



# LESOTHO METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES

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Agro-Met Monthly Update:

October 2008

Date of issue: November 2008

## Highlights

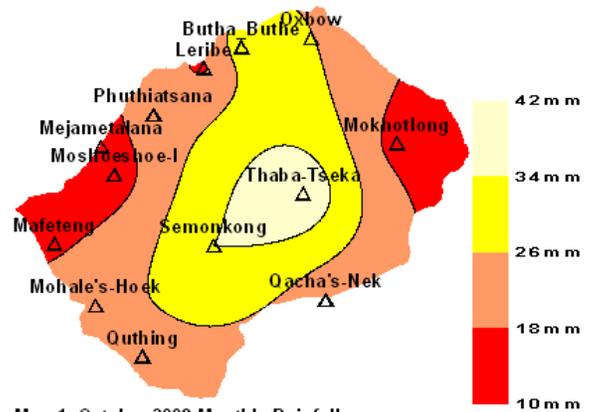
1. Dry weather experienced countrywide
2. Above normal mean monthly temperatures experienced

## Rainfall

### *Monthly Actual Rainfall*

Dry weather conditions continued into the month of October 2008. This was the fourth consecutive month since July that the country experienced below normal rainfall. Low amounts of rainfall were recorded in the western and northeastern parts of the country. The highest and lowest monthly rainfall was 41.7mm at Thaba-Tseka and 13.2mm at Moshoeshoe 1 respectively (Map 1).

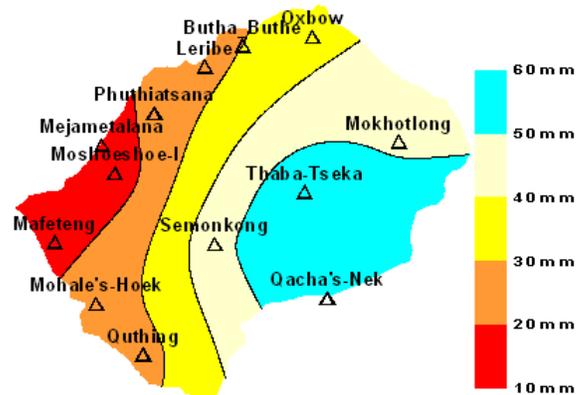
Rain days range from three days to eight days. The lowest number of rain days is mostly found in the western parts of the country while the highest number of rain days is mostly in the northern, central and eastern parts of the country.



Map 1: October 2008 Monthly Rainfall

### *Cumulative Rainfall since September 2008*

Accumulated rainfall since September is below normal countrywide. Dry weather had been prevailing since July 2008 and thus October became the fourth month in a series of dry consecutive months. The lowlands have lowest cumulative rainfall departures from normal than the highlands.



Map 2: Cumulative Rainfall (September - October 2008)

### Temperatures

The month of October was very hot. Monthly mean temperatures had been high. They were normal to above normal countrywide. Mean temperatures were distinctly above normal during

the second dekad of the month. The highest daily maximum temperature of the month was 32.4°C at Mejametalana on the 13<sup>th</sup>.

### Crop Stage and Conditions

Planting of the main summer cereal crops has not started. Normally sorghum should be planted by now and maize planting be in progress. Dry spells that have been prevailing since July have prevented many agricultural activities that include planting summer crops. Soil moisture has been very poor since the beginning of August and the situation remains the same to date. Maize planting has only one month of November to be planted in the lowlands, and time may not be enough.

Some wheat is at kernel formation and its conditions range from fair to bad.

### Water and livestock conditions

Rangelands are generally poor countrywide. Livestock conditions are poor at most places due to bad pasture conditions. Water resources at some places are stressed and water rationing as well as water tankering are reported at some places which are worst affected by rainfall deficiency.

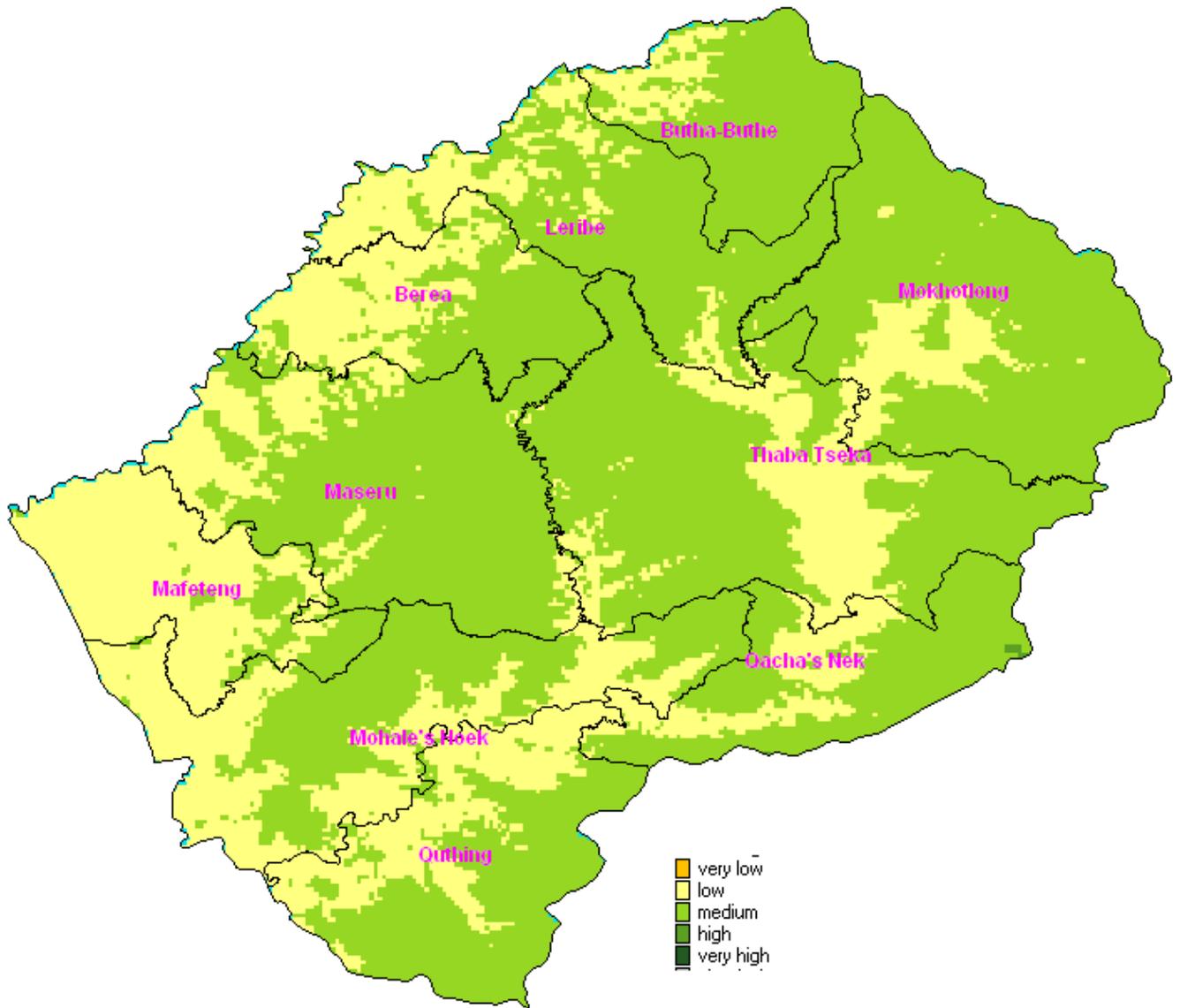
### Vegetation monitoring

Generally the vegetation condition is low in the lowlands and the Senqu River Valley, and medium in the highlands. This is reflected by average SPOT NDVI image shown below for the month of October.

### Weather Outlook (October - December 2008)

The country is facing a crisis due to failure in the start of summer rainfall. Since July this year, no significant rainfall occurred, leading to emergence of drought conditions. Further to this, there are no prospects of improvement of the situation for the current month of November. The season is

therefore expected to continue experiencing poor rainfall.



**Map 3: Average SPOT NDVI Image for the month of October 2008**