

LESOTHO METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES (LEKALA LA TSA BOLEPI)



Ten-Day Agrometeorological Bulletin

21 – 31 October 2008



Issue No.3/2008-09

*...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

- ❑ Dry spells still expected to continue
- ❑ Normal mean temperatures experienced in most places.
- ❑ No agricultural activities in progress.

The Director
Lesotho Meteorological Services
Agrometeorological Section
P.O. Box 14515
Maseru 100, Lesotho

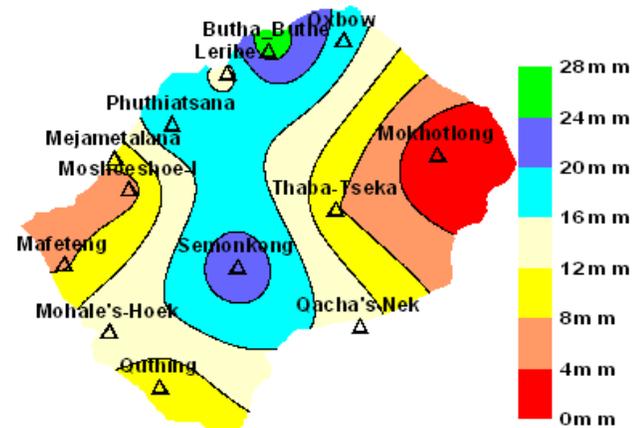
TEL: (+266) 22324374
FAX: (+266) 22325057/22350325
E-mail: agrometeorology@lesmet.org.ls
<http://www.lesmet.org.ls>

DEKADAL WEATHER SUMMARY

Dry and hot conditions continued unabated. Scattered rain showers and thundershowers were experienced. The interior surface trough remained shallow and inactive over much of the southern interior resulting in little tropical moisture influx into the subcontinent. Weak westerly waves continued to sweep over the southern parts of the interior with the Atlantic Ocean Anticyclone maintaining a ridge behind them thereby confining the interior surface trough to the north and inhibiting moisture influx into the country.

RAINFALL SITUATION

The last dekad of October 2008 remained dry like its predecessors. However, there were some scattered thundershowers with below normal rainfall (see Map 1). During the dekad under review rainfall performance could not bring any significant improvements to the prevailing conditions. The highest and lowest dekadal rainfall was recorded at Butha-Buthe (26.7mm) and Mokhotlong (0.2mm).



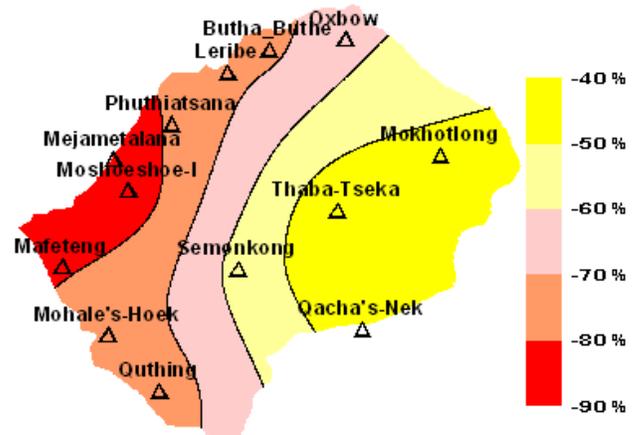
Map 1: Dekadal Rainfall for October 3rd Dekad 2008

Number of rain days range between a day at Mohale's Hoek and Moshoeshoe 1 to four days at Quthing, Semonkong and Leribe.

Cumulative Percentage Rainfall Departure from Normal

Cumulative rainfall since the first dekad of September remains below normal countrywide (see Map 2 & Fig.2). There have been poor performance

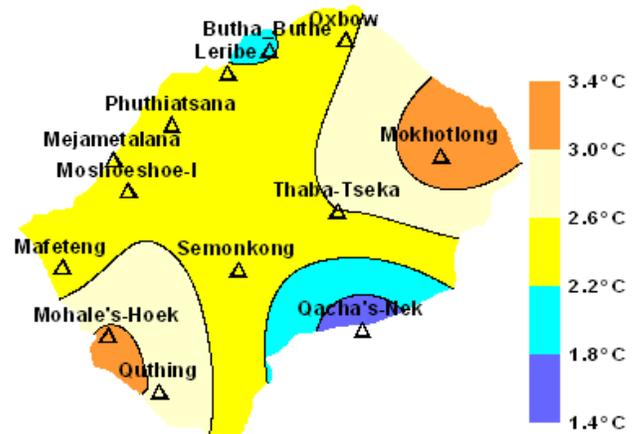
of rainfall since the inception of rainy season and cumulative rainfall has consistently been at deficit.



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

Dry spells still persisted through out the month of October 2008. Since the month of July rainfall performance has been really poor countrywide and dry spells were prominent. Fig. 3 below shows that since September all areas of the country experienced below normal rainfall. Onset of planting season for major crops has lost more than a month due to these conditions.

CROP STAGE AND CONDITIONS

Rainfall has been deficient and planting of maize and sorghum has not started. Actually planting should have started more than a month ago (depending on different areas) but until now very little if not nothing has been done. Although the month of November can be used for planting maize to some certain extend, one month is normally not enough for planting.

The whole country is on the verge of missing agricultural season and that would result in adverse effect on the livelihood patterns and general health of the people especially the rural communities.

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. Drinking water in Maseru has been supplied through the Lesotho Highlands Development Authority system. Potable water shortages are reported at some places and water rationing are reported.

DEKADAL OUTLOOK

1 – 10 November 2008

Mostly isolated rain showers and thundershowers are anticipated especially in the northern parts during the next forecast period. *This implies that dry conditions are expected to continue and there is a high likelihood that there will be no improvements.*

Fig. 1

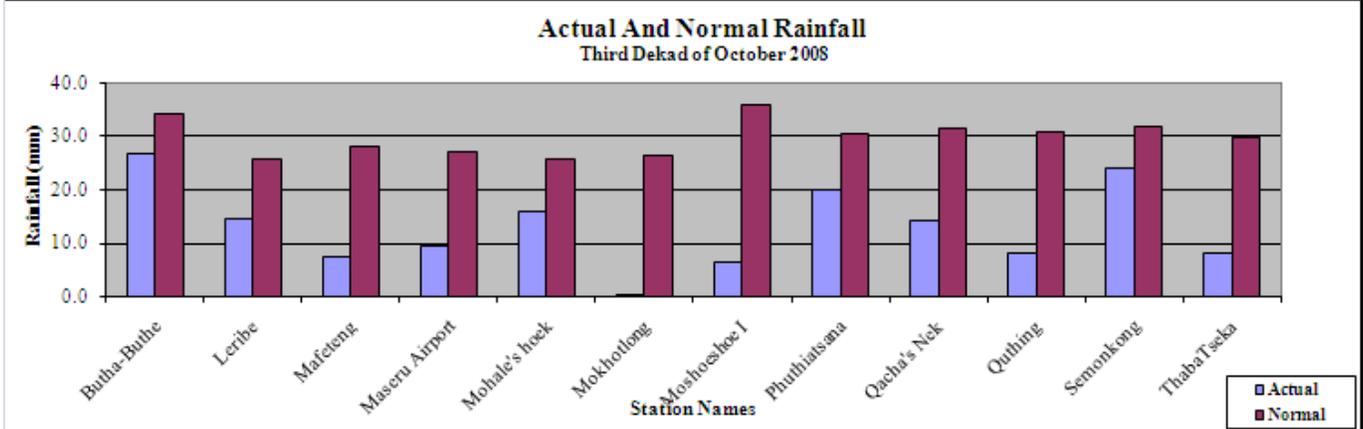


Fig. 2

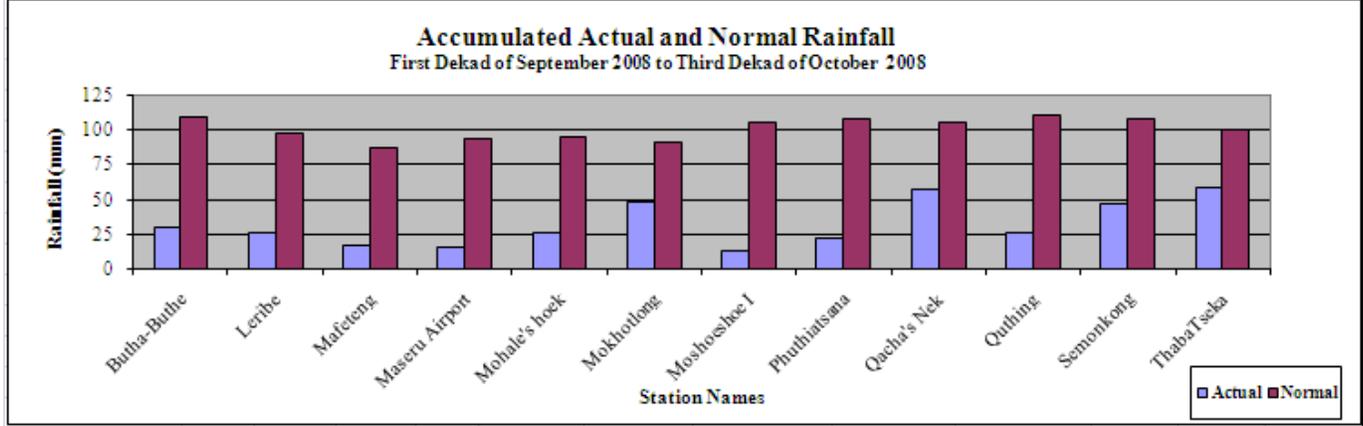
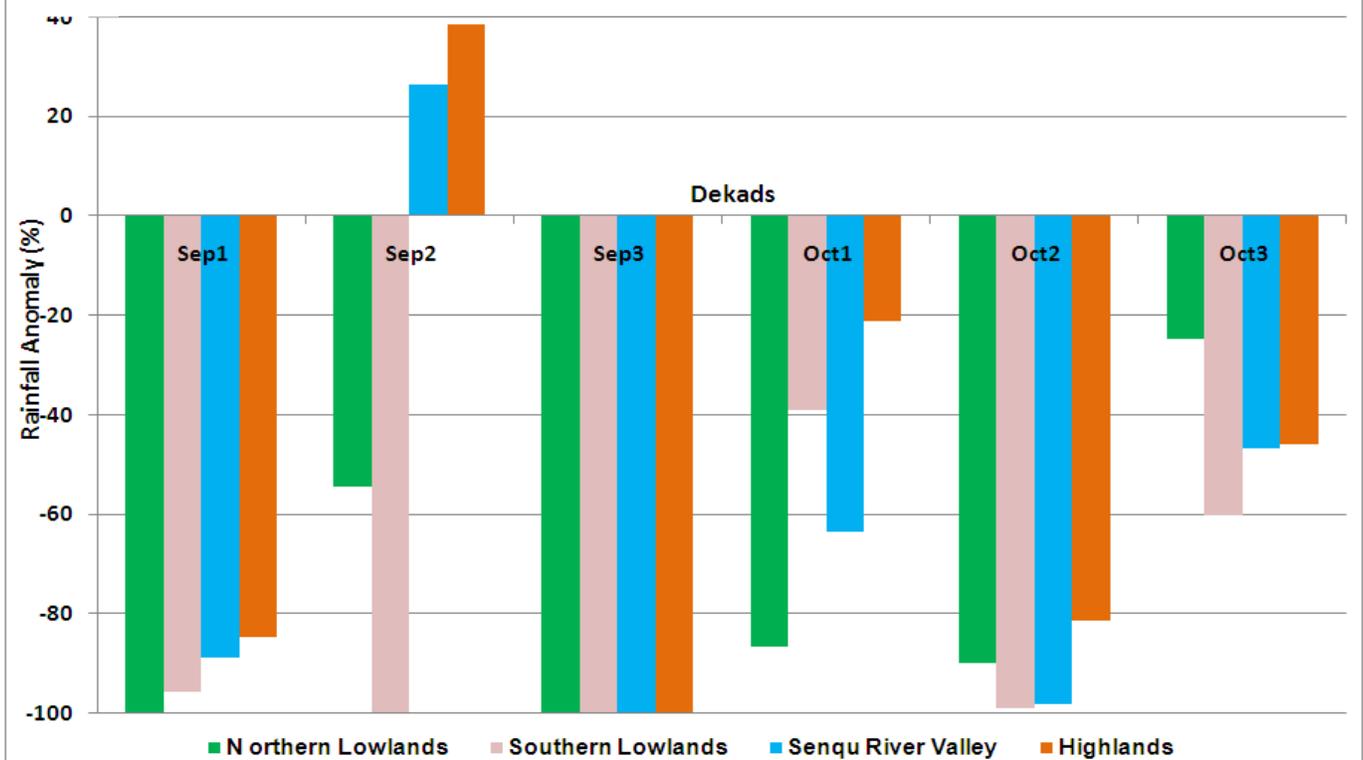


Fig.3 Rainfall Anomaly (%) for the period September Dekad 1, 2008 to October Dekad 3, 2008



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.