

LESOTHO METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES (LEKALA LA TSA BOLEPI)



Ten-Day Agrometeorological Bulletin

21st – 31st October 2003



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

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Highlights

- ❑ Slight increase in rainfall observed.
- ❑ Cumulative rainfall still remains below the expected normal.
- ❑ Soil moisture over several places may not be adequate to support cropping.
- ❑ Abnormally high temperatures experienced.
- ❑ Large scale cropping over the lowland areas has not yet started.
- ❑ Winter wheat experienced some retardation in development.
- ❑ Normal rainfall expected for November to January.

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Weather Summary
21st – 31st October 2003

Rainfall situation improved slightly during the last dekad of October, especially during the last half. This was due to a surface trough, which has been dominant over the interior, causing an influx of moist air from the tropics. This trough deepened on the 31st and a frontal system passed over the southern parts of the sub-region. The combination of these systems resulted in widespread thundershowers, with selected places receiving exceptionally heavy downpours, e.g. Semonkong recorded 63.5mm in 24 hours. Temperatures were generally warm to hot during this period.

RAINFALL SITUATION
21st – 31st October 2003

Slight increase in rainfall was observed over this dekad relative to the previous dekad. Despite that, several other reporting stations have registered below their respective normal rainfall (see table1 & fig.4). The extreme northern parts of the country that covers Butha-Buthe and Ox-Bow registered considerably high rainfall amounts of 46.3 and 57.8mm respectively. The central region also registered significant rainfall amounting to 64.9mm. In contrast, Qacha’s Nek in the central east registered the lowest rainfall of 3.2mm. The remainder of the country received rainfall within 11mm to 28.5mm.

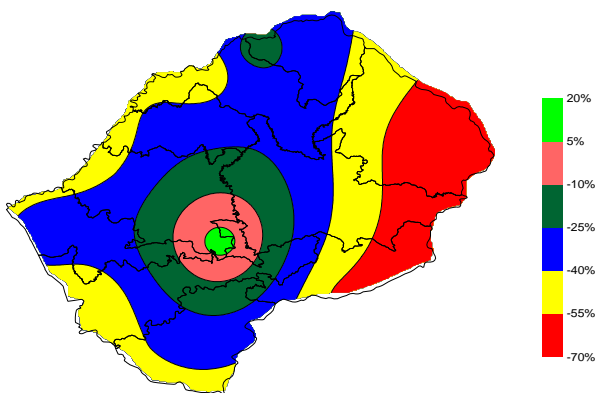


Fig.1: Cumulative rainfall departure from normal since 1st Sept to 3rd dek.Oct 03.

Despite some slight increase in rainfall received, cumulative rainfall since 1st September to date

still remains below the expected normal for the period with an exception of Semonkong that has so far reached its normal rainfall. Although there has been an increase in rainfall, soil moisture over several places may not be adequate to support cropping except in the northern and central regions where moisture deficit is not so critical (see fig.1)

TEMPERATURE
21st – 31st October 2003

The dekad experienced abnormally high temperatures as compared to dekad normal. This is depicted by relatively high positive temperature deviations (see table 1). The high temperatures could promote rapid loss of soil moisture through evaporation.

CROP STAGE AND CONDITION
21st – 31st October 2003

Summer cropping over the highland areas is in progress and some crops are at emergence stage. Crops (maize, sorghum) that suffered frost attack are reported to be improving. On the other hand, cropping over the lowland areas has not started on a large scale, due to unfavourable soil condition caused by dry conditions.

Winter wheat has experienced some redertation in development that resulted from the prolonged drought conditions, hence the crop is still at vegetative to milking stage.

DEKADAL OUTLOOK
01st – 10th November 2003

Light thundershowers over a few places are expected to continue during this forecast period, especially during the first half of the dekad. Temperatures are anticipated to remain mild to hot.

SEASONAL OUTLOOK
(November – January 2003)

Rainfall situation is anticipated to improve during this period. Normal rainfall is expected to occur marking the onset of relieving rains.

Table 1

Rainfall and Temperature Summaries												
		Rainfall (mm)					TEMPERATURE (°C)					
				Rain Days	Total From Sept 03 to 3rd Dek Oct 03		%Dept. from Normal	Minimum	Maximum	Dekadal	Dekadal	Deviation
STATION NAME	ALT. (M)	Actual R/Fall	Normal R/Fall		Actual	Normal		Lowest(Day)	Highest (Day)	Mean	Normal	
Butha-Buthe	1770	46.3	25.2	5	77.4	93.8	-18	5.0(27)	28.6(28)	18.3	16.9	1.4
Mafeteng	1610	28.4	23.0	4	55.4	83.5	-33	5.1(27)	28.0(24,28)	18.1	16.9	1.2
Maseru Airport	1530	11.6	23.3	3	43.9	91.8	-52	5.5(27)	29.7(28)	19.5	16.9	2.6
Mohale's hoek	1600	16.5	26.2	2	45.0	97.9	-54	6.5(27)	30.0(24,30)	19.4	17.6	1.8
Mokhotlong	2200	19.0	23.7	7	27.6	79.4	-65	1.5(21)	26.2(28)	15.7	13.9	1.8
Ox-Bow	2600	57.8	49.0	6	116.6	180	-35	0.6(23)	21.2(28)	10.6	9.4	1.2
Phuthiatsana	1750	12.3	26.0	4	58.6	91.4	-36	6.0(27)	30.5(28)	19.5	17.3	2.2
Qacha's Nek	1970	3.2	28.6	2	41.9	104.8	-60	5.4(27)	28.2(29)	18.6	15.3	3.3
Quthing	1740	24.3	28.0	2	62.7	106.1	-41	7.5(21)	29.3(24)	19.4	16.7	2.7
Semonkong	2458	64.9	26.3	3	116.6	103.1	13	N/A	N/A	13.8	11.4	2.4
Moshoeshoe I	1628	15.8	23.8	5	51.4	91.4	-40	6.7(27)	30.1(25)	19.3	N/A	N/A
Leribe	1740	17.0	22.6	5	43.8	90.7	-52	4.4(27)	29.1(28)	18.5	17.4	1.1

Fig.4

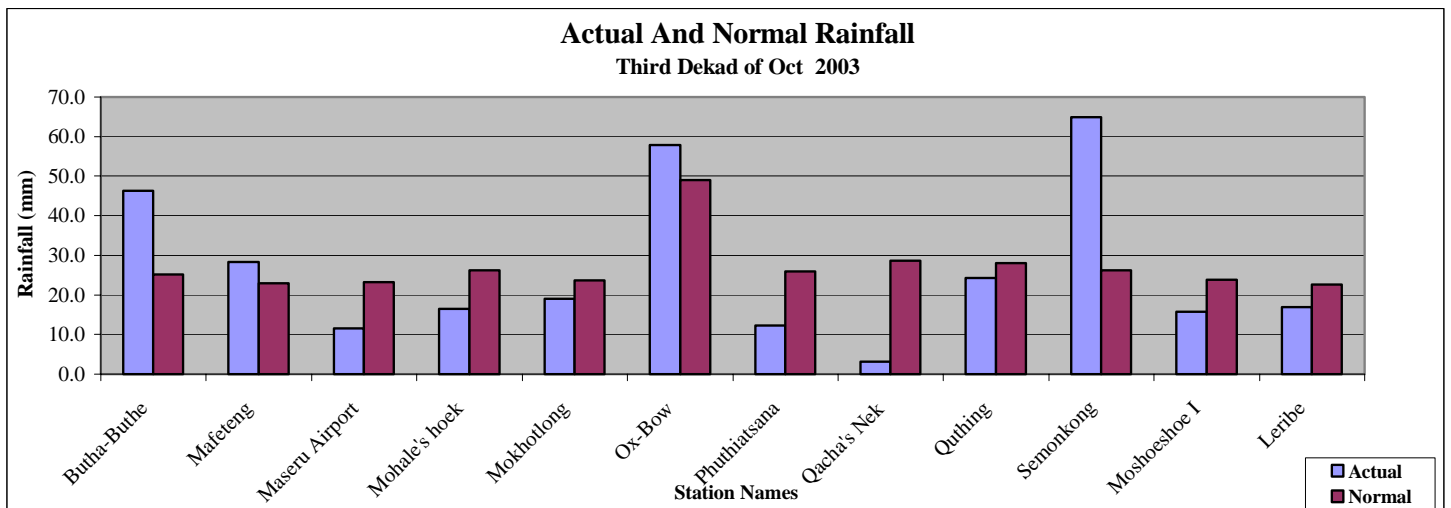
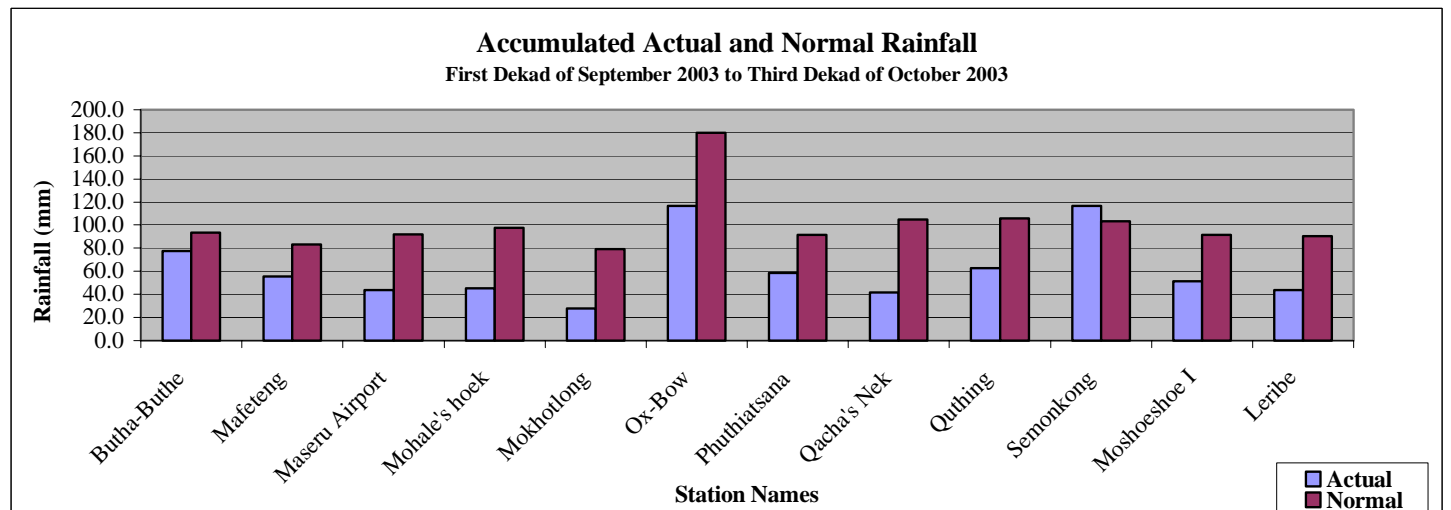


Fig.5



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.