

LESOTHO METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES (LEKALA LA TSA BOLEPI)



Ten-Day Agrometeorological Bulletin

21st – 29th February 2004



Issue No.15/2003-04

Vol.3

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

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Highlights

- ❑ Good rains received over some parts of the country.
- ❑ No improvement in soil moisture accumulation in certain areas of the country.
- ❑ Crops are generally at vegetative to grain filling stage.
- ❑ Slight improvement in rainfall anticipated.

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WEATHER SUMMARY
21st – 29th February 2004

The combination of the surface trough, which was situated over central interior and the Indian high pressure system, which was dominating the northeastern parts of the sub-region resulted in an influx of moisture from the tropics and the Indian Ocean. As a result, the last dekad of February received isolated to scattered thundershowers. Temperatures were generally mild during this period, however, they rose slightly towards the end of the dekad.

RAINFALL SITUATION
21st – 29th February 2004

Good rains were mainly received over the southern tip of the country, the eastern and the central regions, such that Quthing registered 35.6mm, Qachas'nek 36.1mm, Semonkong 49.9mm and Thaba-Tseka 46.0mm. Moshoeshoe 1 in the central west registered 42.8mm and Leribe in the northern sector registered the substantial rainfall amount of 56.2mm. The remaining parts of the country received rainfall within the range 6.0mm to 28mm where Mafeteng in the south western registered the lowest of all followed by Mohale's Hoek (see table 1).

Cumulative Rainfall from 1st Sept 03 to 29th Feb. 04

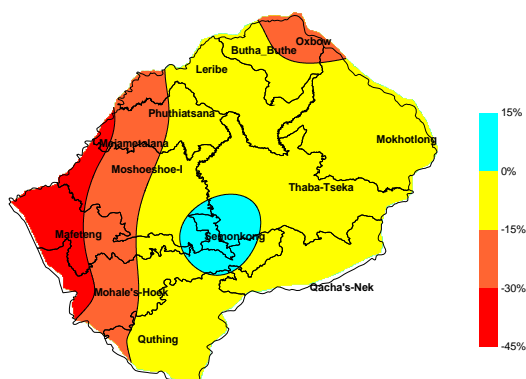


Fig.1: Cumulative rainfall departure from normal since 1st Sept 03 to 29th Feb 04.

Cumulative rainfall since September to 29th February generally ranges from almost below normal to normal (see table 1 & fig.3).

Although some southern parts received fairly good rains during this dekad, there is no improvement in soil moisture accumulation as this region has been under severe rainfall deficit. Cumulative rainfall deficit along the southern region to the western region ranges from 15% to 45% (see table 1 and fig.1). This condition indicates inadequate soil moisture for the current and subsequent winter cropping seasons.

TEMPERATURE
21st – 29th February 2004

Normal to slightly above normal temperatures were registered throughout the country (see table 1 under temperatures). These high temperatures enhanced rapid soil moisture loss especially over areas that registered relatively low rainfall such as Mafeteng and Mohale's Hoek.

CROP STAGE AND CONDITION
21st – 29th February 2004

Improved crop condition has been observed over some parts of the country where substantial rains were consistently experienced in the previous dekad and the dekad in review. However, summer crops in the western part of the country have seen a little improvement due to small quantity of rains received and the high temperatures that resulted in high rates of evaporation and transpiration. Nevertheless, summer crops (maize, sorghum) are generally at vegetative to grain filling stages with conditions ranging from poor to good. Wheat is at grain forming stage to wax maturity with poor to good conditions.

DEKADAL OUTLOOK
01st February 2004

The interior trough is still expected to dominate the central interior, especially during the first half of the dekad. Occasional frontal systems are also expected to pass over the southern coast of the sub-region. As a result, isolated to widespread thundershowers are anticipated to continue during this forecast period which implies slight improvement in rainfall. Temperatures will remain generally mild throughout this period.

Table 1

Rainfall and Temperature Summaries												
		Rainfall (mm)					TEMPERATURE (°C)					
				Rain	Total From Sept. 03 to 3rd Dek Feb.04							
STATION	ALT.	Actual	Normal	Days			%Dept. from	Minimum	Maximum	Dekadal	Dekadal	
NAME	(M)	R/Fall	R/Fall		Actual	Normal	Normal	Lowest(Day)	Highest (Day)	Mean	Normal	Deviation
Butha-Buthe	1770	16.0	23.2	3	491.5	534.9	-8	12.2(25)	27.8(29)	19.2	18.5	0.7
Leribe	1740	56.2	23.9	5	424.9	466.5	-9	13.4(25)	28.3(29)	19.5	18.7	0.8
Maseru Airport	1530	19.7	24.0	4	281.7	456.8	-38	13.6(23)	29.2(29)	20.3	19.6	0.7
Mafeteng	1610	6.2	26.0	2	279.2	439.6	-36	12.9(28)	28.5(28)	19.5	18.8	0.7
Mohale's hoek	1600	12.0	25.5	1	323.4	480.4	-33	13.6(23)	29.4(28)	20.3	19.2	1.1
Mokhotlong	2200	27.6	21.9	7	394.3	436.9	-10	8.2(28)	24.6(27)	16.3	15.6	0.7
Ox-Bow	2600	25.0	37.5	6	669.4	813.5	-18	5.4(28)	19.4(28)	12.3	11.3	1
Phuthiatsana	1750	32.6	32.9	4	383.9	500.4	-23	13.8(23)	27.7(29)	19.7	18.9	0.8
Qacha's Nek	1970	36.1	33.4	5	511.6	555.6	-8	11.7(23,25)	23.8(29)	17.3	17.4	-0.1
Quthing	1740	35.6	26.5	5	395.0	461.1	-14	13.4(25)	27.3(28)	19.7	18.6	1.1
Semonkong	2458	49.9	26.1	6	473.3	446.6	6	6.5(28)	22.8(28)	14.8	15.0	-0.2
Moshoeshoe I	1628	42.8	42.8	4	343.9	479.8	-28	13.0(23)	28.5(29)	19.7	N/A	N/A
Thaba-Tseka	2160	46.0	17.1	6	405.1	412.3	-2	10.2(28)	24.1(28)	16.4	15.5	0.9

Fig.2

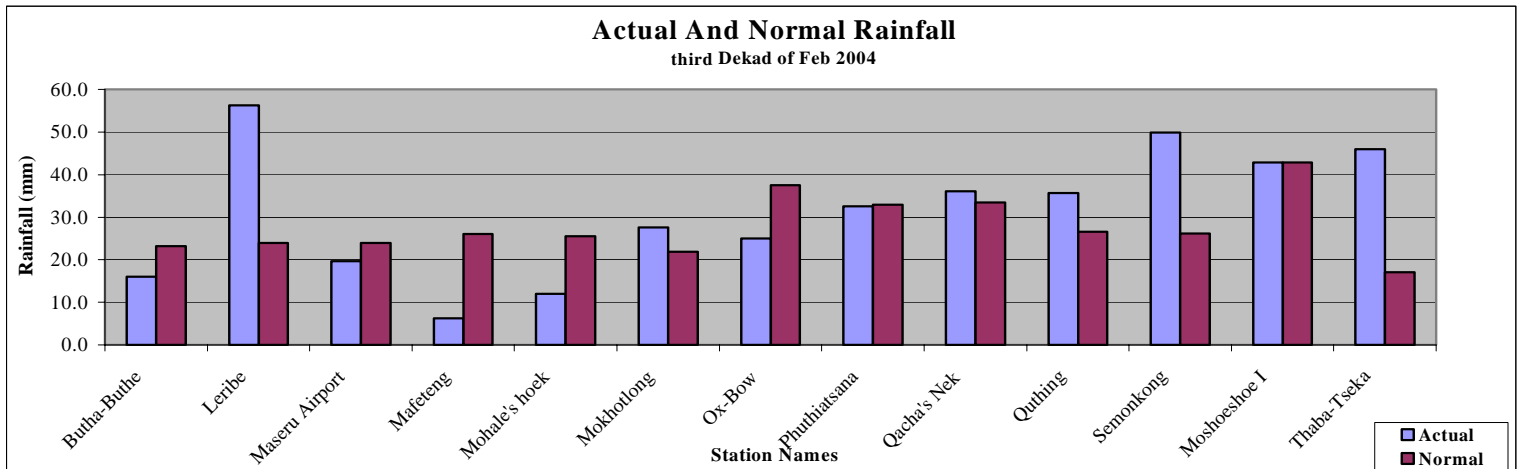
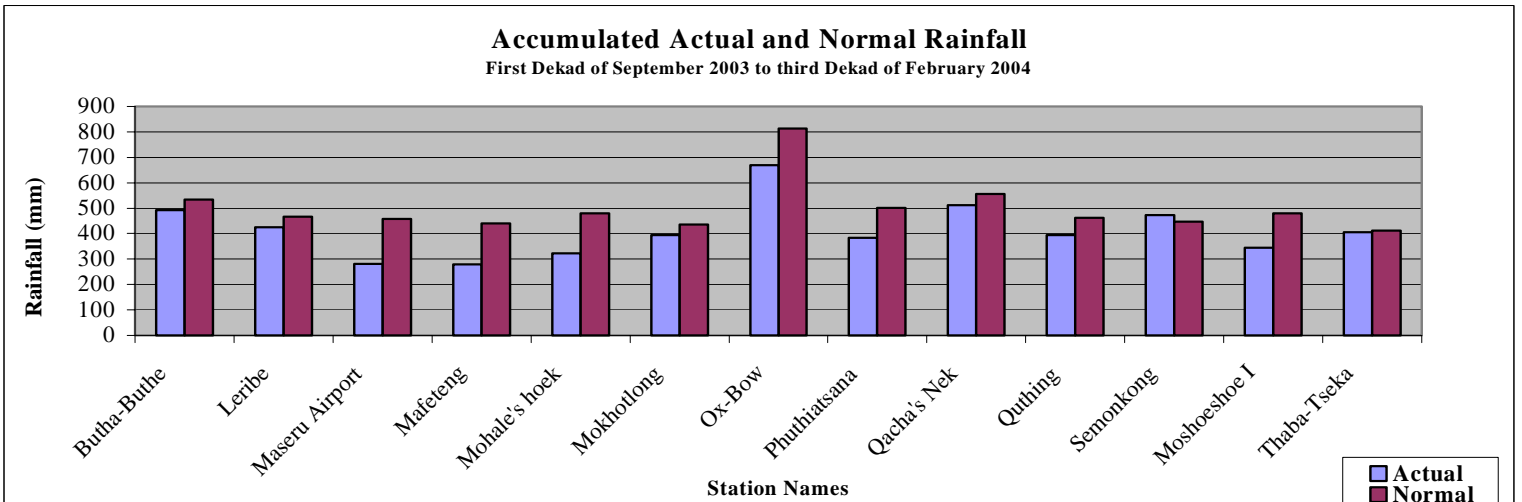


Fig.3



Glossary

Dekad : Ten day period

Normal: Average figure over a specific time period.

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

This Bulletin is issued during the Summer Cropping Season (October – April).

And it is

Produced by the

Lesotho Meteorological Services as a contribution to the

National Early Warning Unit for Food Security.

The Unit is coordinated by the Disaster Management Authority in the

Prime Minister's Office.

Comments and Contributions would be highly appreciated.