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Agro-Met Monthly Update

December 2007

Date of issue: January 2008

Highlights

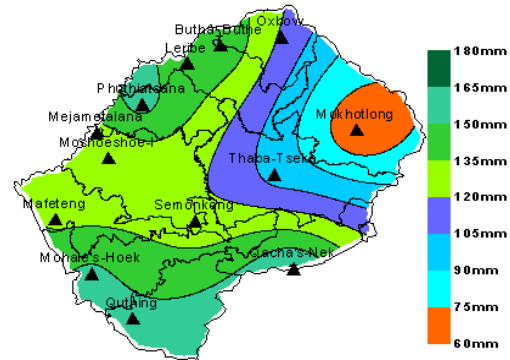
1. Above normal rainfall received in most parts of the country
2. Below normal monthly mean temperatures experienced at most places
3. Weeding in progress

Rainfall

Monthly Actual Rainfall

The country experienced normal to above normal rainfall during the month of December 2007 with the exception of Mokhotlong where monthly rainfall was below normal. The month of December made it a second month in a row that Mokhotlong in the northeast recorded below normal monthly rainfall. The last dekad of the month was predominantly dry countrywide except for the southwestern parts of the country contrary to the first and second dekads, where Butha-Buthe and Mafeteng became the only dry areas respectively, in addition to Mokhotlong which consistently recorded below normal in all three dekads. Map 1 and Table 1 reflects that northwestern parts of the country together with

the region from southwest to southeast including the southern parts of the country recorded highest monthly rainfall in December.

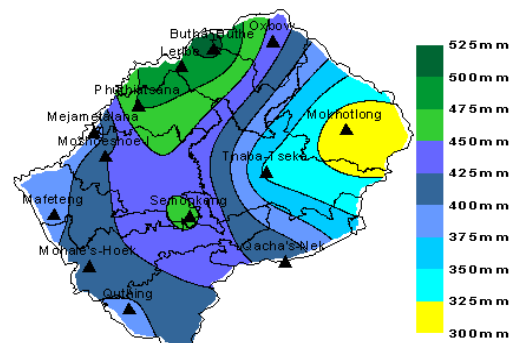


Map 1: December 2007 Monthly Rainfall

Cumulative Rainfall since September 2007

Accumulated rainfall for the period September to December 2007 is normal at Mokhotlong otherwise above normal countrywide. Butha-Buthe (510mm) has recorded highest accumulated rainfall while Mokhotlong (303.6mm) has experienced lowest accumulated rainfall (see Map 2 & Table 1).

Generally, cumulative rainfall remained satisfactory in this period although spatial and temporal distribution often varied.



Map 2: September - December 2007 Cumulative Rainfall



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Temperatures

The mean monthly temperatures for December 2007 were below normal except in Qacha's Nek (see Table 1). Deviations of monthly mean temperatures from normal range from -0.6°C (Mohale's Hoek, Mejametalana and Moshoeshoe 1) to 0.3°C at Qacha's Nek (see Table 1). The low temperatures in December were due to cloudiness, precipitation, wet surfaces and passage of frontal systems over the country.

The lowest daily temperature of the month was 3.6°C recorded at Semonkong on the 1st while the highest daily temperature of the month was 30.5°C at Mejametalana (31st) and Mohale's Hoek (23rd).

Crop Stage and Conditions

Planting and sowing continued for sometime during the month of December 2007. However, field operations were affected by some high rainfall incidences. Some fields were waterlogged especially during the first two dekads of the month and thus impeding with regular works.

There was a very destructive hailstorm on the 4th December 2007, and according to filed reports its coverage was wide. However, since the crops were still young at that time, they were able to recover.

Maize and sorghum are at vegetative stages and conditions are generally good. Weeding became active during the month under review. Winter wheat is ready for harvest with its conditions ranging from moderate to good.

Water and Livestock Conditions

Water resources have improved and are normal countrywide.

General vegetation cover has improved. Due to increase in the levels of greenness on the ground, rangelands have improved. Livestock conditions range from fair to good.

Weather Outlook (January – March 2008)

Generally, there is a high likelihood of normal rainfall over the country. In addition much of the Lowlands including central and southern parts of the country are likely to receive even above average rainfall, and the northern parts including

parts of the eastern Highlands will on the contrary have a possibility of receiving below normal rainfall. Temperatures are expected to be slightly above average with occasional cold spells.

Table 1.

Station	ALT.	December			Cumulative R/Fall since September– December 2007			Temperatures		
		Monthly R/Days	Monthly R/fall		Actual	Normal	% Dep. from Normal	Monthly Mean		Deviation
Name	(M)		Actual	Normal	Actual	Normal		Actual	Normal	
Butha-Buthe	1770	12	150.7	98	510	340.7	50	18.9	19.3	-0.4
Leribe	1740	16	143.5	100.8	487.2	290.3	68	19.2	19.7	-0.5
Mafeteng	1610	10	131.5	85.4	392.5	253.4	55	19.3	19.6	-0.3
Mejametalana	1530	11	130.3	85.9	378.7	263.2	44	20.1	20.7	-0.6
Mohale's Hoek	1600	11	154.2	95.6	412.5	271.1	52	19.7	20.3	-0.6
Mokhotlong	2200	8	61.5	88.7	303.6	259.7	17	17.0	16.6	0.4
Moshoeshoe 1	1628	10	120.3	100.1	423.9	289.7	46	19.7	20.3	-0.6
Ox-Bow	2660	*	*	169.7	*	514.9	*	*	11.7	*
Phuthiatsana	1750	9	155.9	92.7	476.9	301.6	58	20.0	20.4	-0.4
Qacha's Nek	1970	14	168.2	121	424.3	312.1	36	17.9	17.6	0.3
Quthing	1740	12	153.2	96.2	394	309.2	27	19.5	20	-0.5
Semonkong	2458	10	123.3	86.3	458	267.4	71	14.7	15.1	-0.4
Thaba-Tseka	2160	13	98.1	89.7	341.4	263.1	30	15.9	16.3	-0.4

NB: * means that there was no data for that station.