



LESOTHO METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES

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Agro-Met Monthly Update:

December 2008

Date of issue: January 2009

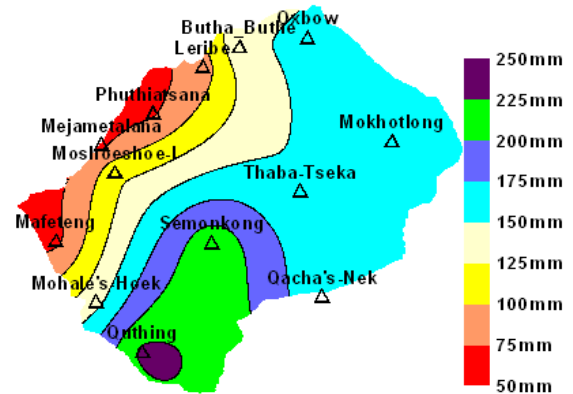
Highlights

1. Normal rainfall recorded during the month.
2. Normal mean temperatures experienced during the month
3. Weeding in progress
4. Vegetation slightly increasing.

Rainfall

Monthly Actual Rainfall

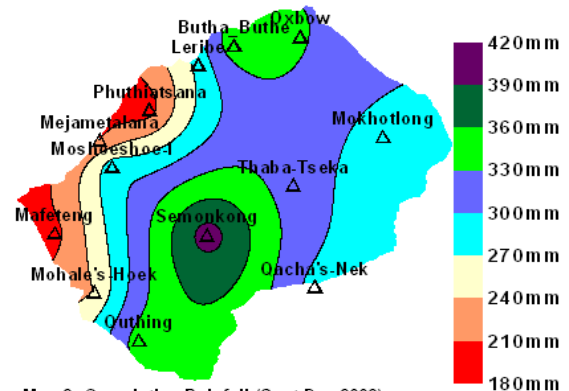
Normal to above normal rainfall was recorded at most parts of the country during the last calendar month of 2008. Near normal rainfall was registered in the areas around Mejametalana, Phuthiatsana and Mafeteng in the west. Lowest and highest monthly rainfall were experienced at Mejametalana (67.9mm) and Quthing (230.3mm) respectively (see Map 1). Monthly rainfall at Quthing was significantly inflated by torrential rains of the December 2nd.



Map 1: December 2008 Monthly Rainfall

Cumulative Rainfall since September 2008

Low cumulative rainfall is observed in some parts in the west of the country (see Map 2). That has been a consistent situation since the inception of the season. However, there has been an improvement of cumulative rainfall in the east to northeast regions of the country. Consistent trend of low cumulative rainfall in some areas in the southern lowlands and northern lowlands could translate into not adequately recharged water resources and at some places.



Map 2: Cumulative Rainfall (Sept-Dec 2008)

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Temperatures

Monthly mean temperatures were normal to above normal countrywide. Highest monthly mean temperature deviation from normal was 2.2°C at Qacha's Nek. Highest daily maximum

temperature of the month of December was 32.2°C recorded at Mejametalana on the 23rd.

Crop Stage and Conditions

Planting has finished and farmers are primarily engaged in weeding in most parts of the country. Crop stages are generally at vegetative stages and crops are in good conditions at most places.

Wheat grown in winter has matured and harvesting is in progress.

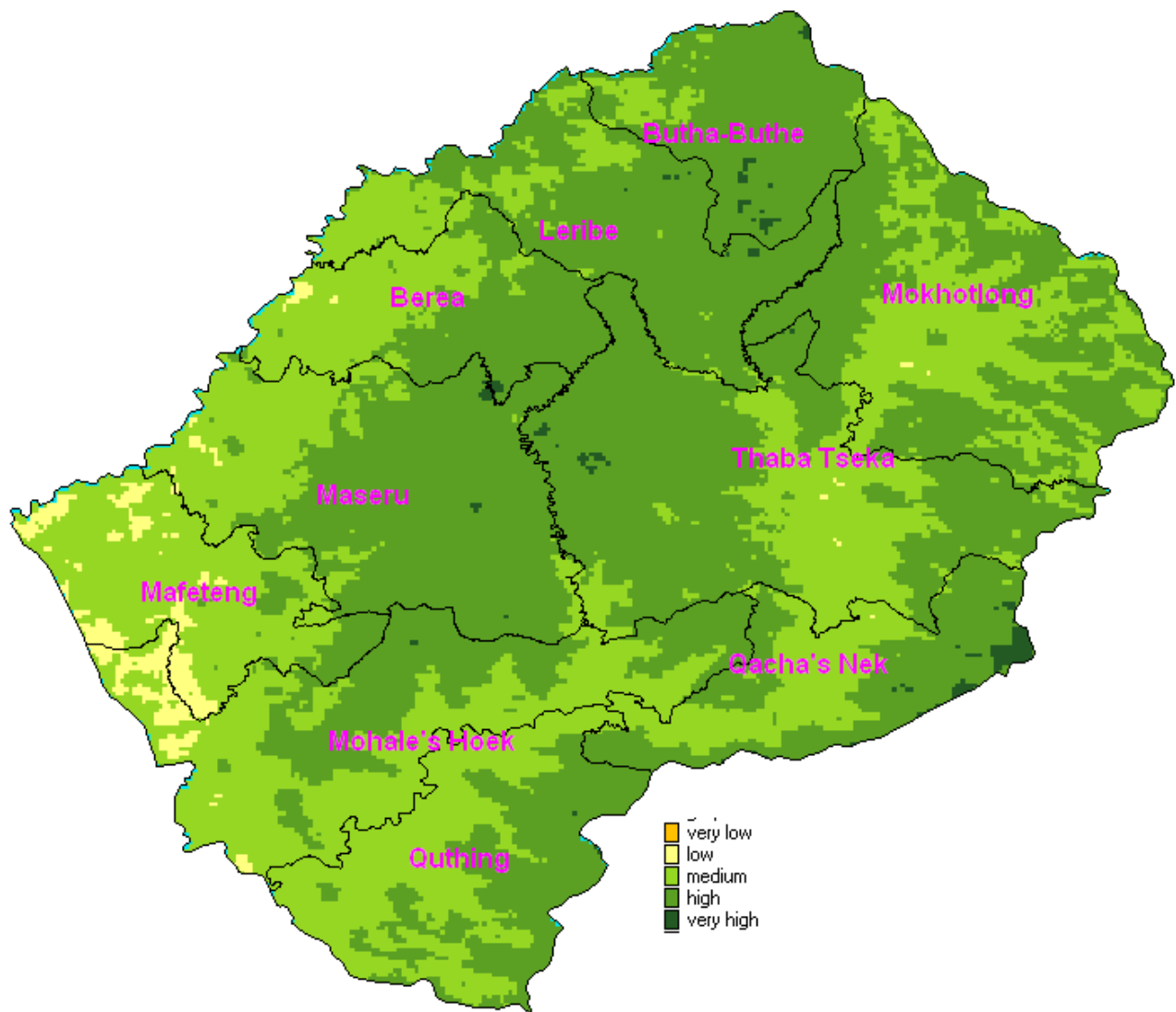
Water and livestock conditions

Due to low cumulative rainfall in most parts of the lowlands – which is a signal that rains have not been optimum, water resources are stretched at

some places where abnormal queues at water resources are still found at some places.

Vegetation monitoring

Average vegetation condition has shown some increase in most parts of the country from the month of November to December 2008. However, there was no change in vegetation conditions over the region extending from parts of Berea and Mohale's Hoek. This is the region that has consistently maintained lowest cumulative rainfall since the inception of the current rainy season.



Average SPOT NDVI Image for the month of December 2008