

LESOTHO METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES (LEKALA LA TSA BOLEPI)



Ten-Day Agrometeorological Bulletin

11 – 20 November 2008



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

Contents

Weather Summary
Page 1

Rainfall Situation
Page 1

Temperature
Page 1

Crop Stage and Condition
Page 1

Dekadal Outlook
Page 2

Rainfall and Temperature
Summaries
Page 3

Glossary
Page 4

Highlights

- ❑ Good rains experienced during the dekad
- ❑ Cumulative rainfall improving
- ❑ Normal mean temperatures experienced in most places.
- ❑ Planting in progress.

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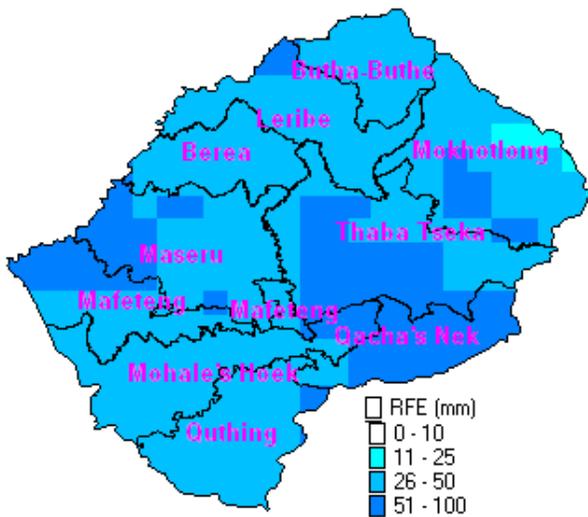
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DEKADAL WEATHER SUMMARY

The period was dominated by a well developed interior trough typical of a summer system. However, the period also experienced mainly cloudy conditions due to shallow atmospheric moisture at times.

RAINFALL SITUATION

Most parts of the country recorded good rains during the second dekad of November 2008. Normal to above normal dekadal rainfall was registered except at Quthing, Mokhotlong and Butha-Buthe where dekadal rainfall was below normal. Mejametalana (54mm) and Mokhotlong (5.2mm) had highest and lowest dekadal rainfall respectively (see Map 1). The dekad under review became the second dekad to have relatively good rainfall after its predecessor.

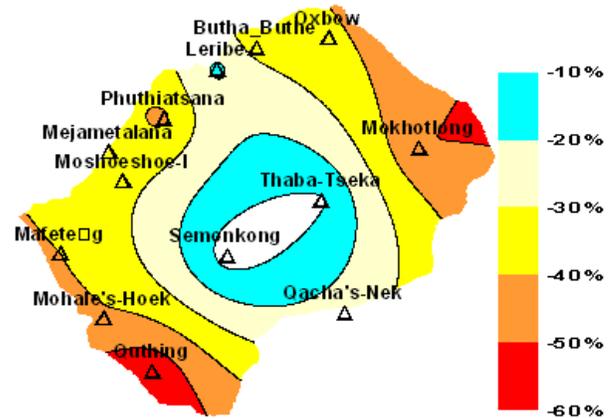


Map 1: Dekadal Rainfall for November Dekad 1, 2008

Number of rain days ranged from two days (Mohale’s Hoek) to five days (Semonkong). Rain came mainly during the first and last two days of the period.

Cumulative Percentage Rainfall Departure from Normal

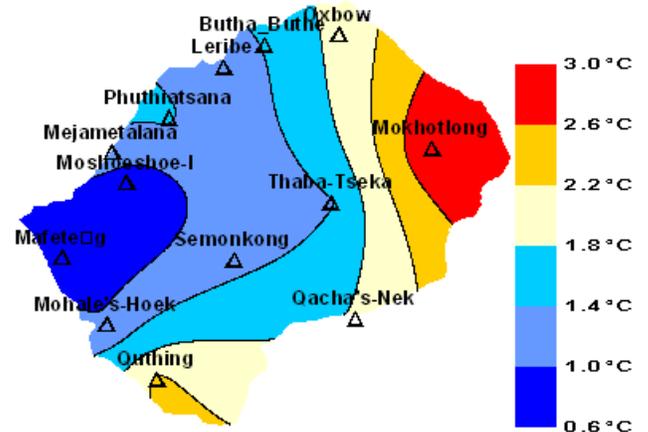
Cumulative rainfall since the first dekad of September is normal only at Thaba-Tseka, Semonkong and Leribe. Otherwise, it remains below normal at other parts of the country. There have been some improvements in cumulative rainfall at most places during the last two dekads reflecting that there have been sustained soil moisture in the last two periods.



Map 2: Cumulative Rainfall % Departure from Normal

TEMPERATURE

Temperatures remained mostly normal during the second dekad. Nevertheless, huge mean temperature deviations were experienced at Mokhotlong (just like during previous dekad) which may be due dry weather that prevailed during the period (see Map 3). Dekadal mean temperatures deviations ranged from minimum of 0.7°C (Moshoeshoe 1) to maximum of 3.0°C (Mokhotlong).



Map 3: Dekadal Mean Temperature Deviation from Normal

RAINFALL ANOMALIES

Fig 3 below depicts that agroecological zones as a whole recorded normal rainfall. But it should be noted that spatial distribution in the zone may vary from place to place and details are as described earlier. This was the second successive dekad that rainfall was normal in all zones. Thus soil moisture must be improved at most in all zones. However, some areas in the northeast (around Mokhotlong) may not be at par with the rest of the country.

CROP STAGE AND CONDITIONS

Planting is in progress at most parts of the country and farmers countrywide are racing against time to have seeds in the soil. Cultivation started during the reporting period. This may be described as a late planting at some places especially in the highlands where planting maize and sorghum may not be encouraged at this time due to likely frost attack later in the season.

Due to time constraints, cash crops and fodder production are encouraged. Wheat and beans can still be planted but their yield may be compromised.

Wheat grown in winter is at maturing and its conditions range from bad to fair.

Pastures and livestock are generally improving but current conditions are not good enough. Water resources have improved.

DEKADAL OUTLOOK

21 – 30 November 2008

Generally dry and warm to hot weather conditions are anticipated over a greater part of the forecast period. However, isolated to scattered thundershowers are expected towards the end of the dekad with a drop in temperatures. This would be as a result of an influx of moist air from the Indian Ocean Anticyclone coupled with moist air from the tropics. This depicts that field work can be carried for the major part of the coming dekad.

Fig.1

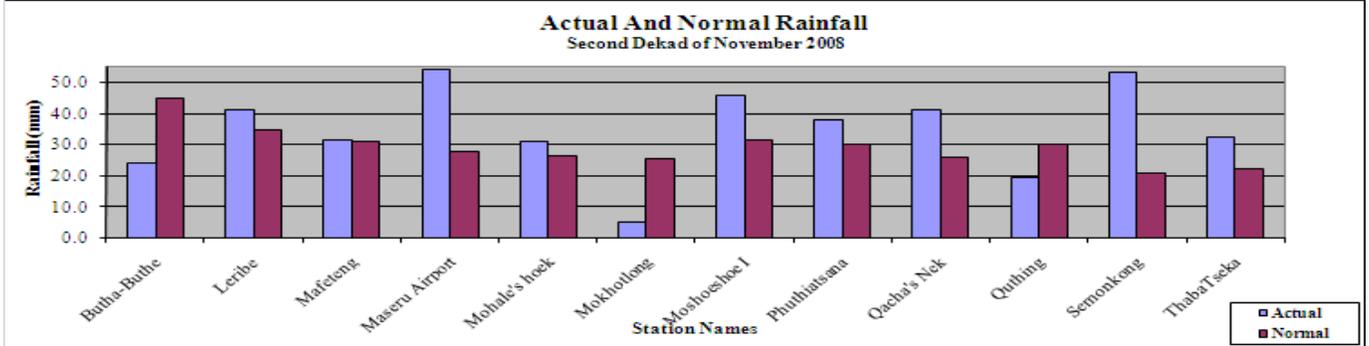
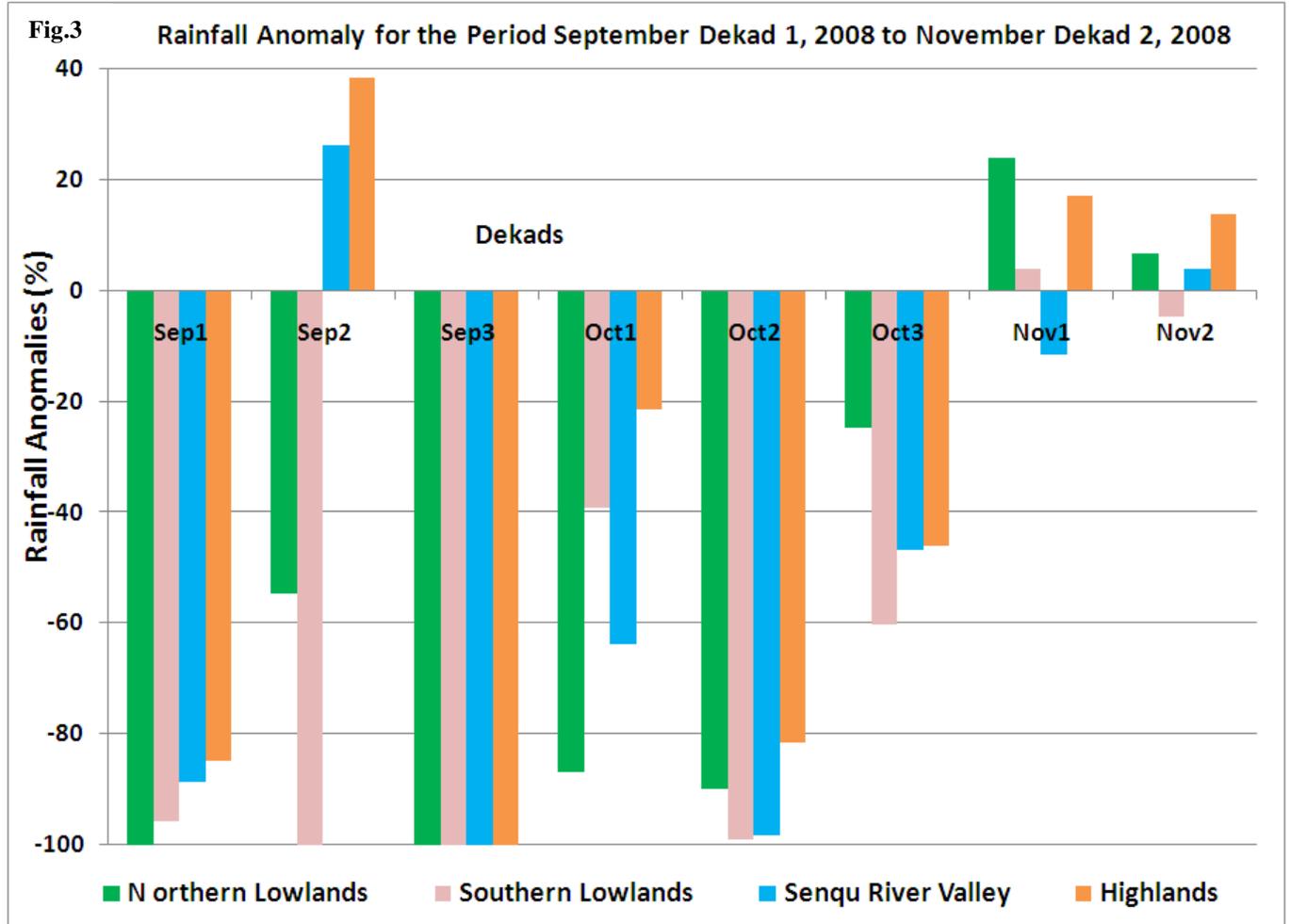
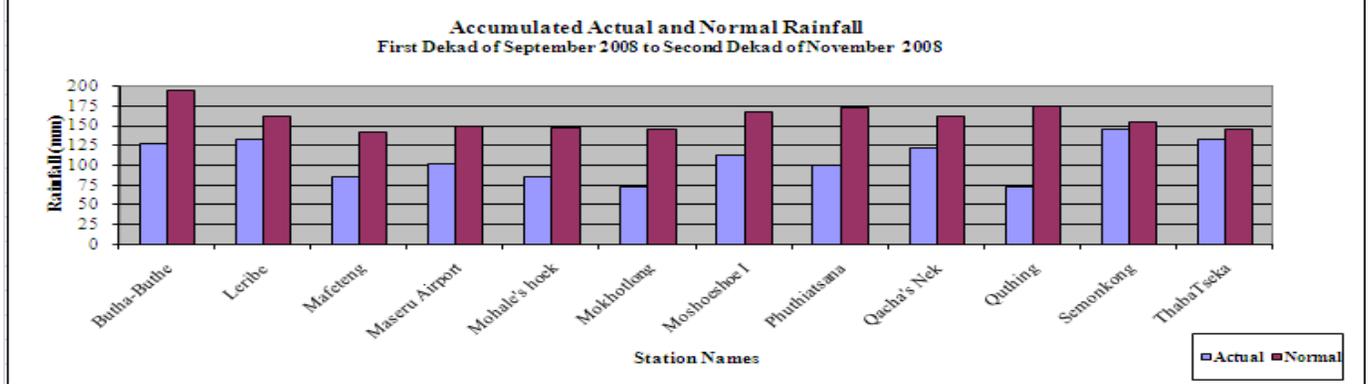


Fig.2



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.