

LESOTHO METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES (LEKALA LA TSA BOLEPI)



Ten-Day Agrometeorological Bulletin

1st –10th March 2006



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*...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

Vegetation
Page 1

Crop Stage and Condition
Page 1

Dekadal Outlook
Page 2

Seasonal Outlook
Page 2

**Rainfall and Temperature
Summaries**
Page 3

Glossary
Page 4

Highlights

- ❑ Below normal rainfall received.
- ❑ Rains and thundershowers occurred.
- ❑ Relatively good cumulative rains received.
- ❑ High vegetation cover.
- ❑ Temperatures expected to remain warm.

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WEATHER SUMMARY

Wet weather conditions that have been prevailing for the past two months is a history during this dekad. The highest dekad rainfall of 27.5mm was received at Mokhotlong. Temperatures dropped significantly at the beginning of the dekad such that the 5th was the coldest day whereby Mokhotlong recorded the minimum temperature of of -0.5⁰C. Thereafter, they increased gradually.

RAINFALL SITUATION

The rainfall registered during this first dekad of March 2006 was far below normal dekad rainfall throughout the country. Only some showers were registered in almost all parts of the country with poor distribution because places like Maseru and Mafeteng received no rainfall. Rain days varies between 0 to 2 days. The rainfall received is too much for the crops since some other crops were already waterlogged due to heavy rains received in the last two months.

Cumulative percentage rainfall departure from Normal

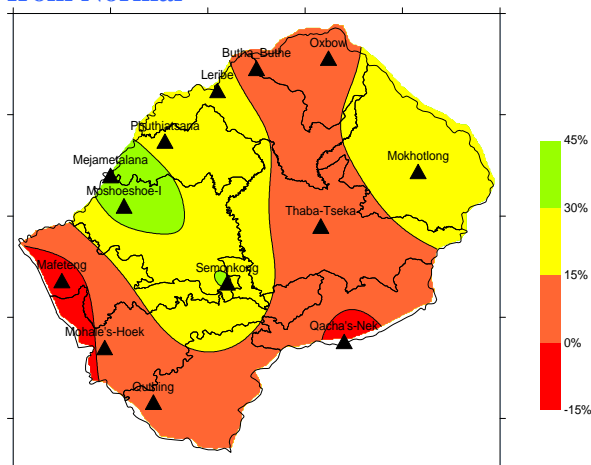


Fig.1: Cumulative rainfall departure from normal since 1st Sept to 10th March 2006.

Relatively good actual cumulative rainfall was registered during this dekad. The percentage of normal rainfall map above depicts that the country received normal to above normal rainfall. These widespread substantial amounts of rain received over the whole country ranged from 1% to 37% of normal rainfall. However,

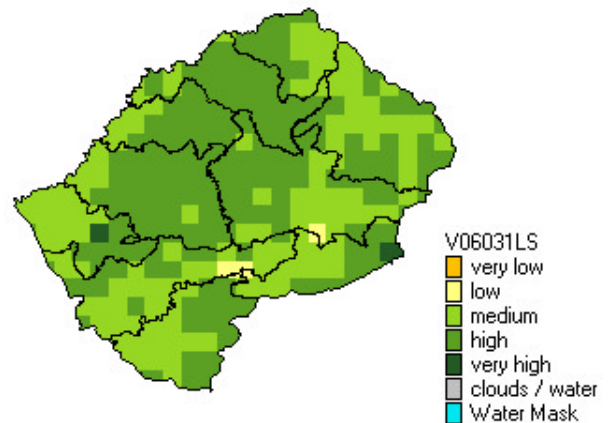
some patches of deficits are observed in the southern Lowlands.

TEMPERATURE

The temperatures were slightly below normal dekadal temperatures throughout the whole country. The highest temperature of 27.9⁰C was registered at Maseru Airport on the 10th and the lowest dekadal temperature of -0.5⁰C was recorded at Mokhotlong on the 5th. The negative temperatures registered simply indicate that Winter season is approaching. The temperatures and the sunshine were favourable to crops, especially at these stage (approaching mature) of their growth especially beans.

VEGETATION

Figure 2



The degree of greenness is dominated by medium to high with some patches of low at Mohale's Hoek and Thaba-Tseka. These high degree of greenness indicates that the crops and the pastures have improved due to good rains received recently.

CROP STAGE AND CONDITION

Agricultural activities during this dekad is centered on weeding of maize and preparing land for Winter wheat, especially in the lowlands. The heavy rainfall that was experienced over the

entire country improved the agriculture scenario. However, this heavy rainfall was in some cases harmful to crops as they were submerged. Besides this, little change is expected in as far as the crop (maize) that was waterlogged because rainfall is expected to decrease a little.

DEKADAL OUTLOOK

11th – 20th March 2006

The period is expected to remain mostly dry. However, rains and thundershowers are

anticipated . Temperatures are expected to be generally warm.

Seasonal Outlook March – May 2006

Rainfall situation is expected to be near average for the period March – May 2006. Therefore, this implies that rains are anticipated to perform better than last year during the same period.

Table 1

Summaries		Rainfall and Temperature										
STATION	ALT.	Rainfall (mm)					Temperature (°C)					
		1 - 10 Mar 2006			Total From Sept05 to 1st Dek Mar 06		1 - 10 Mar 2006					
NAME	(M)	Actual	Normal	Rain	Actual	Normal	%Dept. from Normal	Minimum	Maximum	Dekadal	Dekadal	Deviation
		R/Fall	R/Fall	Days				Lowest(Day)	Highest (Day)	Mean	Normal	
Butha-Buthe	1770	7.7	41.3	2	693.3	629.0	10	5.0 (5)	26.6 (9)	17.3	18.7	-1.4
Leribe	1740	25.6	32.7	2	661.9	551.7	20	5.8 (5)	26.4 (8)	17.5	19.1	-1.6
Mafeteng	1610	0.0	39.1	0	448.3	499.2	-10	6.2 (6)	27.0 (8)	17.3	18.8	-1.5
Maseru Airport	1530	0.0	34.6	0	686.6	502.3	37	8.6 (5)	27.9 (10)	20.1	20	0.1
Mohale's hoek	1600		36.4			522.8						
Mokhotlong	2200	27.5	32.5	4	634.9	487.7	30	-0.5 (5)	24.6 (1)	14.3	16.5	-2.2
Moshoeshoe I	1628	1.9	39	1	769.4	561.2	37	8.0 (6)	27.2 (10)	18.1	19.9	-1.9
Ox-Bow	2600	15.0	57.2	2	996.1	893.6	11	0.0 (7)	19.0 (1)	10.1	11.5	-1.4
Phuthiatsana	1750	7.5	30.1	1	705.2	561.0	26	7.9 (5)	27.3 (8)	18.6	19.6	-1.0
Qacha's Nek	1970	7.4	38.5	1	589.3	615.0	-4	3.3 (5)	27.6 (1)	16.2	17.3	-1.1
Quthing	1740	1.0	41.8	1	607.4	572.7	6	8.3 (5)	26.2 (8)	18.5	19.4	-0.9
Semonkong	2458	1.5	30.8	1	631.2	481.1	31	0.6 (6)	22.3 (2)	12.7	14.4	-1.7
ThabaTseka	2160	1.0	31.1	1	493.4	490.5	1	2.2 (5)	25.5 (7)	14.5	16	-1.5

Fig.3

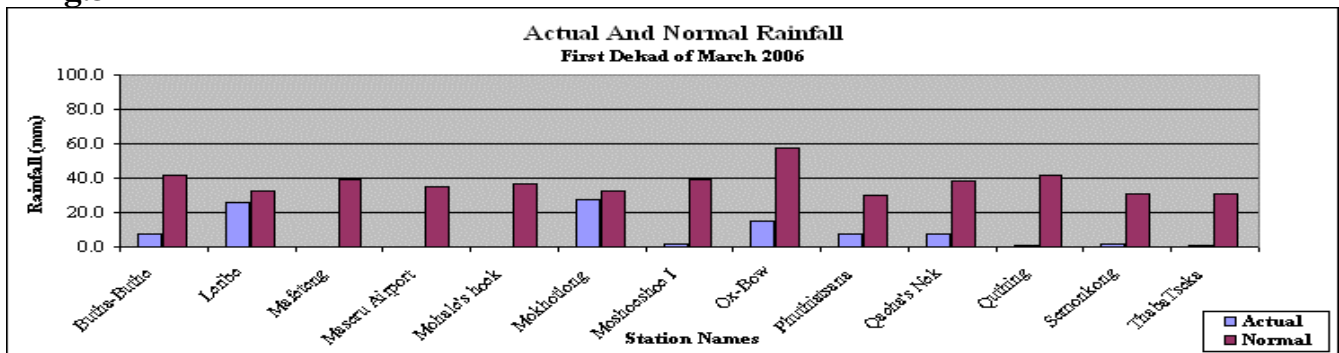
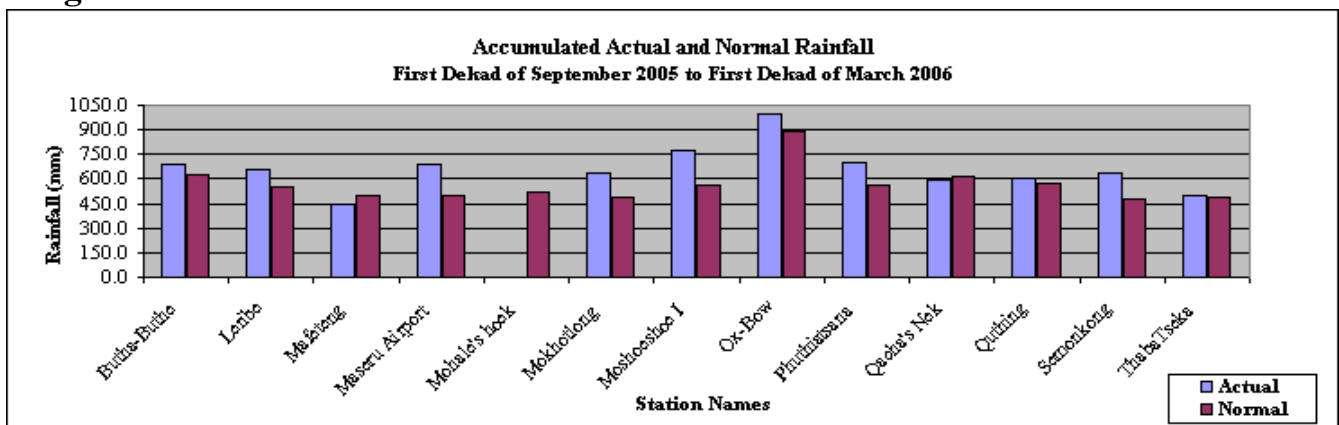


Fig.4



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.