

LESOTHO METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES (LEKALA LA TSA BOLEPI)



Ten-Day Agrometeorological Bulletin

1st – 10th March 2005



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

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Highlights

- ❑ Western parts experienced good rains
- ❑ Cool temperatures observed
- ❑ Crops maturing in most parts of the country
- ❑ Rains expected in the next dekad

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WEATHER SUMMARY

1st – 10th March 2005

The first dekad of March was dominated by the interior trough which caused an influx of tropical moist air into the central interior, and the Indian ocean High Pressure system which was causing on-shore flow of moist air from the ocean. The combination of the above mentioned systems resulted in isolated to scattered thundershowers. Temperatures were generally cool to mild.

RAINFALL SITUATION

1st – 10th March 2005

The Western low-lying areas of Mhoeshoe 1, Maseru Airport and Mafeteng experienced normal to above normal rainfall of 65.3mm, 38.2mm and 35.8mm respectively. Leribe in the Northwest with 10.1mm, and Quthing in the South with 15.1mm had the lowest dekadal rains. The high-lying areas registered near normal to above normal rainfalls. Mokhotlong with 23.2mm which is 71% of normal dekadal rainfall and Semonkong with 25.6mm, which is 83% of normal dekadal rainfall had the lowest rainfall. Qacha's Nek with 47.4mm, 123% of normal dekadal rainfall had the highest rainfall for the high-lying areas (table 1 and fig. 2).

Cumulative rainfall

The high-lying areas have normal cumulative rainfall (1st September 2004 to 10th March 2005). Ox-Bow and Qacha's Nek have the highest cumulative rainfall of 871.1mm and 672.3mm respectively. The highest cumulative rainfall for the low-lying areas is the Northern districts of Leribe and Butha-Buthe where 650.4mm and 600.2mm have accumulated respectively. Mafeteng and Quthing are the only parts of the country that have below 500mm of cumulative rainfall (table 1 and fig. 3).

The cumulative rainfall departure from normal column in table 1 and fig. 1 depicts that accumulated rainfall since the 1st of September is normal in most parts of the country. The lowest percentage departures from normal are at Mafeteng and Quthing with -17% and -18%

respectively. Leribe with 18% has the highest percentage departure from normal.

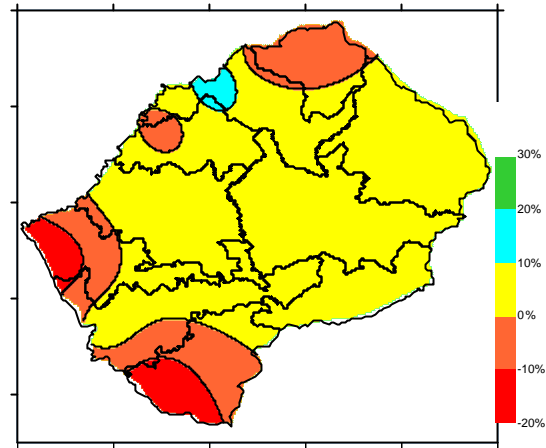


Fig.1: Cumulative rainfall departure from normal since 1st September 2004 to 10th March 2005

TEMPERATURE

1st – 10th March 2005

The first ten days of March were cool. This is eminent from the dekadal mean temperatures that are lower than the normal dekadal mean temperatures. The temperature deviations from normal are mostly negative and they range from 0.8°C to -0.4°C. It is noted that Maseru Airport in the Western part, Quthing in the South and Qacha's Nek in the East have above normal dekadal mean temperatures. The lowest minimum temperatures of the dekad were recorded at Semonkong and Ox-Bow. They observed 2°C and 2.2°C respectively.

CROP STAGE AND CONDITION

1st – 10th March 2005

The cool temperatures that the country has experienced through out the dekad have lowered the rates of evapotranspiration, and thus water loss from the crops and the surface crops was greatly reduced.

The high-lying areas are at risk of frost occurrence anytime from now and it is vital that they reach their maturity stage. Cereal crops (maize and sorghum) are nearing maturity in both the high-lying and low-lying areas. However, there are some crops in the the high-lying that have reached the maturity stage.

With the onset of frost in the low-lying areas and the Senqu River Valley being likely in May, the crops in these areas have sometime to mature. This is unless early frost can occur in these areas. The Senqu River Valley and the Western tip of Mafeteng experienced very erratic rains in most times of the season, and as a result planting was late. The graph below better represents the Western tip of Mafeteng, and the reflection from it is that actual cumulative rainfall have never exceeded the normal cumulative rainfall this season. And as a result, planting season was highly disturbed.

Presently cereal crops conditions in these regions are unsatisfactory.

Summer wheat in the high-lying areas is at the harvesting stage in most places.

DEKADAL OUTLOOK

11th – 20th March 2005

The interior trough is expected to dominate over the central interior during the next dekad. Therefore, isolated to scattered thundershowers are expected to continue especially during the last half of the dekad. Temperatures are expected to remain cool to mild during the dekad.

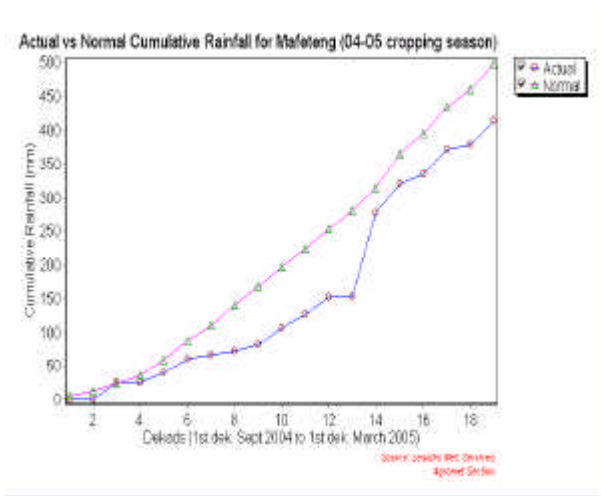


Table 1

Rainfall and Temperature Summaries												
		Rainfall (mm)						Temperature (°C)				
				Total From Sept to 1 st Dek Mar		- March						
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		-	. ()	. ()	.	.	- .
Leribe			N/A	N/A	N/A	.	N/A
Mafeteng		-	. ()	. ()	.	.	- .
Maseru Airport	 ()	. ()	.	.	- .
Mohale's hoek	 ()	. ()	.	.	- .
Mokhotlong	 ()	. ()	.	.	- .
Moshoeshoe I	 ()	. ()	.	.	- .
Ox-Bow		-	. ()	. ()	.	.	- .
Phuthiatsana	 ()	. ()	.	.	- .
Qacha's Nek	 ()	. ()	.	.	- .
Outhing			N/A	N/A	.	.	- .
Semonkong	 ()	N/A	.	.	- .

Fig.

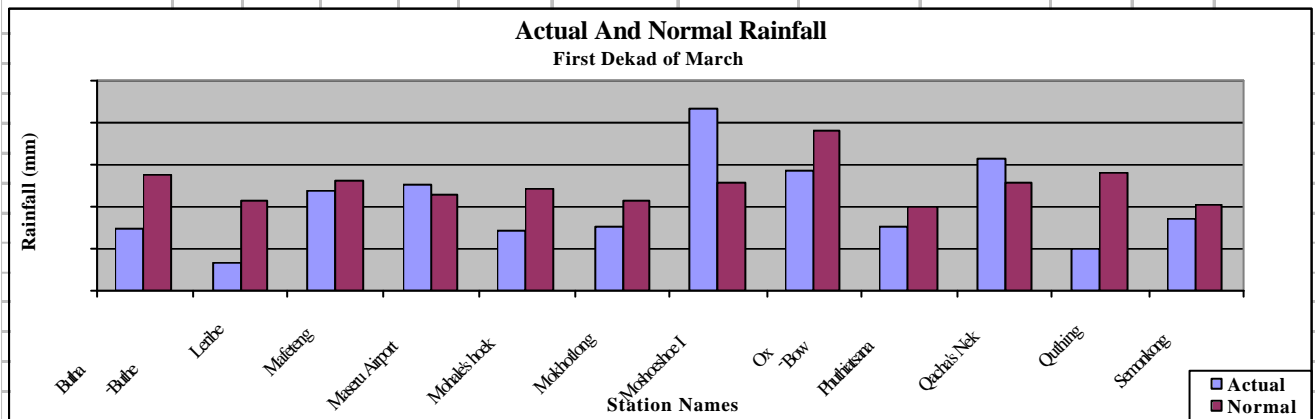
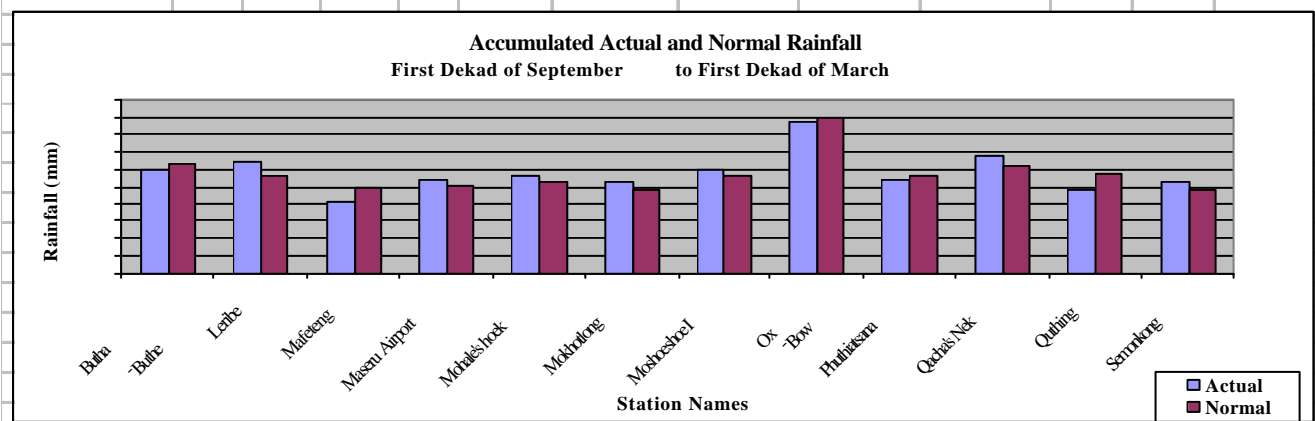


Fig.



GLOSSARY

Dekad : Ten day period

Normal: Average figure over a specific time period.

% Rainfall Departure from Normal: $(\text{Actual Rainfall} - \text{Normal Rainfall}) / \text{Normal Rainfall} \times 100$

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And it is

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Comments and Contributions would be highly appreciated.