**

The dekadal temperatures were slightly above normal. Mohale’s Hoek became the only area to have below normal dekadal mean temperature with a deviation of  $-0.2^{\circ}\text{C}$ . The highest temperature of  $34.4^{\circ}\text{C}$  was registered at Mohale’s Hoek on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and the lowest dekadal temperature of  $0.4^{\circ}\text{C}$  was recorded at Oxbow on the 6<sup>th</sup>. The temperatures were not favourable to crops because they were very high and as a result, most crops were damaged due to rapid wilting.

**CROP STAGE AND CONDITION**

Summer crops have faced a serious water stress throughout the country since January because of dry weather that prevailed and is still continuing. Some crops have turned yellowish while others have dried up completely because of very low rainfall and high temperatures. Furthermore, due to these drought conditions the current years summer crop production is anticipated to be low in all areas of the country.

**WATER SITUATION**

Due to the current drought conditions, the water situation in the capital Maseru is greatly affected. The Caledon River, which has its tributaries in the northern to northwestern parts of the country, is presently experiencing significant low flows and water usage restrictions are likely to be implemented.

**DEKADAL OUTLOOK**

11<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> March 2007

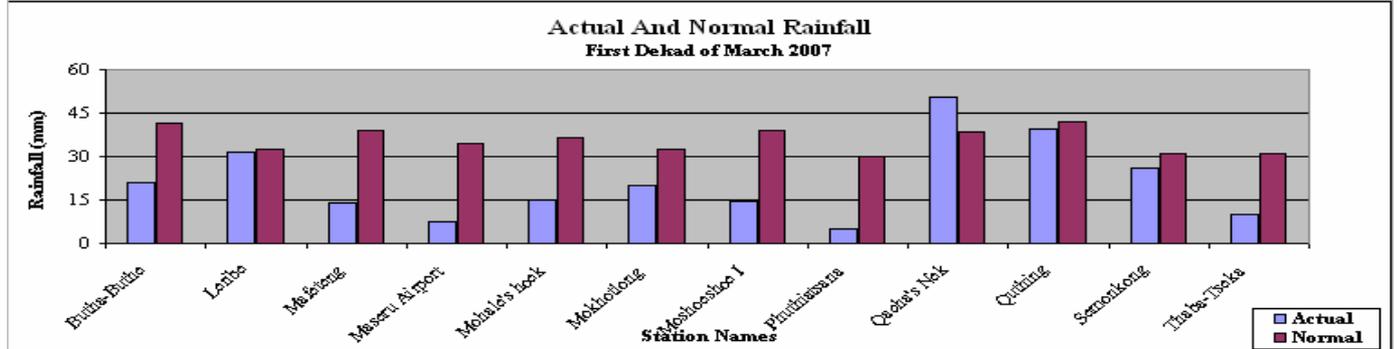
This period is expected to be mostly partly cloudy and warm becoming hot at times.

Occasional isolated rain and thundershowers can be expected in some places.

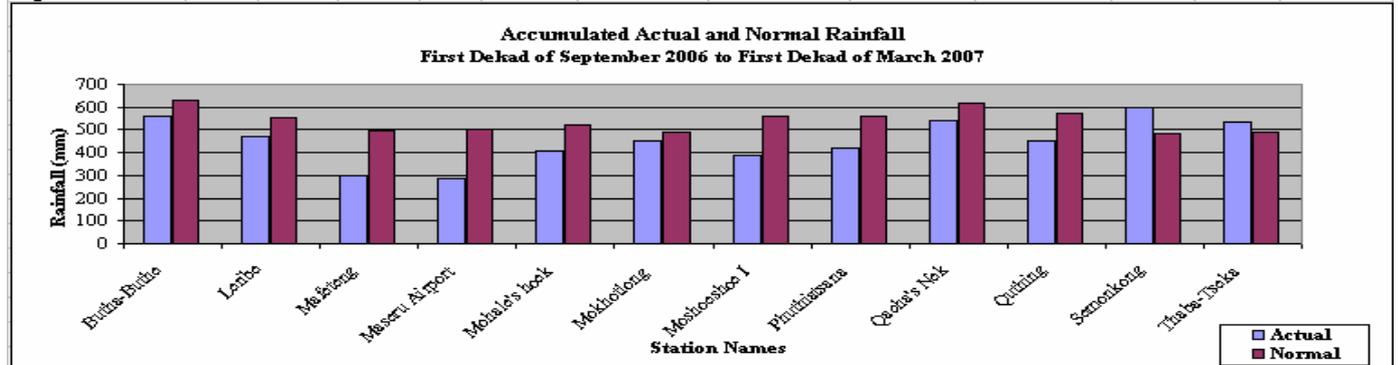
**Table 1**

Rainfall and Temperature Summaries												
STATION	ALT. (M)	Rainfall (mm)						Temperature (°C)				
		Actual R/Fall	Normal R/Fall	Rain Days	Total From Sept 06 to 1st Dek Mar 07		%Dept. from Normal	01 - 10 March 2007				
					Actual	Normal		Minimum Lowest(Day)	Maximum Highest (Day)	Dekadal Mean	Dekadal Normal	Deviation
Butha-Buthe	1770	20.9	41.3	6	562.2	629	-11	7(6)	29.5(2)	19.4	18.7	0.7
Leribe	1740	31.6	32.7	3	467.8	551.7	-15	6.8(6)	30.8(1)	19.8	19.1	0.7
Mafeteng	1610	13.8	39.1	3	296.9	499.2	-41	7.5(6)	31(1,2,3)	19.2	18.8	0.4
Maseru Airport	1530	7.6	34.6	4	284.0	502.3	-43	7.4(6)	32.8(3)	20.8	20.0	0.8
Mohale's hoek	1600	14.9	36.4	4	408.3	522.8	-22	4.5(6)	34.4(3)	19.4	19.6	-0.2
Mokhotlong	2200	19.9	32.5	2	452.3	487.7	-7	5(6)	26.4(3)	17.3	16.5	0.8
Moshoeshoe I	1628	14.3	39.0	4	387.7	561.2	-31	8(6)	32(3)	19.9	19.9	0.0
Phuthiatsana	1750	5.2	30.1	2	417.3	561	-26	10.5(6)	31.9(2)	20.8	19.6	1.2
Qacha's Nek	1970	50.3	38.5	4	543.0	615	-12	7(6)	28.9(2)	17.5	17.3	0.2
Quthing	1740	39.3	41.8	4	452.3	572.7	-21	7.1(6)	-	-	19.4	-
Semonkong	2458	26.1	30.8	4	599.0	481.1	25	1(6)	25.9(2)	14.8	14.4	0.4
Thaba-Tseka	2160	10.1	31.1	4	536.3	490.5	9	6.1(6)	25.3(3)	16.7	16.0	0.7

**Fig 2**



**Fig 3**



## **Glossary**

Dekad : Ten day period

Normal: Average figure over a specific time period.

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

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And it is

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Comments and Contributions would be highly appreciated.