

LESOTHO METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES (LEKALA LA TSA BOLEPI)



Ten-Day Agrometeorological Bulletin

21st – 30th November 2003



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

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Highlights

- ❑ Lower rainfall amounts experienced.
- ❑ Planting in the lowlands seriously hampered by dry spells.
- ❑ Dry and hot weather conditions are still expected during this dekad.
- ❑ Below normal to normal rainfall can be expected during the period Dec 02 – Jan 04.

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Weather Summary
21st – 30th November 2003

A shallow interior trough dominated the last dekad of November, resulting in only light isolated thundershowers. This dekad was drier than previous dekad.

RAINFALL SITUATION
21st – 30th November 2003

The country experienced lower rainfall amounts as compared to the previous dekad. The third dekad of November registered highly variable rainfall with Thaba-Tseka, Ox-Bow, Mafeteng and Mokhotlong recording the highest rainfall of 59mm, 28.3mm and 28.2mm respectively. In contrast, MoshoeshoeI, Semonkong, Quthing and Maseru- Airport registered very low rainfall of 3.2mm, 4mm, 5mm and 7.9mm (see table 1). The amount of rainfall recorded mostly over the lowlands is below the optimum water requirements for wheat hence impacted negatively on the water available for the crop. All the stations recorded below normal dekad rainfall with the exception of Leribe and Thaba-Tseka that registered normal to above normal rainfall (see table1 & fig.4).

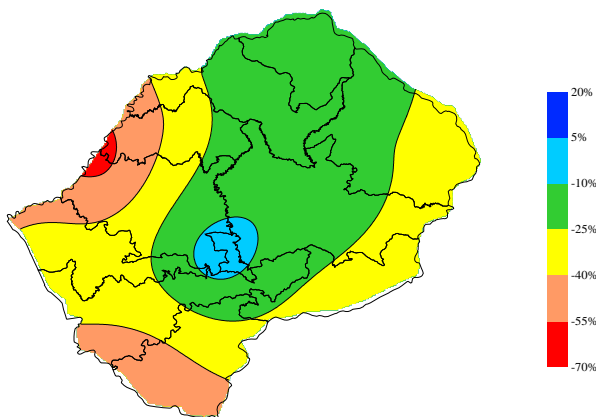


Fig.1: Cumulative rainfall departure from normal since 1st Sept to 3rd dekad. Nov 03.

Cumulative rainfall since 1st September to 3rd dekad of November ranges from 67.2mm to 261.9mm. Majority of the stations experienced below normal cumulative rainfall (see fig5). This is also explained by the negative percentage departure from normal (fig1) whereby the

extreme western, the southern, northwestern to central west regions are the worst affected by rainfall deficit.

TEMPERATURE
21st – 30th November 2003

Temperatures recorded throughout the country were above normal (see table 1). The deviation ranged from 0.6°C to 2.2°C. Stations over the lowlands (Maseru Airport, Mohale’s hoek, Phuthiatsana, Quthing and MoshoeshoeI) registered temperatures greater than 30°C, this coupled with low rainfall induce moisture stress.

CROP STAGE AND CONDITION
21st – 30th November 2003

Summer crops (maize, sorghum, wheat) are at emergence to vegetative stage especially over the highland areas where planting started as early as August/September. Crop growth is much affected by the dry spells that have resulted in depleted soil moisture to support the crop. Over the lowlands planting is in progress but it is hampered by the existing lack of rainfall hence progression on planting activities is minimal.

Winter wheat is at milking stage with poor condition.

DEKADAL OUTLOOK
01st – 10th December 2003

The first dekad of december is still expected to remain dry and hot like the previous dekad, especially the first half of the dekad. However, isolated thundershowers can be expected during the last half of the dekad.

SEASONAL OUTLOOK
(December 03 – January 2004)

Light isolated thundershowers are expected to continue during this period, however there is a high likelihood below normal to normal rainfall.

Table 1

Rainfall and Temperature Summaries												
		Rainfall (mm)					Temperature (°C)					
					Total From Sept 03 to 3rd Dek Nov 03							
STATION	ALT.	Actual	Normal	Rain			% Dept. from	Minimum	Maximum	Dekadal	Dekadal	
NAME	(M)	R/Fall	R/Fall	Days	Actual	Normal	Normal	Lowest(Day)	Highest (Day)	Mean	Normal	Deviation
Butha-Buthe	1770	14.5	35.6	2	157.7	192	-18	8.2(30)	29.7(26)	20.2	18.6	1.6
Maseru Airport	1530	7.9	33.1	2	67.2	175.4	-62	9.4(30)	32.5(26)	21.0	19.1	1.9
Mohale's hoek	1600	15.5	29.3	3	106.7	173.5	-39	9.5(30)	30.5(26)	20.0	19.4	0.6
Mokhotlong	2200	28.2	30.5	4	116.5	157.8	-26	4.5(30)	26.4(26)	17.5	15.1	2.4
Ox-Bow	2600	28.3	55.0	4	261.9	336.1	-22	3.0(29)	19.9(26)	12.9	10.8	2.1
Phuthiatsana	1750	13.8	30.7	2	102.9	183.3	-44	9.8(30)	32.0(26)	21.0	18.8	2.2
Qacha's Nek	1970	20.7	30.8	5	120.3	187.3	-36	3.1(30)	28.6(27)	18.7	16.5	2.2
Quthing	1740	5.0	28.4	3	87.4	187.9	-53	8.2(30)	31.1(26)	20.5	18.3	2.2
Semonkong	2458	4.0	30.8	1	176.5	177.4	-1	-0.9(30)	24.8(26)	14.6	14.0	0.6
Moshoeshoe I	1628	3.2	31.9	4	89.7	181.7	-51	10.0(29)	32.2(26)	21.0	N/A	N/A
Leribe	1740	22.7	27.5	4	128.2	167.9	-24	8.9(30)	29.9(26)	20.1	18.9	1.2
Thaba-Tseka	2160	59.0	28.3	4	136.8	161.1	-15	4.4(30)	25.8(26)	16.6	15.9	0.7
Mafeteng	1610	28.2	31.0	4	111.3	162.2	-31	5.5(29)	28.0(26)	19.1	18.5	0.6

Fig.4

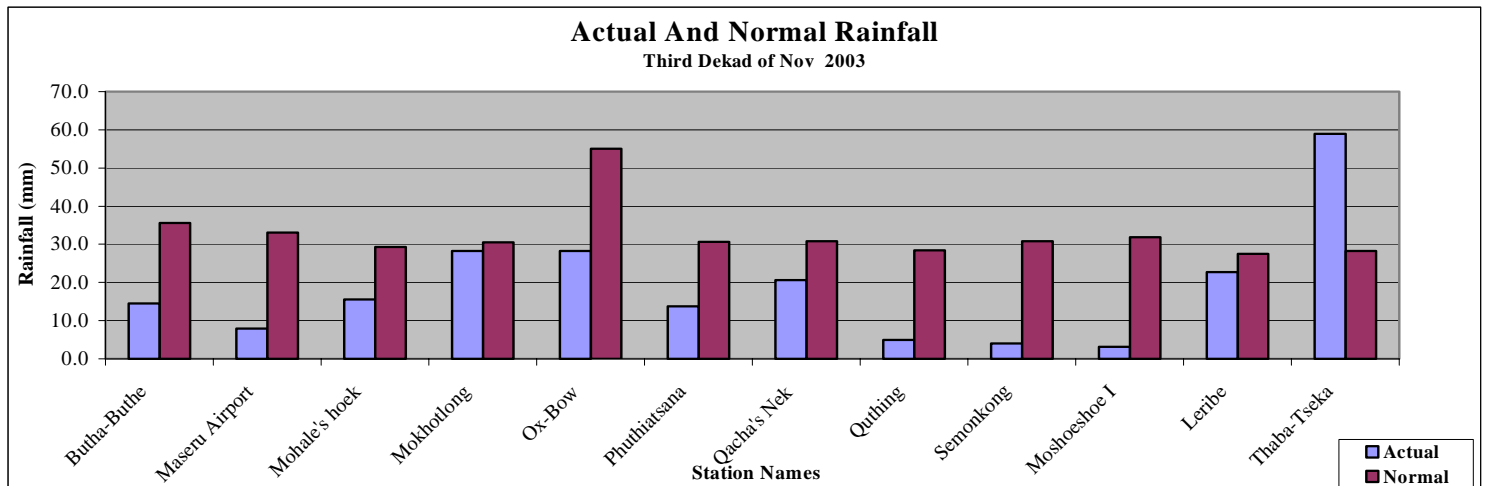
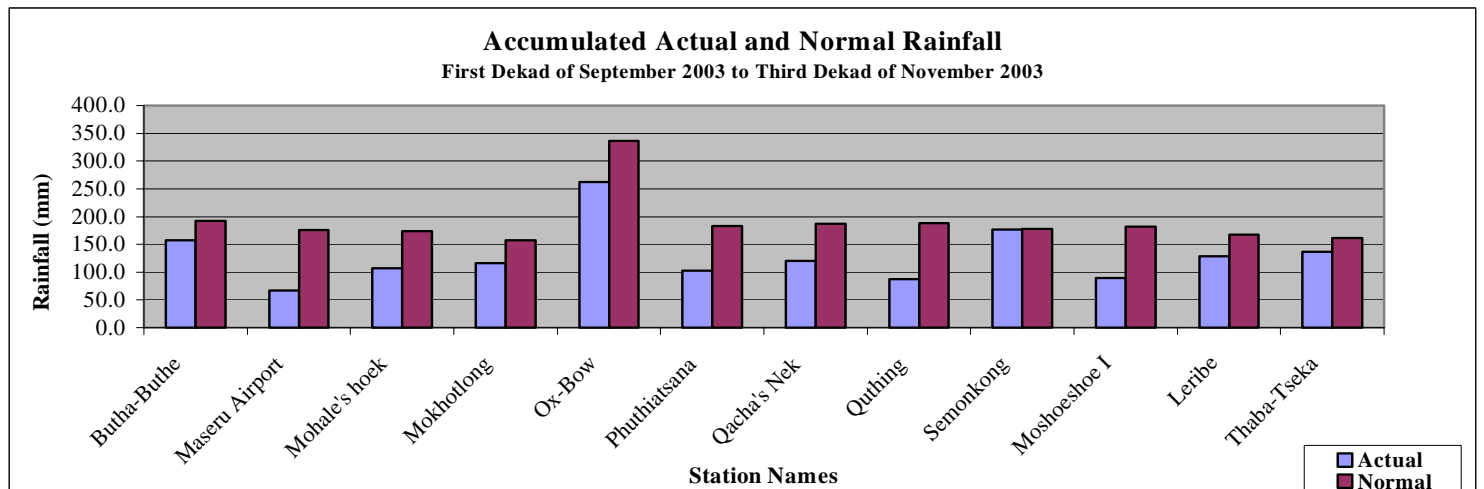


Fig.5



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.