LESOTHO METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES
(LEKALA LA TSA BOLEPI)

Ten-Day Agrometeorological Bulletin

11 – 20 March 2009

Issue No.17/2008-09

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

Contents

Highlights

- **Generally dry weather prevailed.**
- **Cumulative rainfall normal to above normal.**
- **Normal to below normal temperatures experienced at most parts.**
- **Normal frost time has arrived**

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

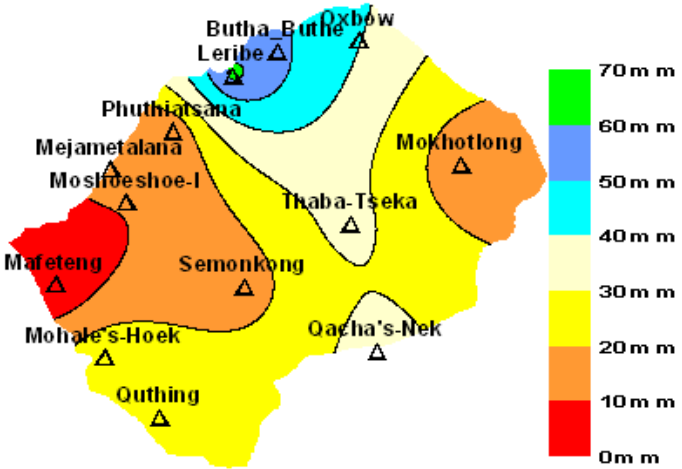
TEL: (+266) 22324374
FAX: (+266) 22325057/22350325
E-mail:agrometeorology@lesmet.org.ls
http://www.lesmet.org.ls

DEKADAL WEATHER SUMMARY

The period was characterized by frequent passage of weak cold fronts in the southern interior followed by a ridging Atlantic Ocean Anticyclone which resulted in dry and cool conditions over the interior of the subcontinent. Rainfall amounts that were received were due to localized convergence of winds and little moisture influx from the north. Towards the end of the dekad tropical storm Izilda developed and is now situated just over the south-western tip of Madagascar Island pulled moisture away from the interior resulting in even more dryer conditions.

RAINFALL SITUATION

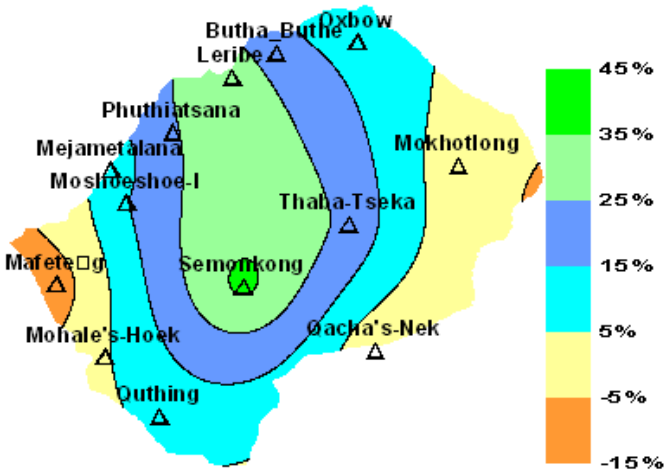
Dry weather persisted from the first dekad of March 2009 into the second dekad. Significant and above normal rainfall during the dekad was recorded in the northern parts of the country, Leribe (62.4mm) and Butha-Buthe (52.1mm). Large parts of the country recorded dekadal rainfall ranging from 10mm to 40mm, and it was below normal at most places (see Map 1 & Fig.1). Mafeteng was the driest place with no rainfall for a second successive dekad.



Map 1: Actual Rainfall for March 2nd Dekad 2009

Cumulative Percentage Rainfall Departure from Normal

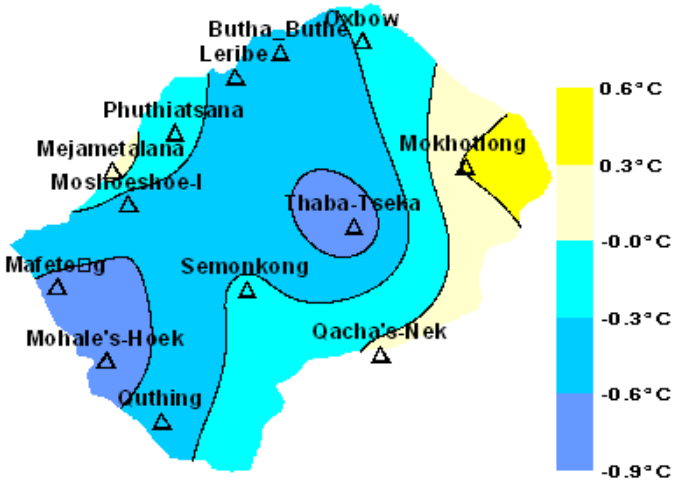
Cumulative rainfall since September 2008 remains normal for the large parts of the country. It is above normal in the region extending from the central parts of the country to the northern parts. Mafeteng in the west have lowest rainfall percentage departure from normal. Rainfall percentage departure from normal has declined at some places since the previous dekad as the country was mostly characterized by dry weather.



Map 2: Cumulative Rainfall Percentage Departure from Normal

TEMPERATURE

Mean temperatures were below normal in the areas surrounding Mohale's Hoek, Mafeteng and Thaba-Tseka. They were slightly above normal in the far northeastern parts of the country (see Map 3).



Map 3: Dekadal Mean Temperature from Normal

RAINFALL ANOMALIES

The southern lowlands were predominantly dry during the period in discussion. Other agroecological zones generally experienced normal rainfall as per Fig.3 below.

CROP STAGE AND CONDITIONS

With cereal crops at most parts of the country being in advanced stages of growth, water requirements have started to decline. Recent relatively dry weather may not be harmful to crops as grains may be fully developed at most places in the country and thus less water requirement. Crops are mostly in the grain filling stages and conditions range from fair to good. Frost may onset at anytime in the highlands and may find some crops not fully matured.

DEKADAL OUTLOOK

11 – 20 March 2009

Tropical storm Izilda is expected to remain quasi-stationary over the south-western tip of the Madagascar Island and is expected to fill up and dissipate towards the end of the dekad. This implies that much of the interior will remain dry as tropical moist air will continue to accelerate towards the disturbance. Meanwhile the interior of the subcontinent will be dominated by dry air circulating hence dry conditions.

Isolated rain and thundershowers can be experienced mainly towards the end of the dekad after the tropical storm has dissipated. Temperatures are expected to be warm but cooler on 29th.

Fig.1

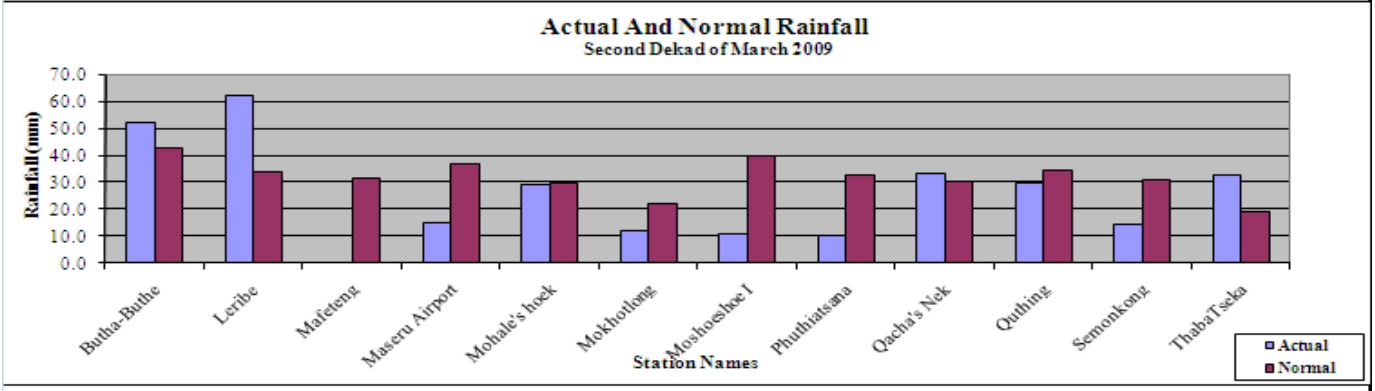


Fig.2

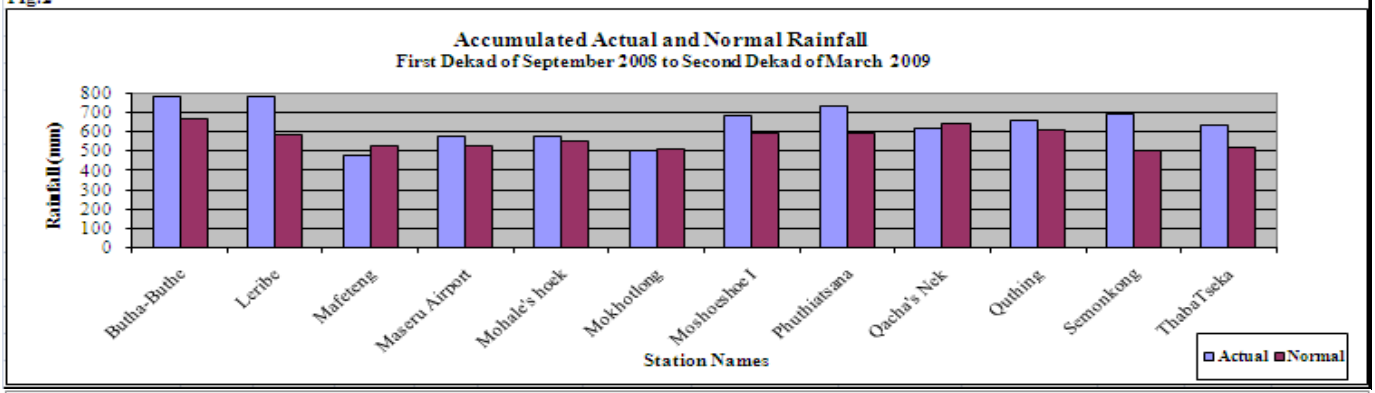


Fig.3