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Agro-Met Monthly Update:

November 2008

Date of issue: December 2008

Highlights

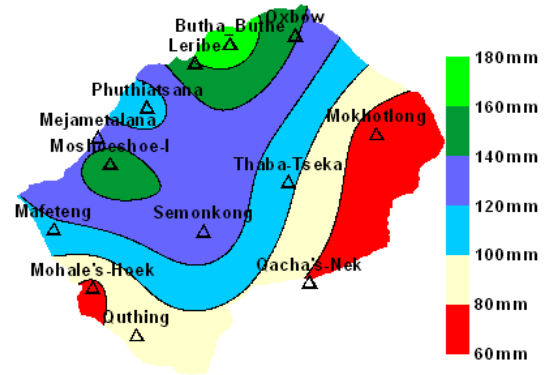
1. Wet weather experienced in most parts of the country
2. Hot temperatures experienced during the month
3. Cropping season has commenced
4. Vegetation conditions have improved in most parts of the country

Rainfall

Monthly Actual Rainfall

Wet conditions prevailed during the month of November 2008. Above normal monthly rainfall was recorded at most parts of the country during the month. Below normal monthly rainfall was recorded at Mokhotlong in the northeast only. The period under review ended what has been a long dry spells that persisted since July 2008. Highest and lowest monthly rainfall was 174mm (Butha-Buthe) and 66.8mm (Mokhotlong) respectively (see Map 1).

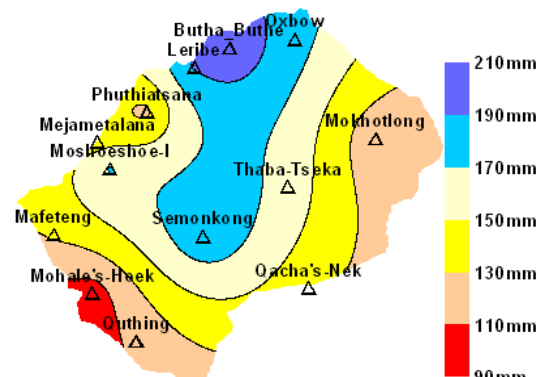
Rain days ranged from six days to fifteen days at Mohale's Hoek and Butha-Buthe respectively.



Map 1: November 2008 Monthly Rainfall

Cumulative Rainfall since September 2008

Accumulated rainfall since September varies from being below normal at some places to normal at others. It shows an improvement at some parts of the country due to rains that were received during the month. Lowest cumulative rainfall amounts are mainly observed in the southwestern and northeastern parts of the country. Northern parts of the country (Leribe and Butha-Buthe) have managed to register a considerable amount of rainfall during November alone (see Map 2).



Map 2: Cumulative Rainfall (Sept-Nov 2008)

Temperatures

The month of November was hot. Normal to above normal monthly mean temperatures were experienced during the month. The first two dekads of the month registered above normal mean temperatures while the last dekad of the

month had mainly below normal mean temperatures. Highest daily maximum temperature recorded during the month was 32.4°C at Mejametalana on the 6th.

Crop Stage and Conditions

Planting of summer cereals began during the month of November in most parts of the country. It started largely during the second dekad. There was little time available for planting as the rains came late and recommended planting dates were passed. Crops (maize & sorghum) were at germinating and early vegetative stages by the end of the month, and planting was still in progress.

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

Water and livestock conditions

Pastures and livestock are generally improving. Water resources have improved at most parts of the country, but queues at rural water sources are still observed at some areas of the southern lowlands.

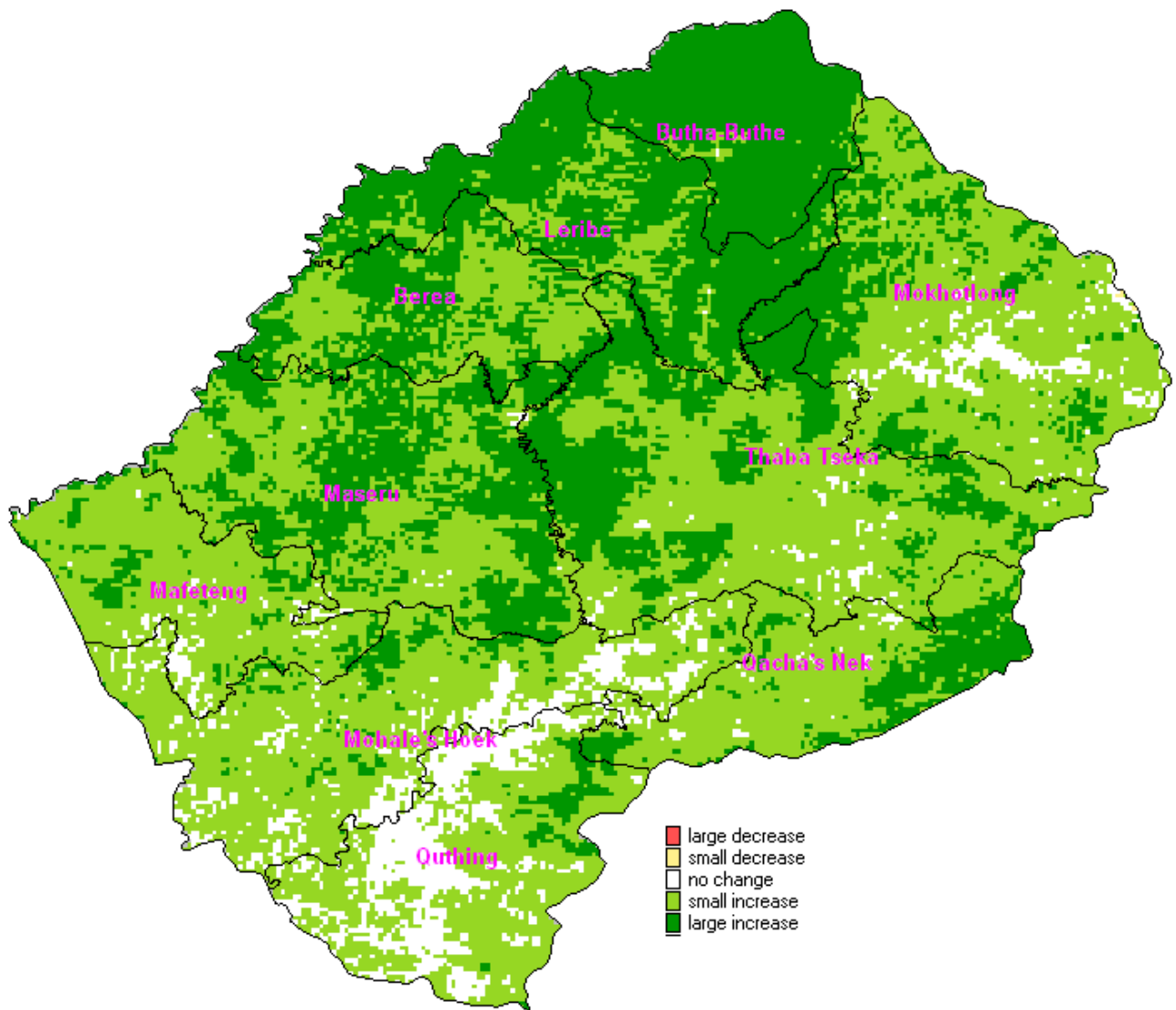
Vegetation monitoring

Vegetation conditions have generally improved during the month November (see Map 3). When first and last dekads of the reporting period are

compared, improvement is most seen mainly in the northern parts of the country, and no major improvements in the some parts of the southern and eastern areas as well as Senqu River Valley where vegetation conditions remain low.

Weather Outlook (October - December 2008)

In general near normal rainfall is expected during October- December Season (OND). Most parts of the lowlands including the South-eastern Highlands have a high likelihood of receiving normal to above normal rainfall while the major parts of the Highlands including the North-western are likely to receive normal to below normal rainfall during OND.



Map 3: SPOT Image, Difference between first & last dekads November 2008