



# LESOTHO METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES

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Agro-Met Monthly Update:

May 2007

Date of issue: June 2007

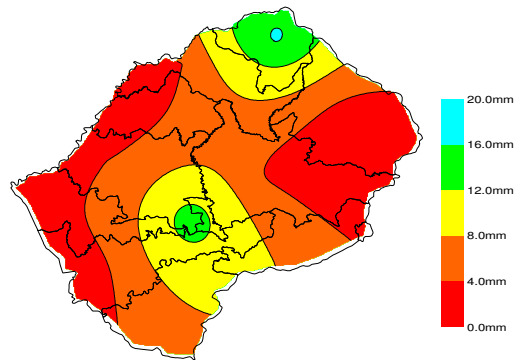
## Highlights

1. Below normal rains experienced throughout the country
2. Below normal temperatures experienced during the month
3. Crops are being harvested.

## Rainfall

### *Monthly Actual Rainfall*

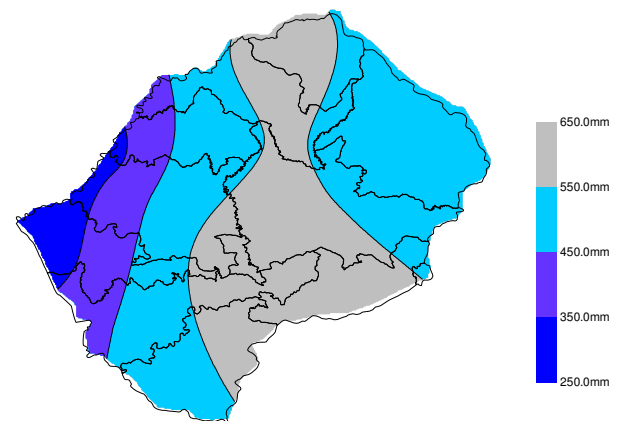
Dry conditions that persisted over the country since the beginning of January continued into May. Rainfall received was below normal in all parts of the country and Mokhotlong received no rainfall. However, the highest monthly rainfall of 16.6mm was observed at Oxbow. And the lowest monthly rainfall of 1.0mm was registered at Butha-Buthe, Maseru and Phuthaitsana. Moreover, snowfall measuring 10cm was recorded at Oxbow, and Semonkong recorded 1cm on the 21<sup>st</sup>. Rainfall received was too low to bring any change with regard to soil moisture content mainly for winter cropping.



Map 1: May 2007 Monthly Rainfall

### *Cumulative Rainfall since September 2006*

The cumulative rainfall registered since September 2006 is below normal except at Semonkong where 4% departure from normal is observed, while the rest of the country shows cumulative rainfall deficit with percentage departure ranging from -6% to -55% (see table 1). Cumulative rainfall ranged from lowest value of 292.3mm (Maseru) to the highest value of 609.5mm (Semonkong). These poor amounts of rainfall indicate that this month was dominated by dry spells hence there is a likelihood of negative effect on winter cropping as significant depletion of soil moisture content is currently experienced at most parts of the country.



Map 2: Cumulative Rainfall (Sept. 2006 – May. 2007)

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### Temperatures

Mean temperatures registered during this month of May 2007 were below normal to above normal. This is clearly shown in table 1 where positive deviations of 1.1<sup>0</sup>C and 0.4<sup>0</sup>C were only registered at Qacha's Nek and Thaba-Tsaka respectively, and the rest of the country registered negative deviations with the exception of Mokhotlong,

which registered 0<sup>0</sup>C deviation. Very cold weather conditions occurred during this month of May as successive cold fronts traversed the region. Minimum temperatures registered were below freezing, reaching lowest values of -15.6<sup>0</sup>C at Oxbow in the highlands and -8<sup>0</sup>C in the lowlands.

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### Crop Stage and Conditions

Winter cropping is facing a serious water stress due to the prevailing dry weather conditions. Currently summer crops are being harvested in

most parts of the country and in some cases they (crops) are very poor because they lacked sufficient rainfall during the growing season.

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### Weather Outlook (May - July 2007)

There is a high likelihood of below average rainfall during this season. There is also a likelihood of emergence of La Nina conditions.

However, not much can be said about the impacts, as there is still uncertainty as to how strong it might be. Temperatures will be above average.

**Table 1**

Station	ALT. (M)	Monthly R/Days	Monthly Rainfall (mm)		Cumulative R/Fall since September 06			Temperatures		
			Monthly R/Fall	Normal R/Fall	Actual R/Fall	Normal R/Fall	% Dep. from Normal	Monthly Mean		Deviation
Name	(M)	R/Days	R/Fall	R/Fall	R/Fall	R/Fall		Actual	Normal	
<b>Butha-Buthe</b>	<b>1770</b>	1	9.5	25.2	586.9	797.2	-26	10.4	10.8	-0.4
<b>Leribe</b>	<b>1740</b>	4	4	23.6	519.3	727.9	-29	10.2	10.8	-0.6
<b>Mafeteng</b>	<b>1610</b>	3	3	26.9	315.4	662.2	-52	-	11.4	-
<b>Mejametalana</b>	<b>1530</b>	1	1	25.7	292.3	646.8	-55	11.2	11.4	-0.2
<b>Mohale's Hoek</b>	<b>1600</b>	3	1.8	23.7	434.4	679.1	-36	-	11.7	-
<b>Mokhotlong</b>	<b>2200</b>	0	0	12.4	481.8	572.2	-16	8.5	8.5	0
<b>Moshoeshoe 1</b>	<b>1628</b>	3	3.7	24.4	400.1	705.1	-43	11.2	11.6	-0.4
<b>Ox-Bow</b>	<b>2660</b>	3	16.6	45	-	1138.4	-	-	4	-
<b>Phuthiatsana</b>	<b>1750</b>	1	2	24	422.4	690.2	-39	11.6	12.2	-0.6
<b>Qacha's Nek</b>	<b>1970</b>	2	7.6	15	590.5	819.8	-28	11.8	10.7	1.1
<b>Quthing</b>	<b>1740</b>	3	4.6	31	495.2	750.5	-34	11.4	11.5	-0.1
<b>Semonkong</b>	<b>2458</b>	5	14	26	609.5	587.6	4	5.9	6.5	-0.6
<b>Thaba-Tseka</b>	<b>2160</b>	3	3.4	13	557.3	594.3	-6	9.0	8.6	0.4