

LESOTHO METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES (LEKALA LA TSA BOLEPI)



Ten-Day Agrometeorological Bulletin

01st – 10th March 2004



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

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Highlights

- ❑ Substantial rains registered at some places
- ❑ Cumulative rainfall still shows below normal to normal rainfall.
- ❑ Central west to southwest still dominated by lack of rainfall.
- ❑ Some crops are at risk of being caught by frost before maturity.

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WEATHER SUMMARY
01st - 10th March 2004

The first dekad of March was mainly dominated by shallow surface troughs over the central interior and by the Indian Ocean high pressure ridge over the north eastern parts of the Sub-region. The combination of these systems resulted in isolated to scattered thundershowers. Temperatures were generally warm during the day and mild at night.

RAINFALL SITUATION
01st - 10th March 2004

Substantial rains were registered at some of the reporting stations especially over some parts of the western region (Maseru Airport, Moshoeshoe I) southern tip (Quthing), central highlands (Semonkong) and the northern highlands (Ox-Bow) where the following total amounts were respectively registered, 48.4mm, 45.3mm, 56.3mm, 55.1mm and 54.2mm (see table 1). In contrast, Mochale's Hoek in the southern and Qacha's Nek in the eastern sector registered considerably below the expected normal (see fig2).

Cumulative Rainfall from 1st Sept 03 to 10th March. 04

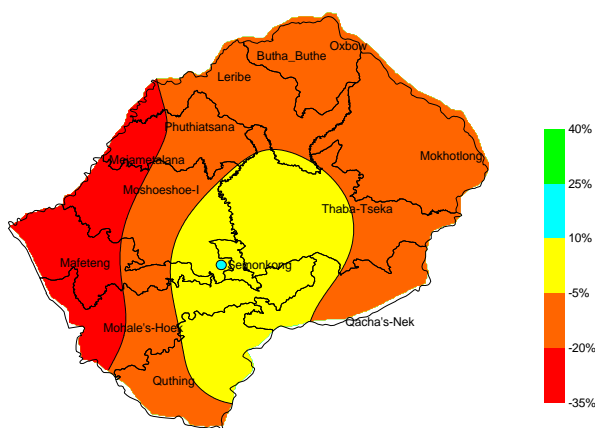


Fig.1: Cumulative rainfall departure from normal since 1st Sept 03 to 10th March 2004

Cumulative rainfall still shows below normal to normal rainfall over the entire country (see fig3). Some parts of the central west to the southwest are still strongly dominated by lack of rainfall (see

fig.1), which is an indication of inadequate soil moisture accumulation that may affect the winter cropping season.

TEMPERATURE
01st - 10th March 2004

Slightly above normal to normal temperatures were registered (see table 1 under temperatures). However, at times very low temperatures were experienced that are adverse to crop performance especially at this critical stage of grain forming.

CROP STAGE AND CONDITION
01st - 10th March 2004

An overall crop (maize, sorghum) improvement has been seen due to improved rainfall performance experienced at several places around the country. Crop stage is generally at flowering to grain filling. However, crops at flowering to early grain filling stages are at risk of being caught by frost before maturity.

Wheat is generally at grain forming to wax maturity with poor to good condition.

DEKADAL OUTLOOK
11th - 20th March 2004

The Indian high pressure system is still expected to be dominant over the north eastern parts of the Sub-region and frontal systems are also expected to pass more frequently over the southern coast of the Sub-region. As a result light isolated thundershowers are expected to occur during this forecast period. However, this dekad is anticipated to receive less rainfall as compared to the previous dekad. Temperatures are expected to remain the same as during the previous dekad.

Table 1

Rainfall and Temperature Summaries												
		Rainfall (mm)						TEMPERATURE (°C)				
		Total From Sept. 03 to 1st Dek Mar. 04										
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	30.6	35.5	3	522.1	570.4	-8	11.5(6)	27.6(9)	18.9	18.0	0.9
Leribe	1740	29.4	34.6	5	454.3	501.1	-9	12.0(5)	28.3(9)	19.3	18.3	1.0
Maseru Airport	1530	48.4	29.6	5	330.1	486.4	-32	12.7(6)	29.0(9)	20.0	19.1	0.9
Mafeteng	1610	47.3	33.7	6	326.6	473.3	-31	8.9(1)	27.8(1)	19.0	18.3	0.7
Mohale's hoek	1600	25.3	39.4	5	358.7	519.8	-31	9.9(6)	28.8(9)	19.8	19.2	0.6
Mokhotlong	2200	20.2	25.3	6	414.5	462.2	-10	8.5(5)	26.3(9)	17.3	15.1	2.2
Ox-Bow	2600	55.1	53.3	7	724.5	866.8	-16	5.0(5)	19.5(9)	12.7	10.9	1.8
Phuthiatsana	1750	26.8	25.5	5	410.7	535.9	-23	12.6(7)	28.3(9)	19.5	18.5	1.0
Qacha's Nek	1970	26.9	36.3	5	538.5	591.9	-9	-	25.7(9)	17.1	17.1	0.0
Quthing	1740	56.2	35.4	6	451.2	496.5	-9	10.3(6)	28.1(9)	19.8	18.2	1.6
Semonkong	2458	54.2	28.3	8	527.5	474.9	11	-	22.6(9)	14.2	14.5	-0.3
Moshoeshoe I	1628	45.3	41.3	9	389.2	521.1	-25	12.5(6)	28.0(1)	19.4	-	-
Thaba-Tseka	2160	24.1	27.7	6	429.2	440.0	-2	6.8(6)	23.3(1)	16.1	15.2	0.9

Fig.2

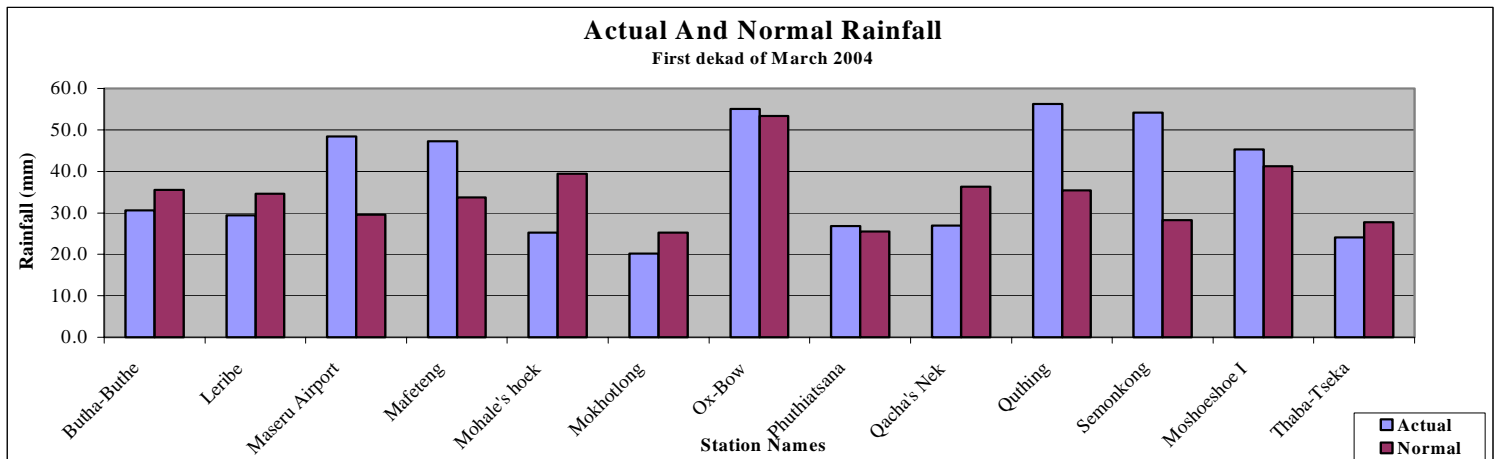
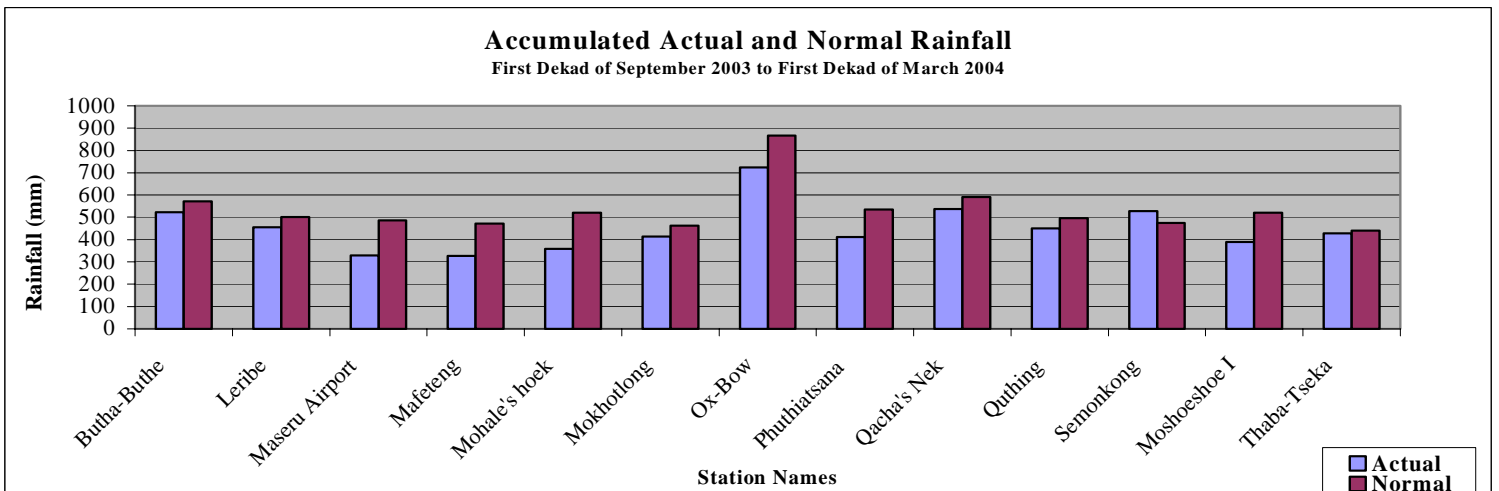


Fig.3



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.