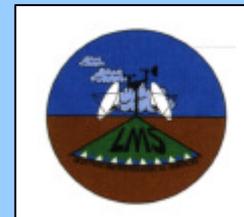


LESOTHO METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES (LEKALA LA TSA BOLEPI)



Ten-Day Agrometeorological Bulletin

11th –20th March 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.
- ❑ Isolated to scattered rains occurred.
- ❑ Relatively good cumulative rains received.
- ❑ High vegetation cover.
- ❑ Temperatures expected to remain warm.

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WEATHER SUMMARY

The previous dekad was generally wet. This was due to a shallow trough, which was situated over the central interior and few frontal systems which passed over the region. It resulted in isolated to scattered rains during this period. Temperatures were generally warm, however they dropped slightly on the 12th and 16th due to passage of frontal systems.

RAINFALL SITUATION

Wet conditions persisted over the country in the first two months of this year 2006. Normal to above normal dekadal rainfall distribution shows that, the current dekad received good rainfall throughout the country. The decrease in rainfall is anticipated during this month. Highest dekadal rainfall of 88mm was registered at Mafeteng and the lowest rainfall of 20.4mm was recorded at Qacha’s Nek.

Cumulative percentage rainfall departure from Normal

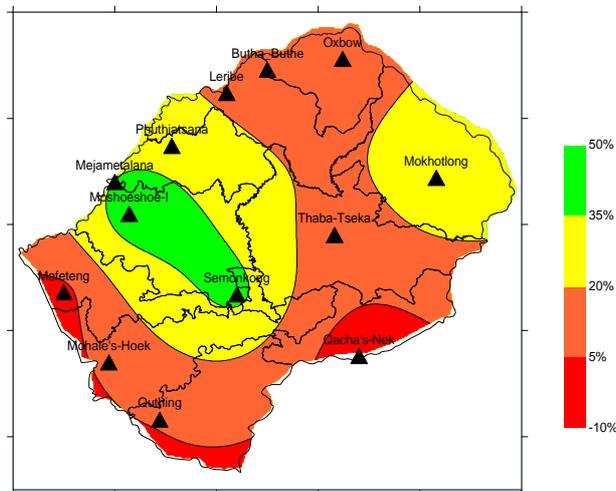


Fig.1: Cumulative rainfall departure from normal since 1st Sept to 20th March 2006.

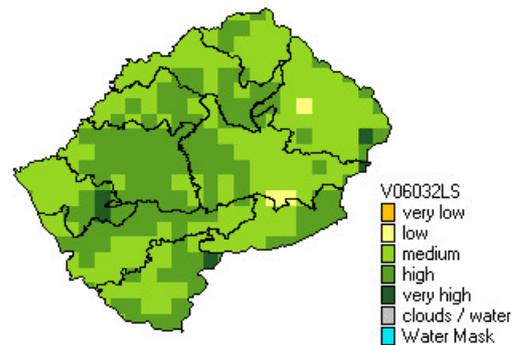
Relatively good actual cumulative rainfall was registered during this dekad. The percentage of normal rainfall map above depicts that the country received normal to above normal rainfall, except Qacha’s Nek which had deficit cumulative rainfall of 5%. These widespread substantial amounts of rain received over the whole country ranged from 10% to 40% of normal rainfall.

TEMPERATURE

Slightly below normal to slightly above normal temperatures were registered from our respective stations. However, temperatures have generally started decreasing, as the season progresses into Winter season and some stations registered below 5⁰C. This in turn depresses performance rate of the crops. Highest temperature of 28.6 was registered at Maseru Airport on the 16th, while the lowest temperature of 0.9⁰C was recorded at Semonkong on the 14th.

VEGETATION

Figure 2



The degree of greenness is medium to high with very small patches of low at Thaba-Tseka and Mokhotlong. These high degree of greenness indicates that the crops and the pastures have improved due to good rains received recently.

CROP STAGE AND CONDITION

Flowering and grain-filling is taking place especially within maize and this shows crops are still young, they may be at the risk of being caught by frost before maturing. Due to heavy received recently and improved agricultural scenario; harvesting is expected to be good as compared to last year at the same time. However, at some places crops were severely damaged affected by hail storms which caused some

damage to crops and some sustained permanent damage.

DEKADAL OUTLOOK

21st – 31st March 2006

Few frontal systems are expected to traverse over the sub-region and a shallow trough is still anticipated to oscillate over the region. As a

result, few thundershowers and rains are still expected to continue during this dekad. Temperatures will be generally warm.

Seasonal Outlook March – May 2006

Rainfall situation is expected to be near average for the period March – May 2006 and temperatures will be on average.

Table 1

Summaries		Rainfall and Temperature										
STATION	ALT.	Rainfall (mm)					Temperature (°C)					
		11 - 20 Mar 2006			Total From Sept05 to 2nd Dek Mar 06		11 - 20 Mar 2006					
NAME	(M)	Actual	Normal	Rain			%Dept. from	Minimum	Maximum	Dekadal	Dekadal	
		R/Fall	R/Fall	Days	Actual	Normal	Normal	Lowest(Day)	Highest (Day)	Mean	Normal	Deviation
Butha-Buthe	1770	42.1	41.0	8	735.4	670.0	10	8.2 (14)	26.0 (11)	17.9	18.1	-0.2
Leribe	1740	79.3	29.9	8		581.6		8.4 (13)	26.5 (11)	17.9	18.2	-0.3
Mafeteng	1610	88.4	31.5	7	536.7	530.7	1	5.5 (13)	25.2 (11)	16.8	18.0	-1.2
Maseru Airport	1530	-	28.9	8	-	531.2	-	7.9 (11)	28.6 (16)	19.7	19.2	0.5
Mohale's hoek	1600	75.1	29.2	8	610.2	552.0	11	6.0 (14)	28.0 (12)	19.2	18.7	0.5
Mokhotlong	2200	36.6	21.0	6	671.5	508.7	32	5.2 (14)	24.2 (17)	16.3	15.6	0.7
Moshoeshoe I	1628	83.6	34.5	8	853.0	595.7	43	7.0 (13)	25.7 (11)	17.3	19.0	-1.7
Ox-Bow	2600	47.5	48.6	8	1043.6	942.2	11	3.2 (11)	18.6 (13)	11.6	10.6	1.0
Phuthiatsana	1750	64.4	35.5	7	769.6	596.5	29	8.2 (13)	26.9 (11)	18.1	18.9	-0.8
Qacha's Nek	1970	20.4	28.8	6	609.7	643.8	-5	4.8 (13)	25.9 (11)	17.1	16.6	0.5
Quthing	1740	41.1	38.6	7	648.5	611.3	6	7.4 (13)	27.2 (11)	18.1	18.6	-0.5
Semonkong	2458	72.7	24.8	8	703.9	505.9	39	0.9 (14)	21.5 (11)	14.1	13.7	0.4
ThabaTseka	2160	81.3	25.8	5	574.7	516.3	11	4.6 (13)	22.6 (14)	14.9	15.4	-0.5

Fig.3

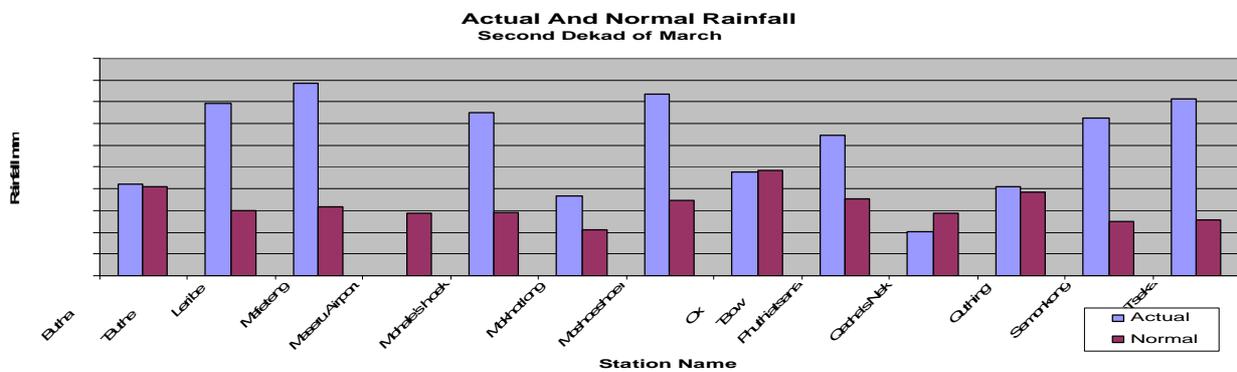
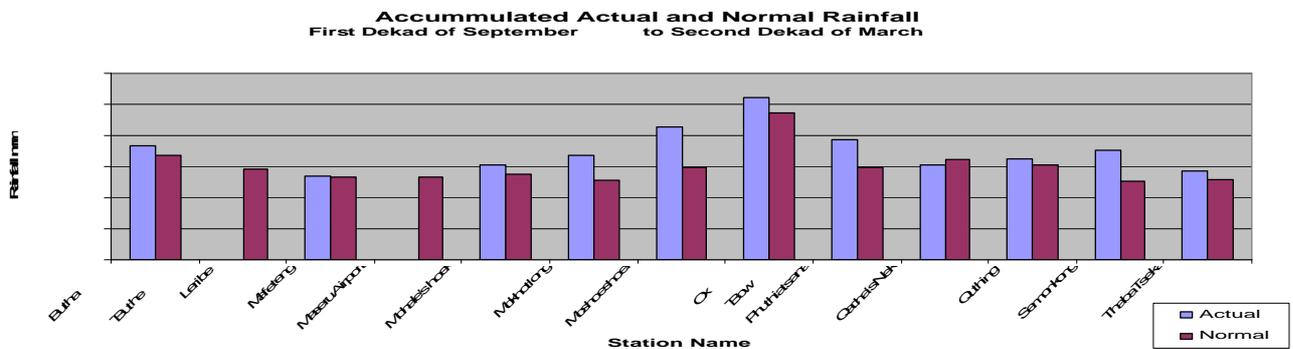


Fig.4



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.