

LESOTHO METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES (LEKALA LA TSA BOLEPI)



Ten-Day Agrometeorological Bulletin

1st – 30th November 2004



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

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Highlights

- ❑ Erratic rains registered during this period.
- ❑ High temperatures were experienced.
- ❑ Below normal wheat production expected.
- ❑ Planting in the Lowlands in progress.
- ❑ Light rains expected

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WEATHER SUMMARY

The month of November was generally characterised by dry weather condition. This was as a result of the sequence of shallow troughs that extended from the north western to the region. These conditions resulted in mostly convective activities that merely resulted in isolated thundershowers. However, on the 22nd relatively deep trough that extended to the upper level resulted in widespread rains. This also resulted in cool weather conditions that brought some significant drop in temperatures. But in general temperatures were warm to hot during this period.

RAINFALL SITUATION

The country received below normal to near normal monthly rainfall with the exception of Qacha's Nek. The lowest monthly rainfall was recorded at Mafeteng, Phuthiatsana and Quthing with 20.3mm, 39.1mm and 48.1mm respectively (Table 1 & Fig 2). The insignificant rains recorded in these areas affected negatively soil water availability and growth of the summer plants. On the other hand, Semonkong, Qacha's Nek and Oxbow registered relatively high monthly rainfall amounts of 82.8mm, 126.6mm and 156.4mm respectively (Table 1).

Cumulative percentage rainfall departure from Normal

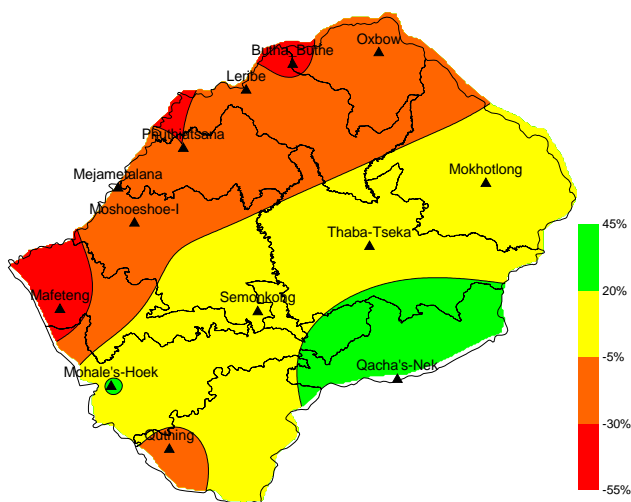


Fig.1: Cumulative rainfall departure from normal since 1st September to 30th November 2004.

Cumulative rainfall since 1st September to 30th November ranged from 81.6mm recorded at Mafeteng to the highest of 294.mm at Oxbow (Table 1 & Fig 3). As compared to the normal, cumulative rainfall is mostly below normal to normal with exception of mostly the eastern parts of the country which recorded above normal cumulative rainfall (Fig 1 & Table 1).

TEMPERATURE

The month of November recorded was hot with above normal temperatures experienced at most places. The deviations from normal vary from 0.1°C to 2.2°C in the lowlands and 0.6°C to 2.8°C in the highlands (Table 1). The 2nd dekad of November was the hottest with all the stations recording the highest maximum temperature in that dekad. All the stations in the lowlands registered temperatures above 30°C and over the highlands, Oxbow had the lowest maximum temperature of 22.5°C. High temperatures recorded resulted in high evapotranspiration and thus affect negatively the soil water.

CROP STAGE AND CONDITION

The crops in the highlands are reported to be in good state (as reported by the Crop Production officers) and the recent rains are satisfactory. In the Lowlands, the crops are at the emergence to early vegetative and majority of the arable land is still unplanted. Planting is still in progress in some parts of the low-lying areas.

The winter wheat in the Lowlands is at maturity stage with fair to good conditions. The wheat production will be below the normal production due to the small area planted caused mainly by the erratic rains in the beginning of the season.

DEKADAL OUTLOOK

1st – 10th December 2004

Shallow troughs are still expected to dominate during this period. This is expected to result in isolated rain and thundershowers over this period. Temperatures are mainly expected to warm to hot.

Table 1

Rainfall and Temperature Summaries												
		Rainfall (mm)					TEMPERATURE (°C)					
		01-30th Nov 2004			Total From 1st Sept. 04 to 30th Nov. 04				01-30th Nov 2004			
STATION NAME	ALT. (M)	Actual R/Fall	Rain Days	Normal R/Fall	Cum.Act & Nor. Rainfall		%Dept. from Normal	Minimum Lowest(Day)	Maximum Highest (Day)	Monthly Mean	Monthly Normal	Deviation
					Actual	Normal						
Butha-Buthe	1770	78.0	10	112.8	145.7	221.5	-34	7.2(23)	32.2(18)	19.7	17.5	2.2
Leribe	1740	51.3	11	96.9	154.3	202.1	-24	6.4(23)	32.6(18)	18.8	18.2	0.6
Mafeteng	1610	20.3	8	77.3	81.6	168.2	-51	5.3(23)	32.0(18)	19.2	18.1	1.1
Maseru Airport	1530	63.9	8	78.9	139.3	168.0	-17	8.4(23)	34.4(18)	19.1	19.0	0.1
Mohale's hoek	1600	77.0	10	79.6	214.3	171.9	25	6.5(23)	32.8(13)	19.1	18.5	0.6
Mokhotlong	2200	82.0	13	76.8	166.7	164.0	2	5.0(23)	28.9(18)	16.1	15.2	0.9
Ox-Bow	2600	156.4	19	162.5	294.0	349.8	-16	-1.0(1)	22.5(18)	12.4	9.6	2.8
Phuthiatsana	1750	39.1	8	88.0	128.4	183.3	-30	7.1(23)	33.1(18)	20.7	19.3	1.4
Qacha's Nek	1970	126.6	14	93.5	282.9	201.2	41	5.5(23)	28.8(12)	17.9	16.1	1.8
Quthing	1740	48.1	12	90.2	171.3	200.5	-15	7.4(23)	31.2(18)	18.9	18.2	0.7
Semonkong	2458	82.8	12	70.0	188.9	168.0	12	0.0(23)	26.1(18)	13.9	13.3	0.6
Moshoeshoe I	1628	68.0	12	83.2	168.3	187.0	-10	7.7(23)	32.5(18)	20.3	18.8	1.5

Fig. 2

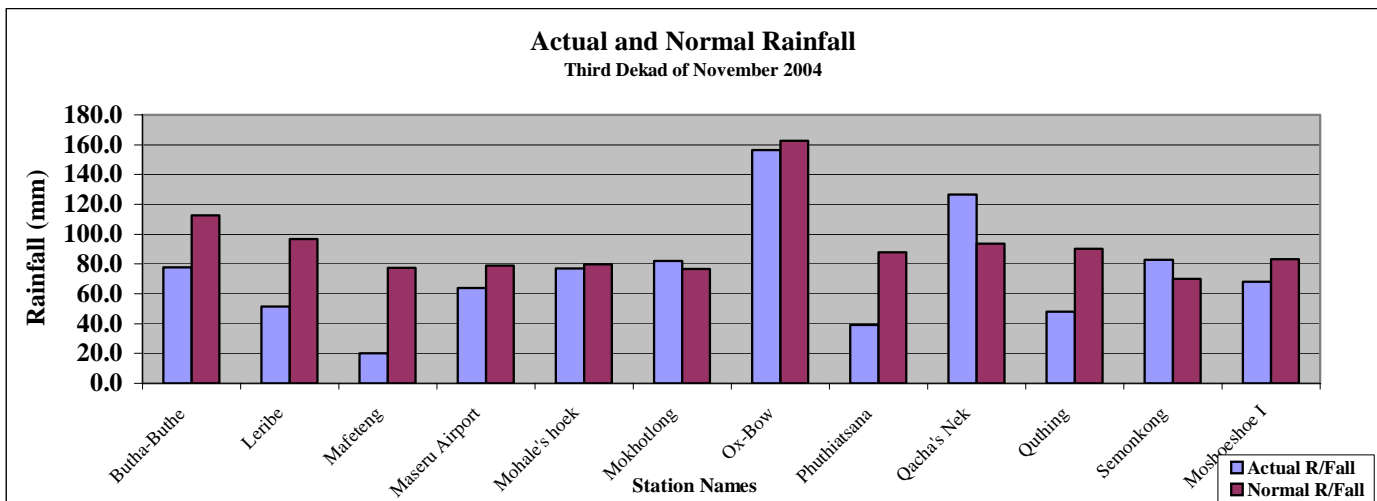
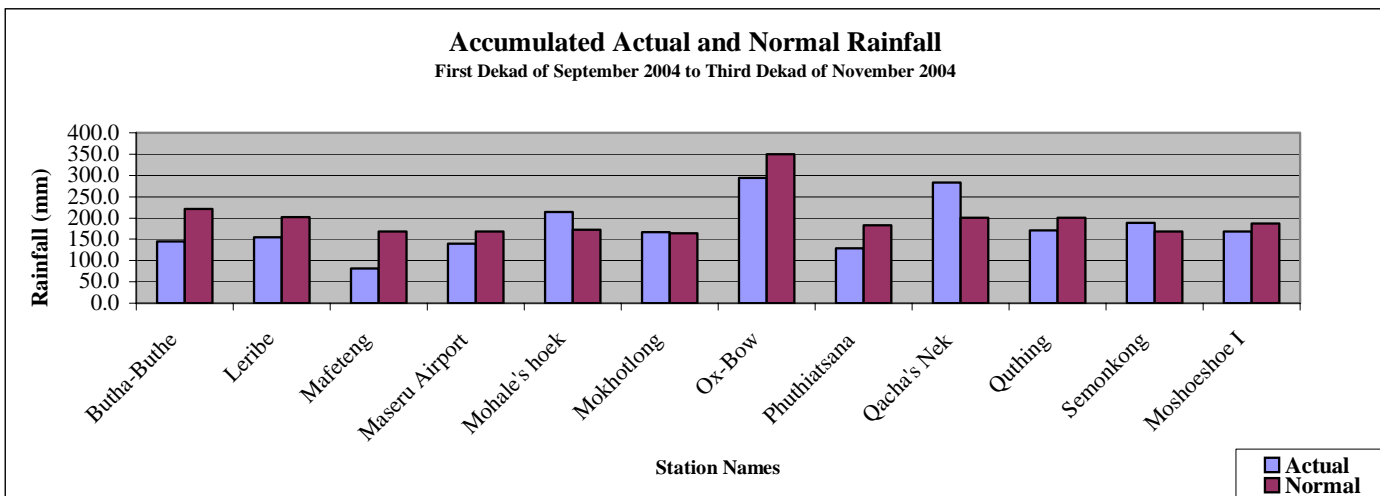


Fig.3



Glossary

Dekad : Ten day period

Normal: Average figure over a specific time period.

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

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.