

LESOTHO METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES (LEKALA LA TSA BOLEPI)



Ten-Day Agrometeorological Bulletin

01st – 10th February 2004



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

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Highlights

- ❑ Reduced rainfall amounts experienced.
- ❑ Some regions remain the worst affected by soil moisture stress.
- ❑ Crop damage due to hail attack experienced.
- ❑ Rainfall improvement expected in the next dekad.

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WEATHER SUMMARY
01st – 10th February 2004

The first dekad of February received some isolated to scattered thundershowers/storms accompanied by hailstorms especially during the second half of the dekad. Temperatures were generally hot during the first half of the dekad, however, temperatures dropped slightly during the second half of the dekad.

RAINFALL SITUATION
01st – 10th February

Reduced rainfall amounts from that of the previous dekad were experienced over several places during the dekad (01st - 10th Feb). Due to these conditions, most stations have therefore experienced below normal rainfall for the dekad with very few having registered above normal rainfall (see table 1). However, some stations like Ox-Bow and Qacha’s Nek have shown some slight improvement as compared to the previous dekad. Mohale’s Hoek, Mafeteng and Quthing in the southern region have received relatively little rainfall as in the previous dekad, this implies recurring depletion of soil moisture that threatens plant growth over this region.

Cumulative Rainfall from 1st Sept 03 to 10th Feb. 04

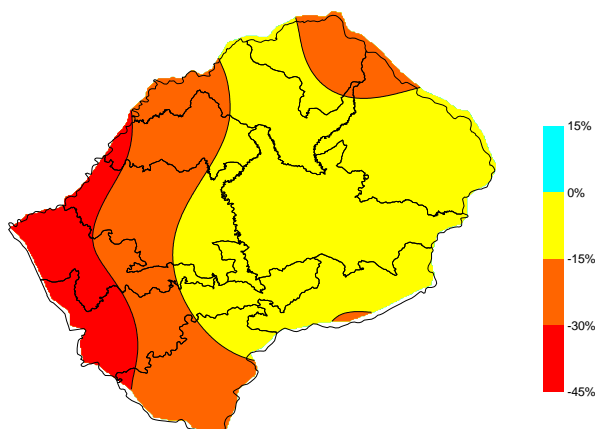


Fig.1: Cumulative rainfall departure from normal since 1st Sept 03 to 10th Feb 04.

Cumulative rainfall since Sept 03 to 10th Feb 04 is still below normal over a number of stations with very few having reached almost the expected

normal e.g. Butha-Buthe and Semonkong (see fig. 3).

Percentage rainfall departure from normal calculated from 1st Sept 03 to 10th Feb 04 indicates some negative values that show an overall rainfall deficiency over the entire country. The southwestern to the extreme southern region remain the worst affected by soil moisture stress. The extreme northern region did show some decline in rainfall since the previous dekad. Otherwise, the extreme central region shows slight improvement with regard to moisture stress.

TEMPERATURE
01st – 10th February 2004

Positive temperature deviation were reached at almost all reporting stations except at Semonkong (see table 1 under temperatures). These positive deviations were as a result of the intense heating accompanied by some dry spells experienced over this period that at times caused crops to loose strength.

CROP STAGE AND CONDITION
01st – 10th February 2004

Crops benefitted well from the rains received during the dekad. However, at some places, in the Mafeteng and Qacha’s Nek districts, crop damage due to hail was reported where some crops were caught at critical stage of tasseling/flowering hence likelihood of poor crop production. Nevertheless, crops are generally at vegetative to grain forming stages. Crop condition ranges from poor to good. Hoeing at some places in the lowland areas is still in progress where planting was delayed.

DEKADAL OUTLOOK
11th – 20th February 2004

The second dekad of February is expected to be dominated mostly by surface troughs. As a result rainfall situation is expected to improve during this period as compared to the previous dekad. Temperatures are expected to be generally warm, however a slight drop in minimum temperatures can be expected.

Table 1

Rainfall and Temperature Summaries												
		Rainfall (mm)						TEMPERATURE (°C)				
		Total From Sept. 03 to 1st Dek Feb.04										
STATION	ALT.	Actual	Normal	Rain			%Dept. from	Minimum	Maximum	Dekadal	Dekadal	
NAME	(M)	R/Fall	R/Fall	Days	Actual	Normal	Normal	Lowest(Day)	Highest (Day)	Mean	Normal	Deviation
Butha-Buthe	1770	25.5	38.8	2	460.4	473	-3	11.8(6,9)	29.6(4)	19.4	19.4	0
Leribe	1740	29.0	37.9	4	323.4	404.5	-20	10.5(8)	31.4(4)	20.2	19.6	0.6
Mafeteng	1610	12.0	37.5	2	256.0	378.7	-32	11.2(8)	30.5(4)	20.6	19.8	0.8
Maseru Airport	1530	22.0	40.4	3	251.9	399.6	-37	11.7(8)	31.0(4)	21.4	20.6	0.8
Mohale's hoek	1600	6.3	33.9	2	242.5	415.6	-42	13.0(3)	31.0(3,1)	21.8	20.7	1.1
Mokhotlong	2200	29.2	34.9	5	342.0	383.7	-11	6.0(8)	26.6(4)	16.7	16.4	0.3
Ox-Bow	2600	46.4	54.2	7	570.6	726.4	-21	1.6(8)	21.6(4)	12.2	12.0	0.2
Phuthiatsana	1750	40.4	35.5	3	326.6	434.5	-25	11.7(8)	30.3(4)	20.5	19.9	0.6
Qacha's Nek	1970	68.5	42.9	4	405.2	479.9	-16	10.4(1,2)	31.5(4)	18.3	18.2	0.1
Quthing	1740	20.1	40.5	4	293.2	402.0	-27	11.2(8)	30.8(4)	21.6	19.8	1.8
Semonkong	2458	30.2	35.7	5	387.0	390.1	-1	4.1(8)	25.6(4)	15.4	16.5	-1.1
Moshoeshoe I	1628	53.4	37.5	4	278.3	393.2	-29	11.9(6)	30.6(4)	20.9	N/A	N/A
Thaba-Tseka	2160	45.5	37.0	5	334.7	370.2	-10	7.2(8)	N/A	N/A	16.3	N/A

Fig.2

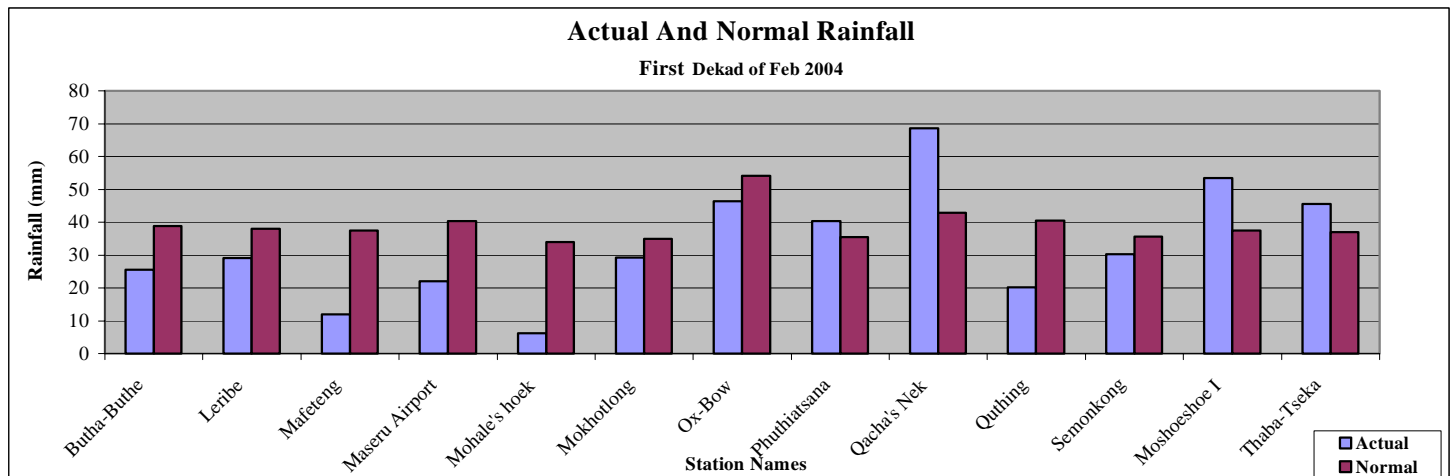
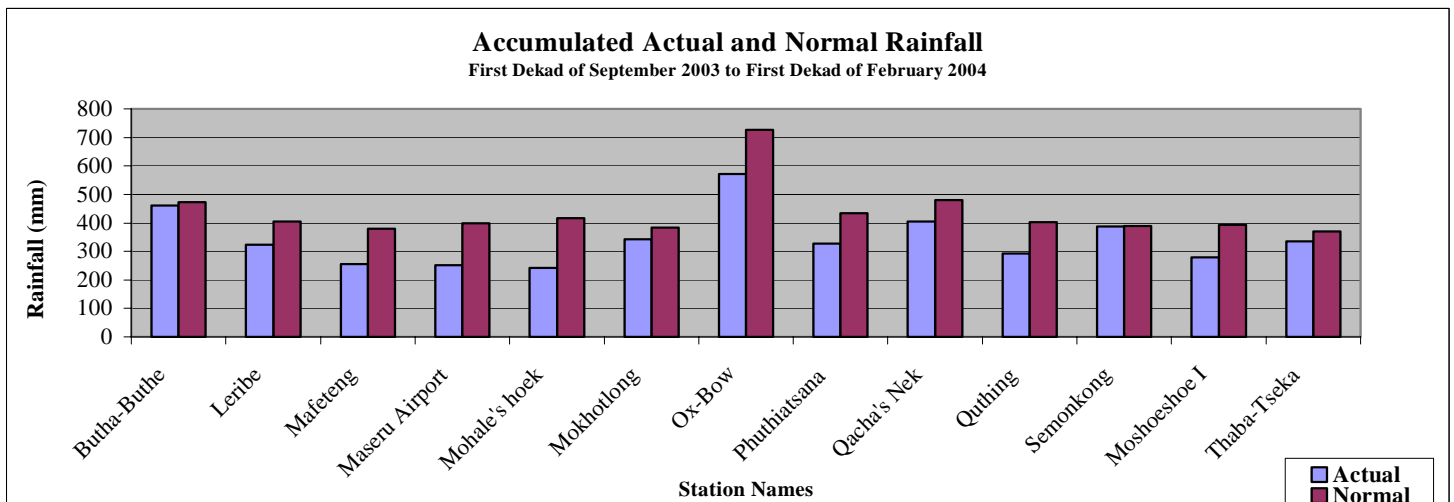


Fig.3



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.