

# LESOTHO METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES (LEKALA LA TSA BOLEPI)



## Ten-Day Agrometeorological Bulletin

11<sup>th</sup> –20<sup>th</sup> April 2006



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

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### ***Highlights***

- ❑ Above normal rainfall received.
- ❑ Normal to above normal cumulative rains received.
- ❑ Decrease in vegetation cover.
- ❑ Temperatures expected to be cool.

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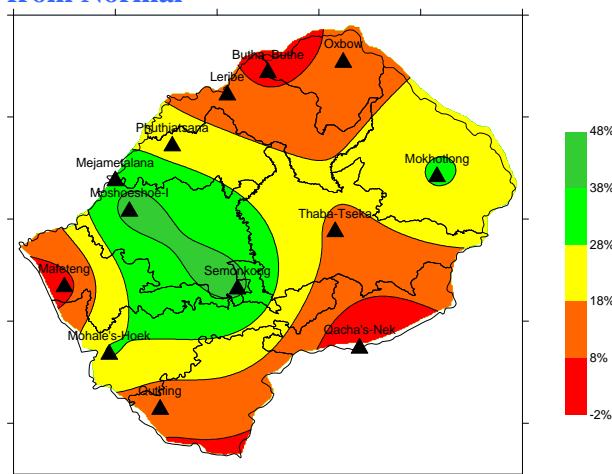
**WEATHER SUMMARY**

The previous dekad was wet and cool. This was due to a combination of trough, which was situated over the central interior and frontal systems which passed over the region. As a result, the dekad received scattered to widespread rains especially during the last half of the dekad.

**RAINFALL SITUATION**

Rainfall received during this dekad was far above dekadal normal rainfall in most parts of the country. Nevertheless, some other parts of the country registered rainfall slightly above normal rainfall (see table 1 and figure 3). This high amount of rainfall which the country is currently receiving is believed to improve on Winter crops country wide. The highest dekadal rainfall was registered at Mohale’s Hoek as 108mm, and 22.5mm was recorded at Mokhotlong as the lowest dekadal rainfall.

**Cumulative percentage rainfall departure from Normal**



**Fig.1: Cumulative rainfall departure from normal since 1<sup>st</sup> Sept to 20<sup>th</sup> April 2006.**

It is illustrated from table 1 and figure 4 that cumulative rainfall is normal to above throughout the country. Qacha’s Nek is the only station which registered deficit of -3%. The rest of the country registered relatively improved cumulative rainfall, of which the percentage departure from normal varies between 10% and 40% generally. Cumulative rainfall since September 2005 has played a very important role in that, water levels have increased under ground

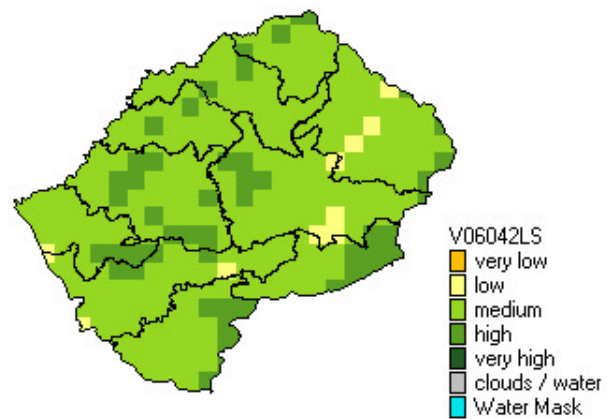
and surface water is also enough for agricultural activities.

**TEMPERATURE**

Leribe, Mokhotlong and Oxbow registered positive deviations of 0.2, 0.5 and 2.1 respectively. The rest of the country recorded negative deviations. This implies that Winter season is fast approaching. This in turn depresses performance rate of the crops, and as some crops are at early ripening stage. Highest temperature of 24.9<sup>o</sup>C was registered at Maseru Airport on the 15<sup>th</sup>, while the lowest temperature of -1.2<sup>o</sup>C was recorded at Oxbow on the 13<sup>th</sup>.

**VEGETATION**

**Figure 2**



The degree of greenness is dominated by medium to high greenness with some small patches of low scattered in the southern highlands and some parts of the lowlands. The degree of greenness has degraded when the above map is compared with the maps of previous dekads. This may imply that summer wheat is now at maturity stage, and is at harvesting stage. At some places especially in the highlands maize and sorghum have been damaged by frost. Otherwise crops (maize and sorghum) are at ripening stage.

**CROP STAGE AND CONDITION**

Most crops are currently at ripening and maturity stages throughout the country, except those

permanently damaged by frost in Quthing. Other crops are still very young because they were planted very late due to drought experienced at the beginning of planting season. This indicates that there is a high possibility of some crops being caught by frost before they reach maturity stage. As for Winter crops (peas and wheat), they are expected to be planted massively throughout the country due to high moisture content in the soil.

### **DEKADAL OUTLOOK**

21<sup>st</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> April 2006

Frontal systems are still expected to traverse the sub-region and influx of tropical moisture in the region is also anticipated to continue especially during the first half of the dekad. Temperatures will be generally cool. Frost patches are anticipated to occur from this dekad in the highlands.

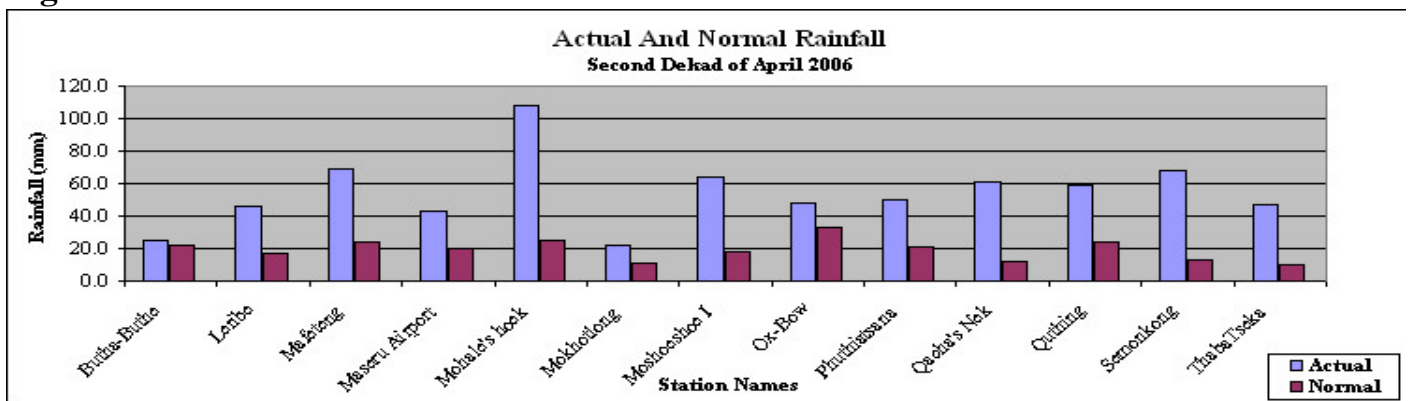
### **Seasonal Outlook May – July 2006**

Rainfall situation is still expected to be on average for the period May – July 2006 and temperatures will also be on average however, they will drop significantly after the passage of cold fronts.

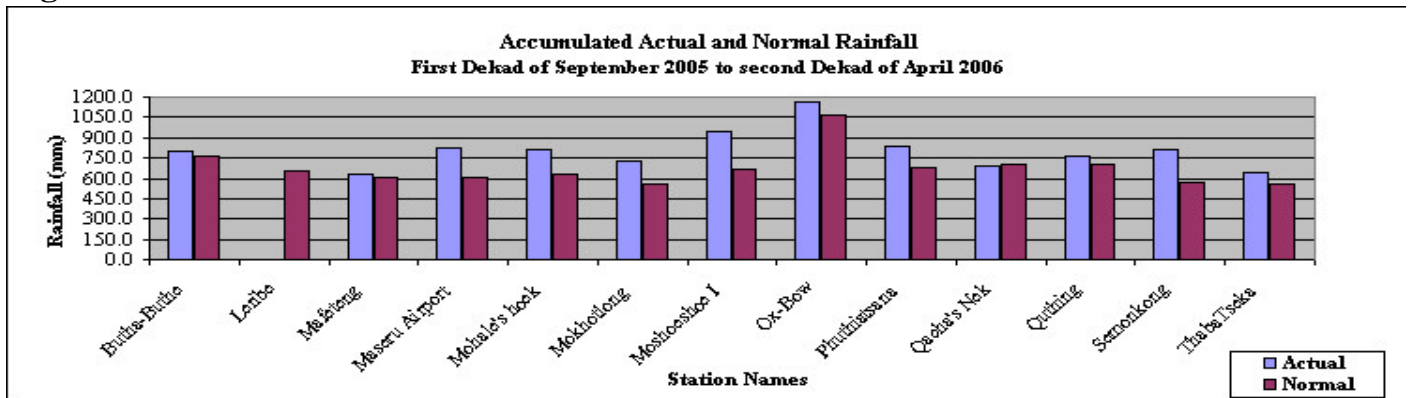
**Table 1**

Summaries		Rainfall and Temperature						Temperature (°C)				
		Rainfall (mm)			Total From Sept05 to 2ndt Dek April 06			11 - 20 April 2006				
		11 - 20 April 2006		Rain Days	Actual		%Dept. from Normal	Minimum	Maximum	Dekadal	Dekadal	Deviation
R/Fall	R/Fall	Actual	Normal		Lowest(Day)	Highest (Day)		Mean	Normal			
STATION NAME	ALT. (M)											
Butha-Buthe	1770	25.4	22.1	5	799.5	763.6	5	5.5 (13)	23.5 (14)	14.5	14.6	-0.1
Leribe	1740	46.2	17.1	5		658.5		5.6 (13)	24.7 (14)	14.9	14.7	0.2
Mafeteng	1610	69.4	24.0	4	633.4	612.1	3	4.1 (15)	22.0 (14)	13.4	14.9	-1.5
Maseru Airport	1530	42.9	20.3	4	819.1	611.9	34	6.9 (15)	24.9 (15)	15.6	15.4	0.2
Mohale's hoek	1600	108.0	24.6	5	811.7	630.9	29	5.5 (15)	24.0 (14)	14.5	15.3	
Mokhotlong	2200	22.5	11.3	3	726.6	558.0	30	3.5 (15)	21.6 (14)	12.5	12.0	0.5
Moshoeshoe I	1628	63.8	18.0	5	949.4	669.6	42	6.5 (15)	24.3 (14)	15.1	15.4	-0.3
Ox-Bow	2600	47.6	32.6	5	1164.3	1060.7	10	-1.2 (13)	15.5 (16)	9.3	7.2	2.1
Phuthiatsana	1750	49.6	21.5	5	838.0	679.1	23	6.9 (13)	-		15.6	N/A
Qacha's Nek	1970	61.4	12.4	5	695.6	706.5	-2	5.4 (18)	23.4 (16)	13.2	16.6	-3.4
Quthing	1740	59.5	24.5	6	766.1	698.0	10	7.8 (18)	23.0 (14)	14.8	15.0	-0.2
Semonkong	2458	68.4	13.5	6	807.3	571.0	41	-0.2 (15)	19.2 (16)	10.0	10.1	-0.1
ThabaTseka	2160	46.8	10.1	4	646.9	560.0	16	4.6 (13)	20.5 (16)	11.6	12.0	-0.4

**Fig.3**



**Fig.4**



## **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.