

LESOTHO METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES (LEKALA LA TSA BOLEPI)



Ten-Day Agrometeorological Bulletin

01st – 10th April 2004



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

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Highlights

- Decrease in rainfall observed over some places.
- Below normal to normal cumulative rainfall reached.
- Temperatures have started dropping considerably.
- Crops generally at grain filling to wax maturity.

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WEATHER SUMMARY
01st – 10th April 2004

The high pressure system dominated the sub-region during the first dekad of April. However, a frontal system traversed the southern parts of the sub-region, while a trough developed over the central interior on the 4th. As result, the first dekad was generally dry and mild. Isolated thundershowers occurred on the 4th. Temperatures were generally mild during the day and cool at night.

RAINFALL SITUATION
01st – 10th April 2004

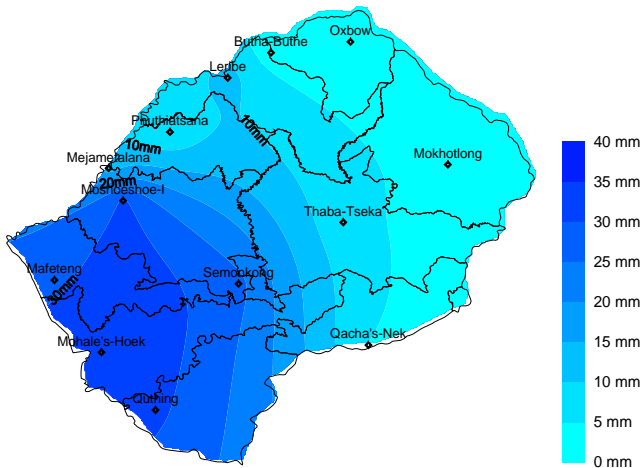


Fig.1: Actual rainfall distribution for the 1st dekad of April 2004

A significant decrease in rainfall relative to the previous dekad was observed over most of the northern half of the country (see fig.1), where rainfall as low as 2.4mm to 13mm was registered while the southern half received relatively good rains ranging from 25mm to 35mm. On the other hand, the northern half of the country registered far below normal rainfall (see fig. 3). However, the southern half received the expected rainfall for the dekad.

CUMULATIVE RAINFALL FROM 1ST SEPT 03 TO 10TH APRIL 04

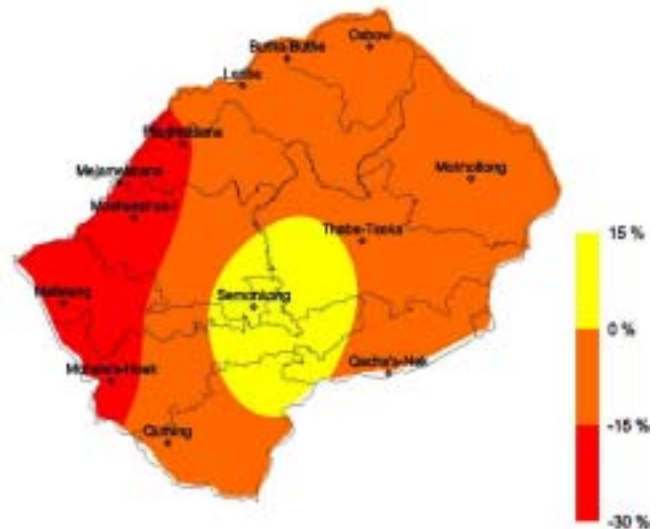


Fig.2: Cumulative rainfall departure from normal since 1stSept 03 to 10th April 2004

Cumulative rainfall since September 03 to dekad under discussion has reached the expected normal at most places (see fig.2) except for a few stations such as Mafeteng, Maseru, Mohale's Hoek, Phuthiatsana and Moshoeshoe 1 situated over the southwestern part of the country where cumulative rainfall is below normal.

Percentage departure from normal analysis shown in fig. 2 still emphasizes low moisture accumulation over the south western region where the percentage departure fall within the negative range. Otherwise, the rest of the country has accumulated adequate soil moisture that is enough to encourage preparation of winter cropping.

TEMPERATURE
01st – 10th April 2004

The positive temperature deviation shows normal to slightly above normal temperature during the

dekad under review (see table 1 under temperatures).

Temperatures have started dropping considerably, which puts the late planted crops at risk as crop development is retarded and therefore likely to be affected by frost before maturity.

CROP STAGE AND CONDITION

01st – 10th April 2004

Crops (maize, sorghum) are generally performing well due to the adequate soil moisture. However, the late planted crops though maintaining relatively good vegetation, still stand the risk of frost attack before maturity as they are still at flowering to grain filling stage. Nevertheless, crops are generally at grain filling to wax maturity and crop condition ranges from poor to good.

Summer wheat is at wax to full maturity with poor to good condition.

DEKADAL OUTLOOK

11th – 20th April 2004

The high pressure system is still expected to dominate the sub-region during the first half of the dekad. As a result, the first half of the dekad will be dry and mild. Rainfall situation is expected to improve during the second half of the dekad due to the frontal system, which is expected to pass over the sub-region. A surface trough is also expected to develop over the central interior during this period. Temperatures will generally drop, especially at night.

Table 1

		Rainfall and Temperature Summaries										
		Rainfall (mm)						TEMPERATURE (°C)				
		01 - 10 April			Total From Sept.03 to 1st Dek April 04							
STATION	ALT.	Actual	Rain	Normal			% Dept.from	Minimum	Maximum	Dekadal	Dekadal	
NAME	(M)	R/Fall	days	R/Fall	Actual	Normal	Normal	Lowest (day)	Highest (day)	Mean	Normal	Deviation
Butha-Buthe	1770	2.4	1	23.7	634.0	663.9	-5	6.0(10)	24.4(9)	16.7	15.7	1.0
Leribe	1740	12	3	23.4	567.2	577.0	-2	6.3(10)	23.7(9)	16.8	15.7	1.1
Mafeteng	1610	28.8	5	26.3	418.4	565.3	-26	5.2(10)	23.5(8)	16.2	15.6	0.6
Maseru Airport	1530	13	3	23.6	440.8	567.9	-22	6.3(10)	25.3(9)	17.5	16.0	1.5
Mohaleshoek	1600	33.5	4	26.8	484.1	612.6	-21	5.0(10)	24.5(8)	16.7	16.3	0.4
Mokhotlong	2200	4.8	1	16.4	474.2	525.4	-10	5.0(9)	22.3(4)	13.5	12.7	0.8
Moshoeshoe I	1628	30.8	3	30.6	469.3	626.7	-25	7.0(10)	24.5(9)	16.9	N/A	N/A
Phuthiatsana	1750	5.4	1	23.6	518.1	624.6	-17	5.3(10)	24.4(9)	17.2	15.9	1.3
Qacha's Nek	1970	4.9	2	19.8	637.1	674.4	-6	6.9(10)	23.1(9)	15.8	14.9	0.9
Semonkong	2458	26.5	3	21.9	619.2	554.9	12	0.5(10)	20.2(9)	11.5	11.5	0.0
Thaba-Tseka	2160	6.5	1	16.5	517.8	506.3	2	6.5(9)	21.2(9,10)	14.2	12.9	1.3
Quthing	1740	31	5	27.8	560.5	594.0	-6	6.5(10)	24.1(8)	15.8	15.3	0.5

Fig.3

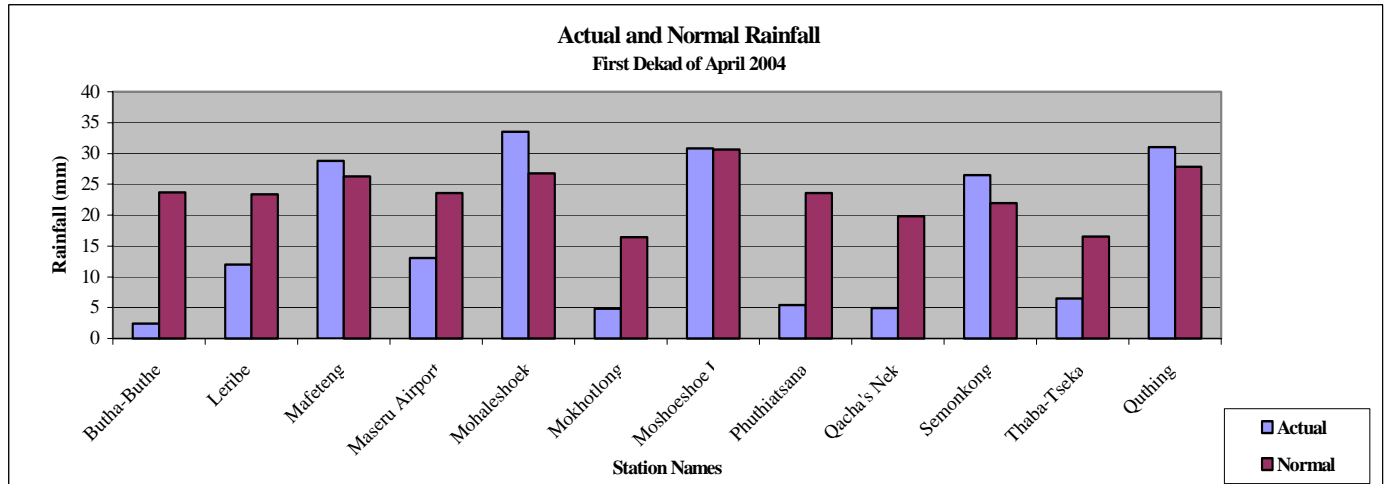
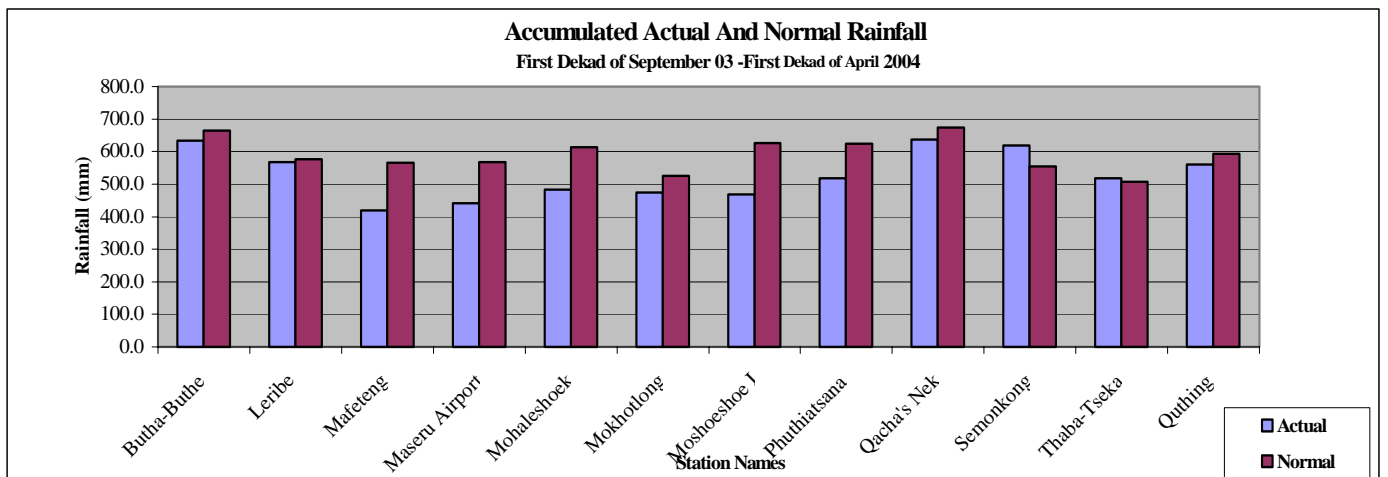


Fig.4



Glossary

Dekad : Ten day period

Normal: Average figure over a specific time period.

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

Cum. Stands for cumulative.

Act. & Nor. R/f stands for Actual and Normal Rainfall

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And it is

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Comments and Contributions would be highly appreciated.