

LESOTHO METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES (LEKALA LA TSA BOLEPI)



Ten-Day Agrometeorological Bulletin

1 – 10 November 2008



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

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Highlights

- ❑ Good rains experienced during the dekad
- ❑ Normal mean temperatures experienced in most places.
- ❑ Agricultural activities confined to limited time

The Director
Lesotho Meteorological Services
Agrometeorological Section
P.O. Box 14515
Maseru 100, Lesotho

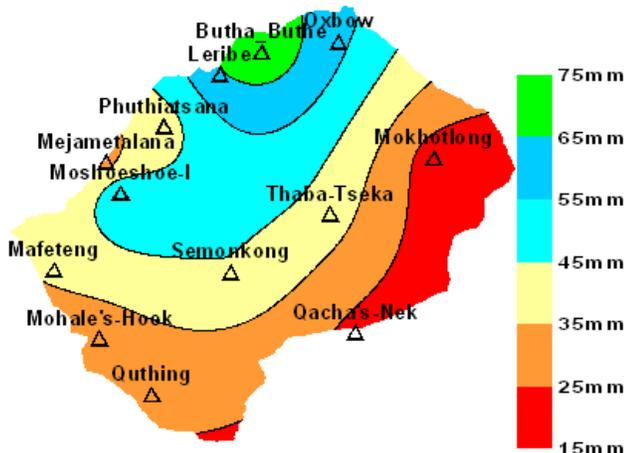
TEL: (+266) 22324374
FAX: (+266) 22325057/22350325
E-mail: agrometeorology@lesmet.org.ls
<http://www.lesmet.org.ls>

DEKADAL WEATHER SUMMARY

The first half of the period was generally dry while the second half experienced some rainfall. That was as a result of a dry subtropical trough which brought about just partly cloudy conditions over the interior during the first half. Nevertheless, the trough intensified towards the end of the dekad and gathered a little moisture that resulted in considerable rainfall coupled with strong winds towards the end of the dekad.

RAINFALL SITUATION

Rains were recorded during the last two days of the dekad. Northern parts of the country experienced highest dekadal rainfall while the eastern parts of the country recorded lowest amounts of dekadal rainfall (see Map 1). Dekadal rainfall was normal to above normal except for the eastern parts of the country where it was below normal. Butha-Buthe (73.1mm) and Mokhotlong (19.6mm) registered highest and lowest dekadal rainfall respectively. It was the first time that the country in general had good rainfall since the commencement of the current rainfall season.



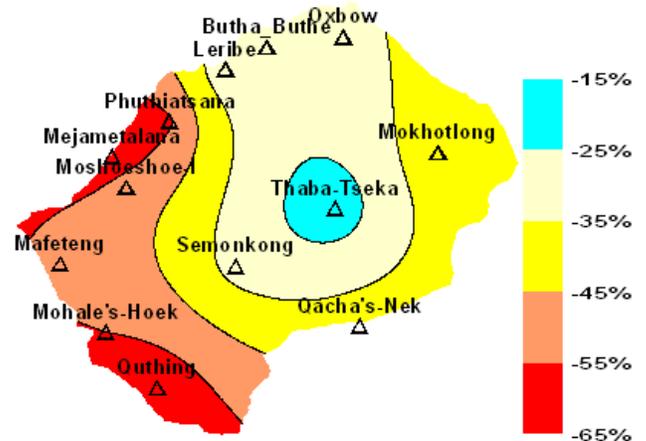
Map 1: Dekadal Rainfall for November 1st Dekad 2008

Temporal distribution of rainfall varies from place to place. Number of rain days range from one day (Mohale's Hoek) to five days (Butha-Buthe).

Cumulative Percentage Rainfall Departure from Normal

Cumulative rainfall since the first dekad of September remains below normal at most parts of the country and normal only at Thaba-Tseka (see Map 2

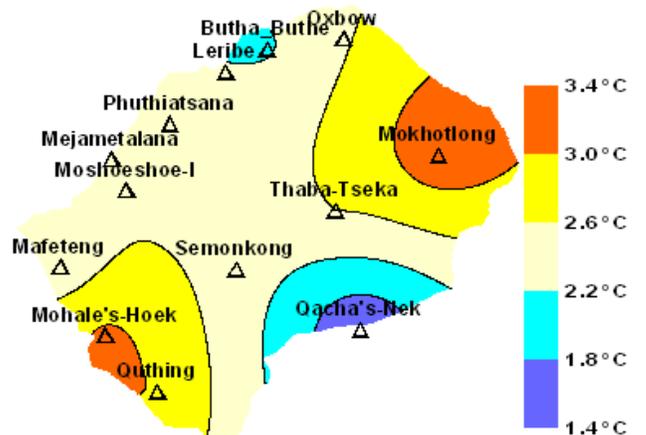
& Fig.2). Recent rainfall has slightly improved cumulative.



Map 2: Cumulative Rainfall % Departure from Normal

TEMPERATURE

Temperatures during the first dekad of November 2008 were mostly normal. However, some parts as shown in Map 3 were noticeably hot (Mokhotlong and Mohale's Hoek). Dekadal mean temperature deviations ranged from minimum of 1.4°C (Qacha's Nek) to maximum of 3.3°C (Mokhotlong).



Map 3: Dekadal Mean Temperature Deviation from Normal

RAINFALL ANOMALIES

A break to a lengthy dry spells was effected by the rains that were recorded mainly towards the end of the dekad. Dry spells were persistent since winter until the first dekad of November (see Fig 3). Soil moisture was improved at most places of the country due to recent rains.

CROP STAGE AND CONDITIONS

Soil moisture has improved and it should facilitate planting at most parts of the country. But it is important to note that arrival of rains was late and planting of maize is left with theoretically about five days (planting is encouraged until November 15th). Thus planting of cereal crops has passed with very few fields cultivated. Failure to timely cropping was as a result of agricultural drought that prevailed for the last four months

At this stage horticulture and fodder production is encouraged. Wheat and beans can still be planted but their yield may be compromised.

Wheat grown in winter is at kernel forming stage and its conditions range from bad to fair.

Pastures and livestock in general are in bad state. It may take some time and well distributed rainfall before any significant improvement can be anticipated. Water resources are also fully stretched in most parts of the country. Due to recent rains an improvement in potable water availability is expected.

DEKADAL OUTLOOK

11 – 20 November 2008

Isolated to scattered rain and thundershowers are anticipated in the first half of the dekad, and during the last two days of the forecast period. Otherwise the remaining days are expected to be dry due to the retrogression of the subtropical trough. The period is expected to experience mild to warm temperatures. These conditions should allow for planting.

Fig. 1

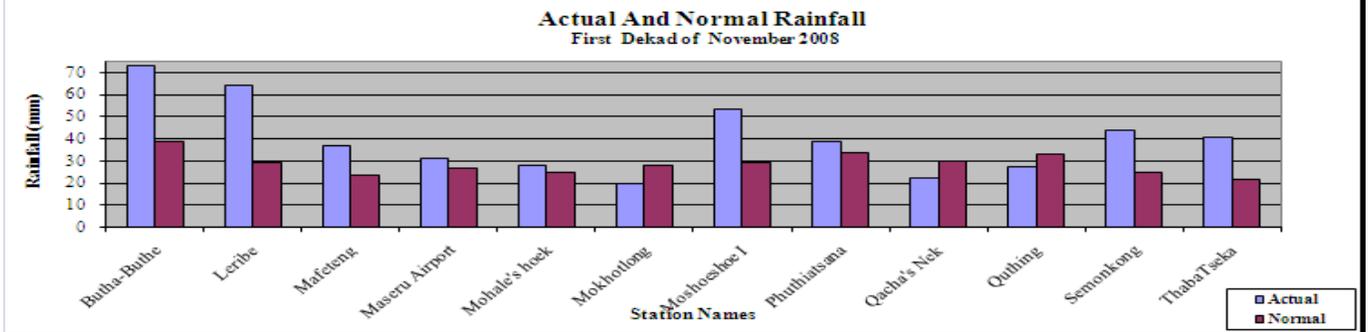


Fig. 2

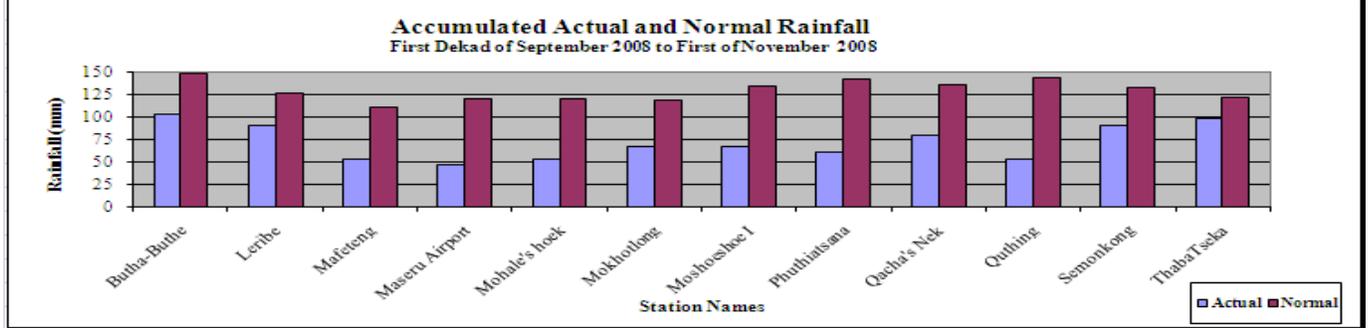
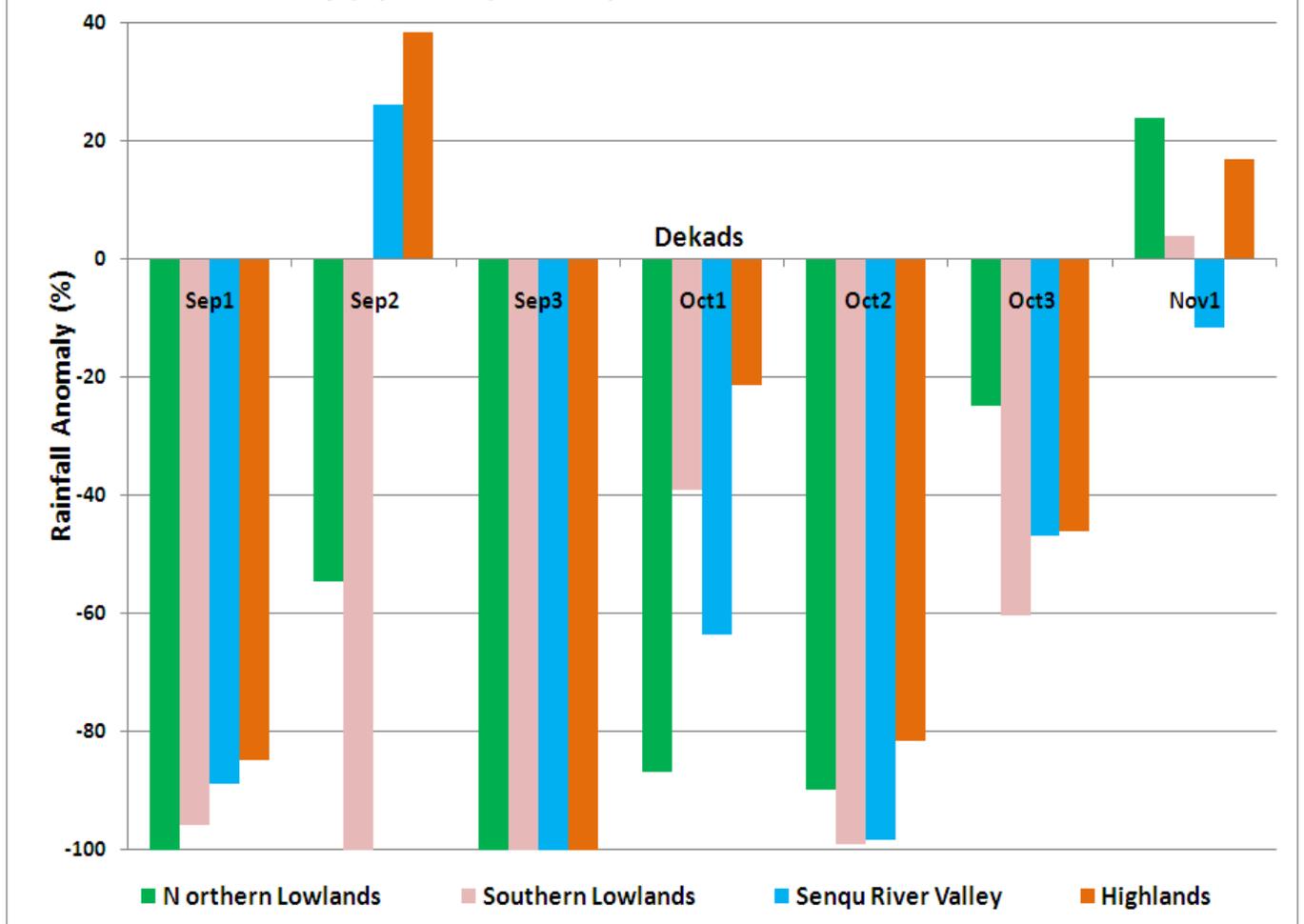


Fig.3

Rainfall Anomaly (%) for the period September Dekad 1, 2008 to November Dekad 1, 2008



Glossary

Dekad : Ten day period

Normal: Average figure over a specific time period.

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

NDVI: Normalized Difference Vegetation Index – simply implies how good or bad the vegetation is for the specific period.

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And it is

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Comments and Contributions would be highly appreciated.