

LESOTHO METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES (LEKALA LA TSA BOLEPI)



Ten-Day Agrometeorological Bulletin

11th – 20th January 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 amounts experienced.
- ❑ Some areas are worst hit by drought conditions.
- ❑ Near normal to above normal temperatures recorded.
- ❑ Maize crop at vegetative to tasseling stages.
- ❑ Light rains expected in the next dekad.

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WEATHER SUMMARY11th – 20th January 2004

The second dekad of January was slightly wet especially during the second half of the dekad. This was due to the low pressure system that has been dominant over the interior during the first half of the dekad and becoming much deeper towards the end of the dekad. Temperatures were generally warm.

RAINFALL SITUATION11th – 20th January 2004

There has been a decrease in rainfall amounts over most parts of the country during this 2nd dekad of January 2004 as compared to the previous dekad. Moshoeshoe I is the only station which received dekad rainfall which is higher than that registered in the 1st dekad of January. The highest dekad rainfalls were recorded in Quthing and Oxbow with 47.5mm and 44.2mm respectively while Thaba-Tseka and Qacha's Nek registered lowest dekad rainfall of 6.6mm and 8.4mm respectively. The dekad was mostly drier-than-normal to normal with the exception of Quthing, Mohale's Hoek and Semonkong which had above normal dekad rainfall. Though some places received far below normal dekad rainfall, crops still benefited from the residual moisture accumulated since the beginning of the month (January).

Accumulated Rainfall From 1st Sept 03 to 20th Jan 04

Cumulative rainfall ranges from 174.1mm recorded at Moshoeshoe I to 491.6mm recorded at Oxbow (see table 1). Stations throughout the country recorded below normal to near normal cumulative rainfall, (see fig 3). Fig 1 shows that percentage rainfall departure from normal is mostly negative throughout the country. However, the western to the extreme southern parts of the country show higher negative percentage rainfall departure from normal, which is an indication that these parts are the worst hit by drought as compare to the rest of the country (see fig 1).

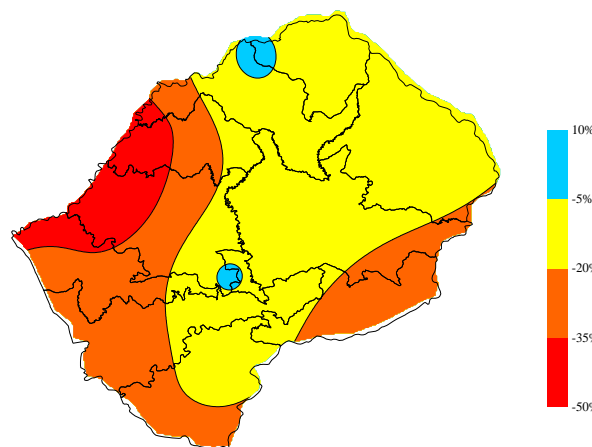


Fig.1: Cumulative rainfall departure from normal since 1st Sept 03 to 20th Jan 04.

TEMPERATURE11th – 20th January 2004

The temperatures experienced around the country were near normal to above normal, with the exception of Semonkong that had below normal dekadal temperatures. Temperature deviations from normal ranged from -1.9°C to 2.0°C (see table 1).

CROP STAGE AND CONDITION11th – 20th January 2004

The rains resulted in the improvement of crops (maize, sorghum, wheat) over most parts of the planted areas. Maize is relatively at an advanced stage at most places. Crop stage ranges from vegetative to flowering with quite a few at tasselling stage, notwithstanding the fact that some are still at early vegetative stage due to late planting. However, sorghum and wheat crops are still at vegetative stage. The crops are generally at fair to good conditions. Farmers are still in the process of planting cash crops such as beans so as to benefit from the prevailing soil moisture.

DEKADAL OUTLOOK21st – 31st January 2004

Rainfall situation is still expected to continue to improve during the third dekad of January. Isolated to scattered thundershowers are anticipated. Temperatures will remain warm to hot during this period.

Rainfall and Temperature Summaries												
		Rainfall (mm)					TEMPERATURE (°C)					
		Total From Sept. 03 to 2nd Dek Jan. 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	32.4	37.3	3	383.5	384.6	0	20.0(16)	29.7(14)	20.1	19.8	0.3
Leribe	1740	25.7	33.5	4	279.9	318.9	-12	11.5(16)	29.7(13)	21.1	20.3	0.8
Mafeteng	1610	13.4	32.3	4	207.4	298.1	-30	11.2(17)	29.5(11)	20.1	20.4	-0.3
Maseru Airport	1530	31.3	30.9	5	163.1	314.6	-48	13.4(16)	31.0(13)	22.2	21.0	1.2
Mohale's hoek	1600	40.5	25.6	5	223.7	336.9	-34	11.5(16)	31.0(11)	20.9	21.4	-0.5
Mokhotlong	2200	12.1	29.4	2	254.0	305.3	-17	8.0(16)	26.6(14)	18.2	16.6	1.6
Ox-Bow	2600	44.2	53.1	5	491.6	605.6	-19	2.2(16)	20.2(13,14)	14.1	12.1	2
Phuthiatsana	1750	13.0	42.9	6	219.5	358.9	-39	12.1(16)	29.8(13)	21.6	20.3	1.3
Qacha's Nek	1970	8.4	40.9	4	275.0	387.5	-29	11.1(17)	28.2(12)	19.4	18.5	0.9
Quthing	1740	47.5	26.2	6	251.1	320.6	-22	12.7(16)	29.2(11)	20.7	20.5	0.2
Semonkong	2458	41.8	30.9	4	309.4	314.7	-2	5.6(16)	24.5(11)	15.8	17.7	-1.9
Moshoeshoe I	1628	22.6	22.7	6	174.1	327.6	-47	13.5(16)	30.0(11,13)	21.5	N/A	N/A
Thaba-Tseka	2160	6.6	23.5	4	248.9	294.5	-15	9.0(16)	25.4(17)	18.0	16.9	1.1

Fig.2

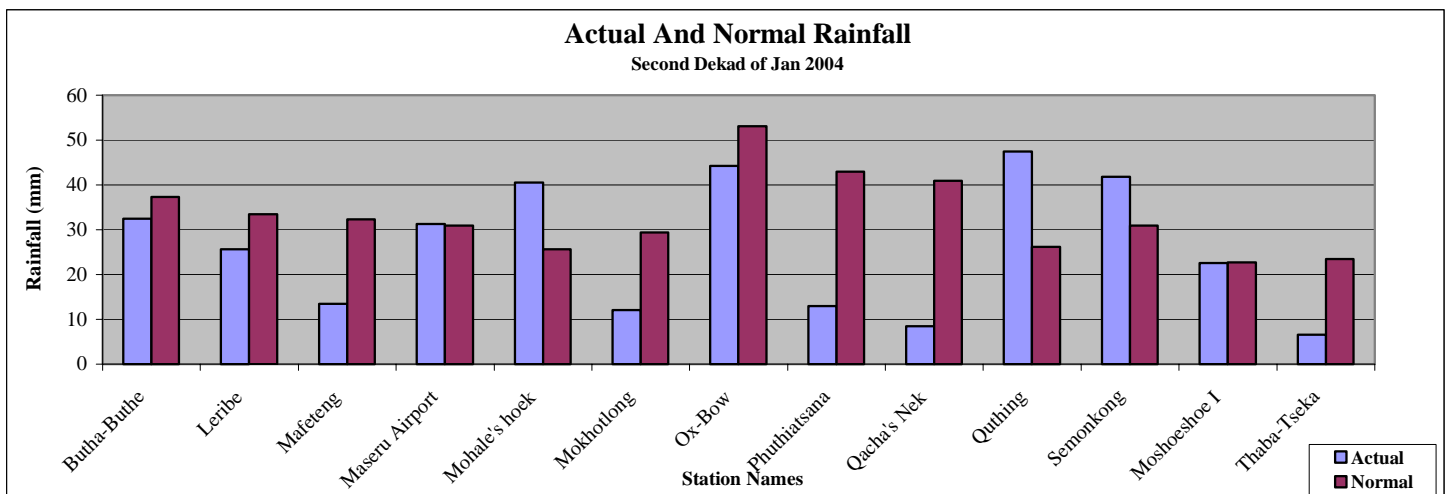
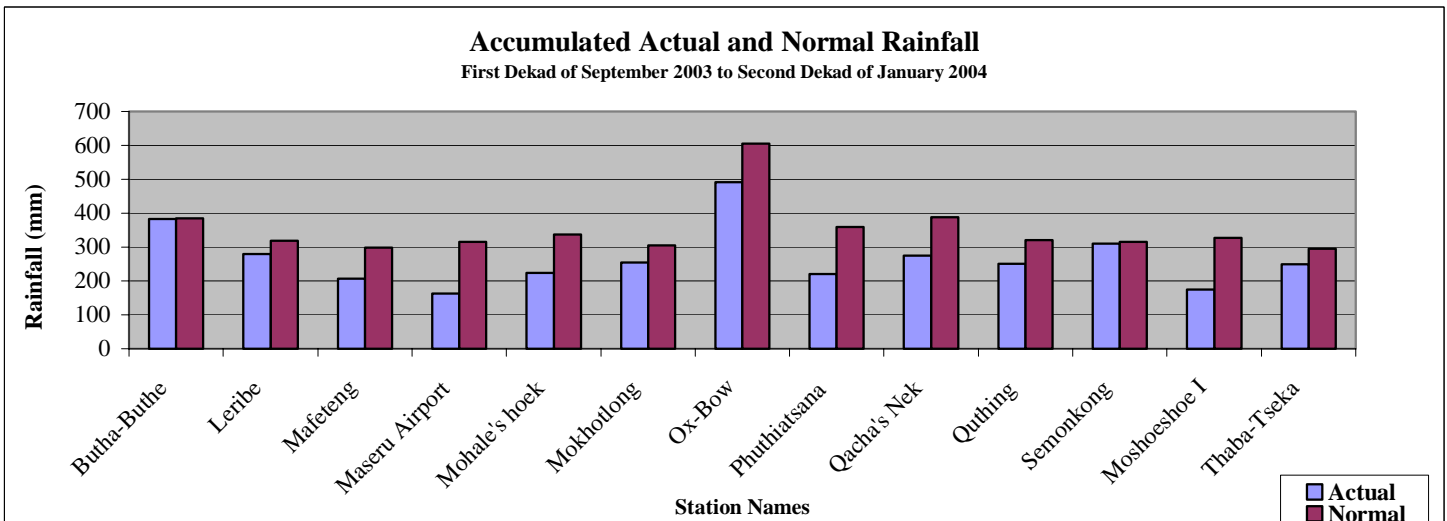


Fig.3



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

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Comments and Contributions would be highly appreciated.