

# LESOTHO METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES (LEKALA LA TSA BOLEPI)



## Ten-Day Agrometeorological Bulletin

11 – 20 October 2008



Issue No.2/2008-09

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

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## Highlights

- ❑ Lengthy dry spells are continuing
- ❑ Above normal mean temperatures experienced in most places.
- ❑ No agricultural activities in progress.

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**DEKADAL WEATHER SUMMARY**

Mostly isolated rain showers and thundershowers were experienced due to little tropical moisture advection into the subcontinent induced by the passage of cold fronts over the southern interior. There was a Ridging Anticyclone over the interior inhibited moisture influx into the subcontinent thereby preventing the onset of rainfall in Lesotho.

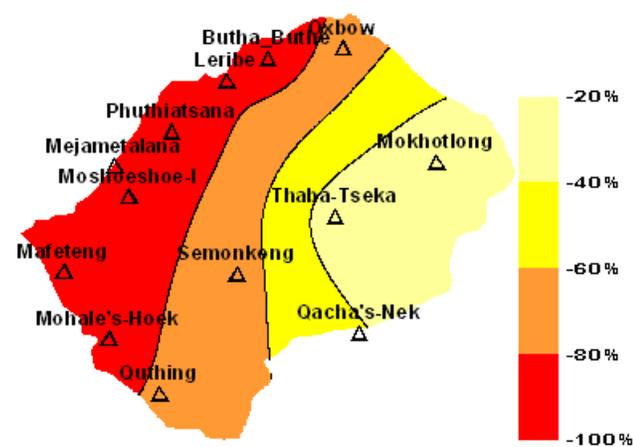
**RAINFALL SITUATION**

The second dekad of October 2008 was dry. It follows a series of dry dekads since the beginning of the agricultural season. In fact, dry spells in the country have been persistent since the month of July 2008. The highest dekadal rainfall was recorded at Thaba-Tseka (21.1mm) while the rest of the country recorded less than 10mm of rainfall. Phuthiatsana, Mafeteng and Mohale’s Hoek had no rainfall during the dekad under review.

The maximum number of rain days during the dekad under discussion is two days.

**Cumulative Percentage Rainfall Departure from Normal**

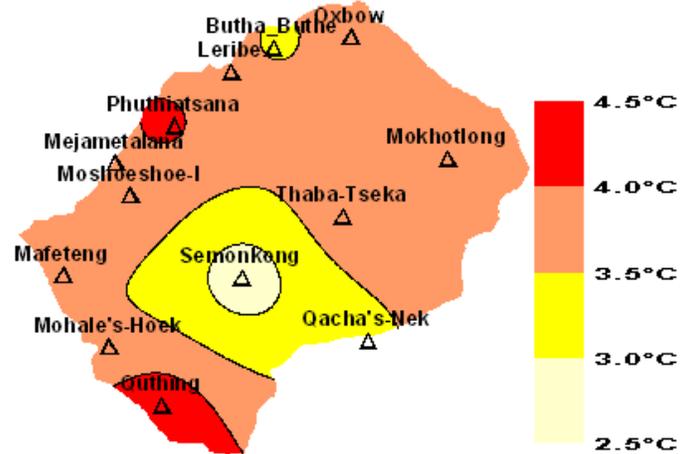
Cumulative rainfall since the first dekad of September is below normal countrywide (see Map 2 & Fig.2). Due to the persisting dry spells and hence low cumulative rainfall the soil is left with no moisture and practically no soil preparations can be performed.



Map 2: Cumulative Rainfall % Departure from Normal

**TEMPERATURE**

The second dekad of October 2008 was very hot when compared to normal. Mean temperature were significantly above normal countrywide (see Map 3). Phuthiatsana and Quthing were the hottest areas. High temperatures usually increase rates of evapotranspiration.



Map 3: Dekadal Mean Temperature Deviation from Normal

**RAINFALL ANOMALIES**

Rainfall performance continued to be poor. The country is about to finish a series of four consecutive months without rainfall. Fig.3 below shows the rainfall anomalies in percentages in different agroecological zones since September. Dry spells had been prominent since September and there have been very little rainfall activities. Due to this conditions onset of the agricultural season was further delayed and the planting time is shortened.

**CROP STAGE AND CONDITIONS**

Practically the onset of agricultural season has not started. Moisture content of the soil is very low and it cannot allow planting. Farmers planting maize in the lowlands still have the month of November but one month is normally not enough for planting. Sorghum planting possibility is fast fading away. In the highlands onset of the season for maize and sorghum has basically failed. In general, it can be anticipated that area planted for cereals will be low in this season.

Wheat grown in winter is at vegetative stages and conditions range from bad to fair.

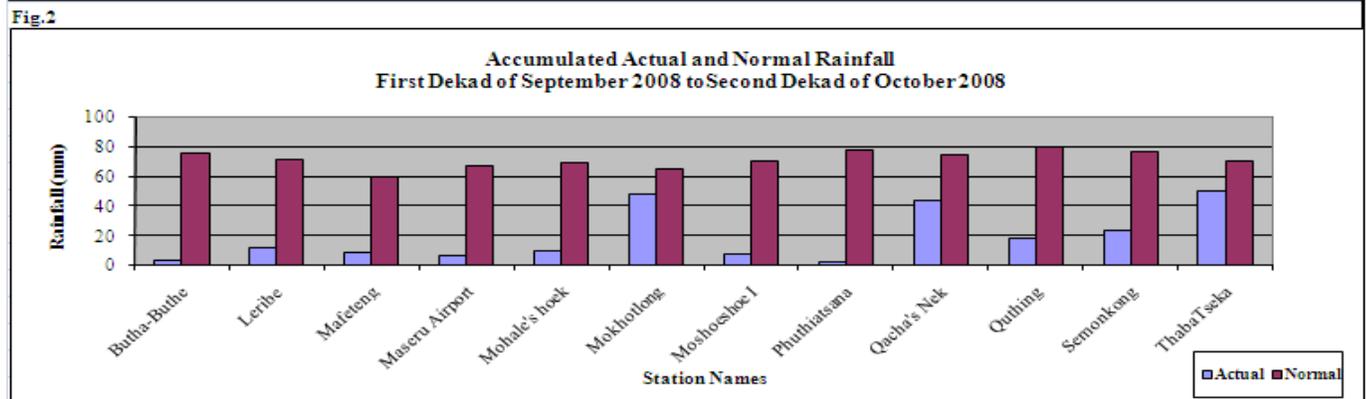
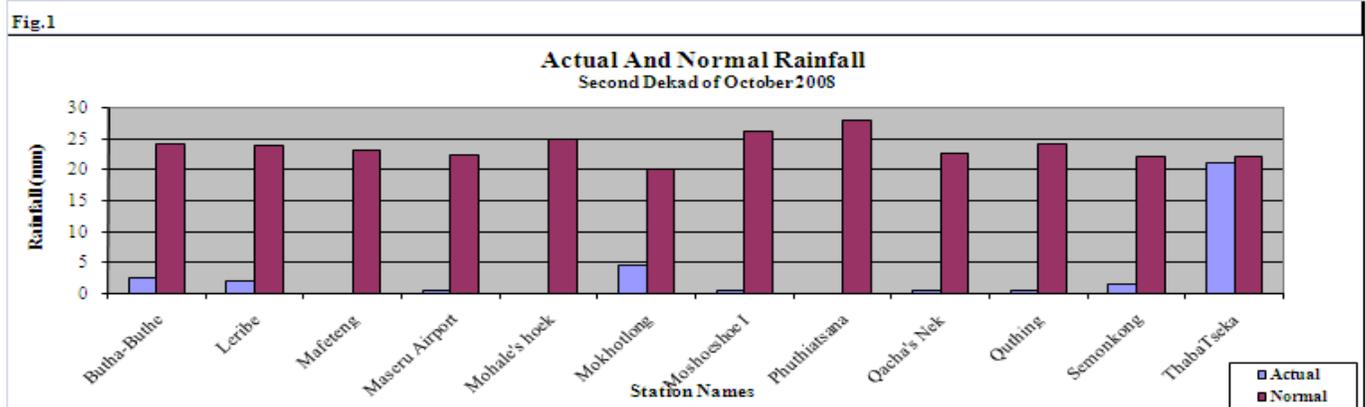
Pastures and livestock in general are in bad state. Water resources are also fully stretched in most parts

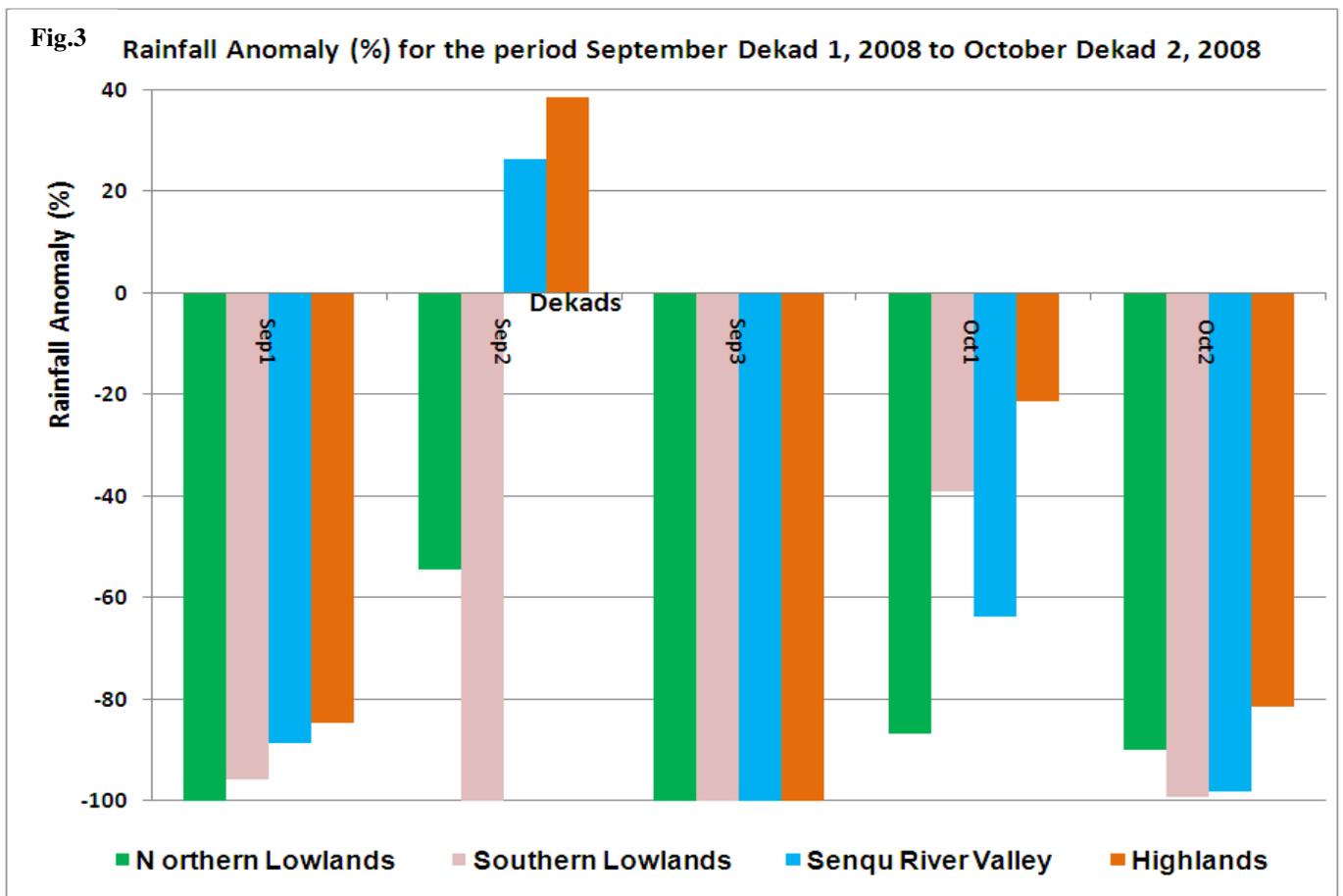
of the country. Potable water shortages are reported at some places and water rationing are reported at some places.

Isolated to scattered rain showers and thundershowers are anticipated in the next dekad. Thus next dekad is expected to be predominantly dry. *Expected rains should not bring any significant improvements to current conditions and this implies that onset of the rains will be further delayed.*

**DEKADAL OUTLOOK**

11 – 20 October 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.

This Bulletin is issued during the Summer Cropping Season (October – April).

And it is

Produced by the

Lesotho Meteorological Services as a contribution to the  
National Early Warning Unit for Food Security.

The Unit is coordinated by the Disaster Management Authority in the  
Prime Minister's Office.

Comments and Contributions would be highly appreciated.