



LESOTHO METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES

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Agro-Met Monthly Update:

October 2010

Date of issue: November 2010

Highlights

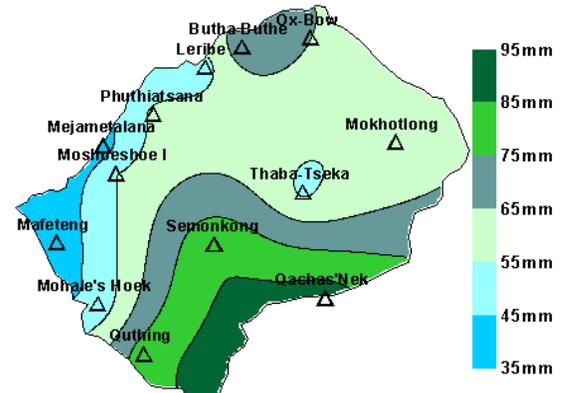
1. Most places record below normal monthly rainfall
2. Most places experience above mean monthly temperatures
3. Drought conditions still persist in some places
4. Normal to above normal rainfall forecasted in October -December

Rainfall

Monthly Actual Rainfall

The month of October saw a little more rainfall activities than the previous month of September, lessening the intensity of drought conditions that had been going on. However, most parts of the country still remain with below normal rainfall amount. Only Qacha's Nek and Semonkong recorded above normal rainfall, while Butha-Buthe, Mokhotlong and Quthing recorded normal rainfall.

The maximum and minimum monthly rainfall amounts recorded were 90.7mm at Qacha's Nek and 34.9mm at Mafeteng respectively.

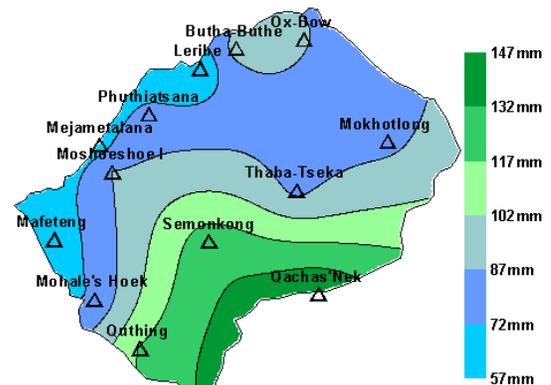


Map 1: October 2010 Rainfall

Cumulative Rainfall from May to September 2010

Cumulative rainfall for the month of October range between normal and below in most places, with Qacha's Nek recording above normal rainfall.

Mafeteng has recorded lowest cumulative rainfall amount of 57.7mm while Qacha's Nek has recorded highest cumulative rainfall amount of 146.7mm.



Map 2: Sept. - Oct 2010 Cumulative Rainfall

Agrometeorology Section
 Lesotho Meteorological Services
 P.O. Box 14515
 Maseru 100
 Lesotho

Tel: +266 22 324374
 Fax: +266 22 325 057/ 22 350 325
 E-mail: agrometeorology@lesmet.org.ls

Temperatures

Mean monthly temperatures were normal to above normal everywhere for the month of October in spite of recording temperatures below freezing point in some places like Semonkong.

Highest and lowest mean monthly temperature deviations were 1.7°C and 0°C at Qacha's Nek and Mafeteng respectively.

Crop Stage and Conditions

The shortage of rains has hindered significant field activities from progressing. Generally farmers in the lowlands have not been able to

cultivate their fields, only those in the mountains have started cultivation.

Seasonal Forecast (October 2010 – March 2011)

Normal prospects of rain anticipated in the coming season...

Most places have registered below normal rainfall since February 2010, as a result the country is experiencing drought conditions. This has called for the release of water in the Katse Dam to supplement the water resources in the lowlands. The most hit places are the southern parts extending from Mafeteng to Qacha's Nek. These conditions were exacerbated by the above normal temperatures recorded during the months of July and August. However, the prevailing conditions are expected to end around mid October.

For the period October-November-December (OND) 2010, there is a likelihood of receiving normal to above normal rainfall countrywide. However, in the second half of the season, January-February-March (JFM) 2011, the region that covers Berea, Maseru, Mafeteng, Mohale's Hoek and Quthing including the highlands of Semonkong and the western parts of Qacha's Nek is likely to receive normal to below normal rainfall while the northern parts which include northern lowlands of Leribe and Butha-Buthe, the highlands of Thaba-Tseka and Mokhotlong as well as the eastern parts of Qacha's Nek are likely to receive normal to above normal rainfall.

This winter has been considered warm as mean monthly temperatures were predominately above normal throughout the country with a few occasional cold spells. For October 2010 to March 2011, temperatures are expected to be normal to above normal. There is also a high likelihood of thunderstorm and hail occurrence this coming season.

The rainfall which is anticipated to commence in mid October will improve the current drought conditions, thus bringing relief to the already stressed water resources, agriculture and other socio-economic sectors. However, since Lesotho's agricultural activities normally start in September, there will be a slight delay in agricultural activities due to the late onset of rains that are anticipated to commence in mid October.