

LESOTHO METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES (LEKALA LA TSA BOLEPI)



Ten-Day Agrometeorological Bulletin

11th - 20th October 2003



Issue No.2/2003-04

Vol.3

*...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 1

Seasonal Outlook

Page 1

Rainfall and Temperature
Summaries

Page 2

Glossary

Page 3

Highlights

- ❑ Dry conditions continued into the 2nd dekad.
- ❑ Significant drop in temperatures experienced.
- ❑ Rainfall situation continues to threaten preparation for summer cropping.
- ❑ Slight crop damage reported in some places.

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Weather Summary
11th – 20th October 2003

Dry weather conditions continued during the second dekad of October (11 – 20th October). The first half of the dekad was generally warm. However, temperatures dropped significantly during the second half. This was due to the passage of a frontal system over the subcontinent on the 18th. The Atlantic high-pressure system, which ridged inland on the 20th, also intensified the cold conditions as it was causing an influx of cold onshore south easterlies over the sub-region.

RAINFALL SITUATION
11th – 20th October 2003

Rainfall deficit continued into the second dekad of October 03. Very insignificant rains were registered ranging from nil to 8.8mm countrywide (see table 1). These conditions have not brought any change, with respect to soil moisture content, rather the situation has continuously worsened. This is depicted by the intensifying negative percentage rainfall departure from normal (see fig1) shown by the accumulated rainfall since September 03 to date. The north-eastern parts remained the worst affected. The overall rainfall situation continues to threaten preparation for summer cropping.

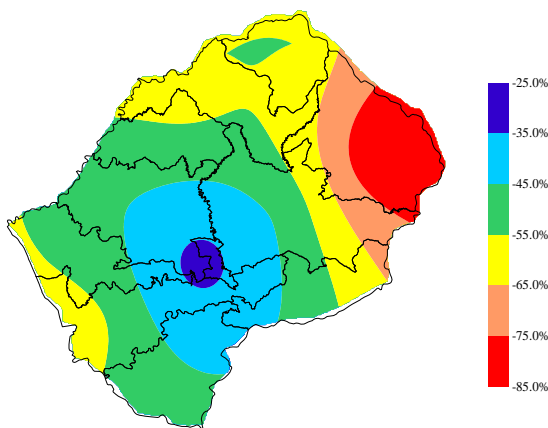


Fig.1: Cumulative rainfall departure from normal since 1st Sept to 2nd dekad.Oct 03.

TEMPERATURE
11th – 20th October 2003

Below normal to normal temperatures were registered during this period. The significant drop in temperatures that even reached below 0°C at some places (see table 1) brought about these conditions.

CROP STAGE AND CONDITION
11th – 20th October 2003

Summer cropping in most parts of the lowland areas has not intensively commenced as a result of the prevailing drought. Nevertheless, planting in the highland areas is in progress. Crops such as maize and sorghum are at emergence stage in some places. However, slight crop damage has been reported at Mokhotlong and Thaba-Tseka due to frost occurrence during the period under discussion. Winter wheat is at vegetative to milking stage with poor condition as a result of drought conditions.

DEKADAL OUTLOOK
21st – 31st October 2003

The period 21st to 31st is expected to remain dry same as in the previous dekad. However, very light thundershowers are expected at few places during this period, especially during the last half of the dekad. Temperatures will improve slightly as compared to the last half of the previous dekad.

SEASONAL OUTLOOK
(October – December 2003)

The country is currently experiencing drought condition, however, the situation is expected to improve towards mid November onwards to December whereby normal rainfall is anticipated.

Table 1

Rainfall and Temperature Summaries												
		Rainfall (mm)					TEMPERATURE (°C)					
		Total From Sept 03 to 2nd Dek Oct 03										
STATION	ALT.	Actual	Normal	Rain			%Dept. from	Minimum	Maximum	Dekadal	Dekadal	
NAME	(M)	R/Fall	R/Fall	Days	Actual	Normal	Normal	Lowest(Day)	Highest (Day)	Mean	Normal	Deviation
Butha-Buthe	1770	9.0	22.9	1	31.1	68.6	-55	3.2(18)	28.6(12)	15.9	16.2	-0.3
Mafeteng	1610	0.1	18.4	1	27.0	60.5	-55	N/A	28.5(12)	15.7	16.4	-0.7
Maseru Airport	1530	2.2	22.7	1	32.3	68.5	-52	2.1(18)	29.4(12)	16.5	16.0	0.5
Mohale's hoek	1600	0.0	26.9	0	28.5	71.7	-60	2.5(20)	32.0(12)	16.2	16.9	-0.7
Mokhotlong	2200	2.4	17.3	1	8.6	55.7	-85	-2.5(20)	27.0(12)	13.6	13.6	0.0
Ox-Bow	2600	4.0	45.3	1	58.8	131	-55	7.0(18)	20.8(12)	8.7	8.9	-0.2
Qacha's Nek	1970	8.4	22.9	3	38.7	76.2	-49	-0.3(18)	27.4(13)	13.3	14.9	-1.6
Quthing	1740	8.8	24.6	1	38.4	78.1	-51	N/A	N/A	15.2	16.1	-0.9
Semonkong	2458	4.0	24.2	1	51.7	75	-31	7.0(18)	24.0(12)	10.4	10.2	0.2
Moshoeshoe I	1628	6.3	20.6	1	35.8	67.6	-47	0.9(18)	29.8(13)	15.8	N/A	N/A
Thaba-Tseka	2160	2.0	21.4	1	32.4	63.1	-48	0.1(20)	25.6(12)	13.3	14.0	-0.7
Leribe	1740	1.3	22.1	2	26.8	68.1	-64	3.0(18)	29.2(16)	15.9	16.9	-1.0

Fig.4

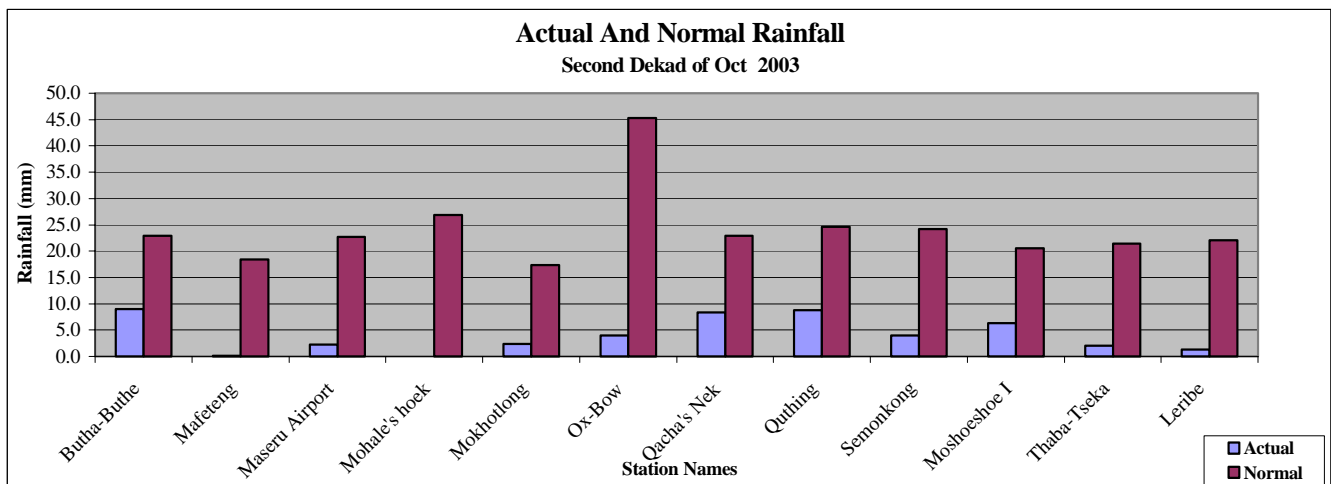
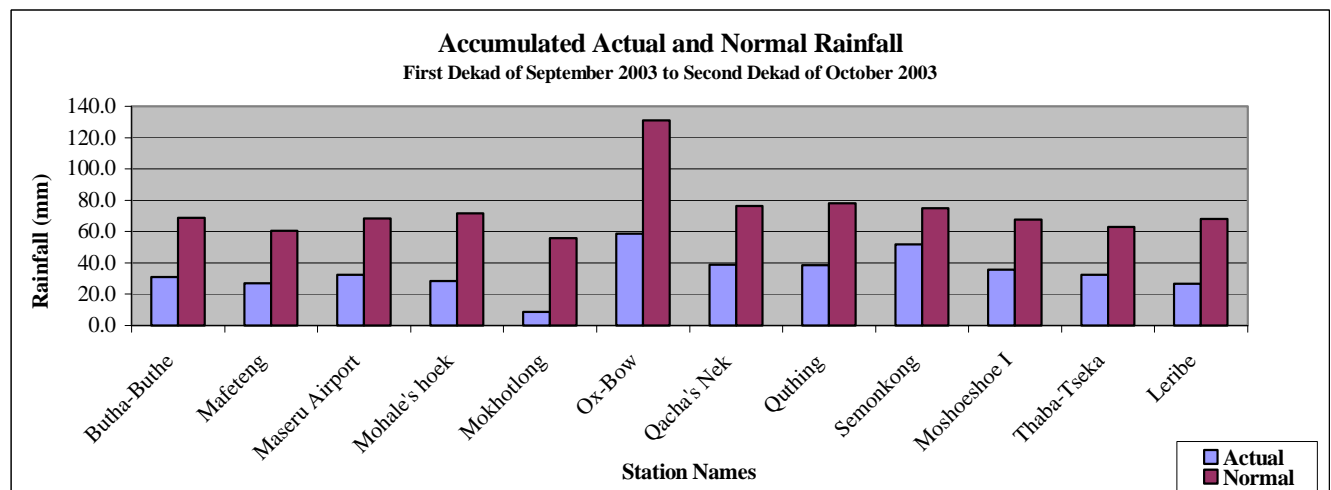


Fig.5



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

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.