

LESOTHO METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES

(LEKALA LA TSA BOLEPI)



Ten-Day Agrometeorological Bulletin

21st – 31st January 2005



Issue No.10/2004-05

Date of Issue: 4 February 2005

Vol. 3

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

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Highlights

- ❑ Below normal rains recorded.
- ❑ Cumulative rainfall normal countrywide.
- ❑ Crops conditions good at few localities.
- ❑ Infestation of insects at some places.
- ❑ Low rainfall expected for next dekad.

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WEATHER SUMMARY

11th – 20th January 2005

The last dekad of January was dominated by surface trough. However, there was insufficient moisture over the interior as a result only partly cloudy and warm conditions with few thundershowers occurred.

RAINFALL SITUATION

The last ten days of January received relatively low rainfall compared to the previous dekad (11th – 20th January 2005) which was very wet. The lowest dekadal falls were experienced at Qacha's Nek, Maseru airport and Mokhotlong with 14.1mm, 17.1mm and 20.8mm respectively (Fig. 2 and Table 1). In contrast, high dekadal values were recorded at Leribe, Butha-Buthe and Oxbow with 77.8mm, 51.8mm and 51.6mm respectively. On the whole, the country recorded below normal dekadal rainfall with the exception of Butha-Buthe, Leribe, Mafeteng and Semonkong where near normal to above normal rainfalls were registered.

Cumulative rainfall

Despite dekadal rainfall of many stations being less than the normal for this period, cumulative rainfall is still near normal for almost all the stations with the bias to above normal (Table 1 and Fig. 1).

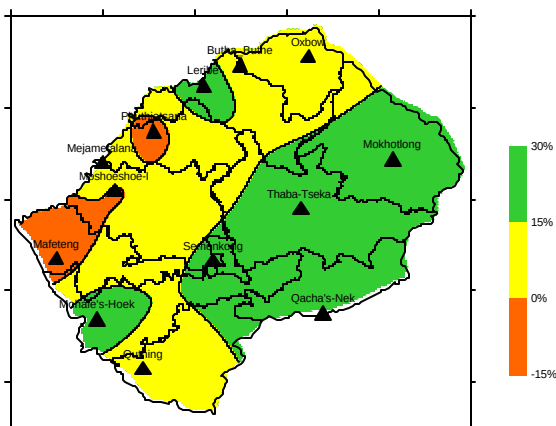


Fig.1: Cumulative rainfall departure from normal since 1st September to 31st January 2005.

The percentage departure from normal cumulative rainfall ranges from -12% to 32% (Table 1). The highest cumulative rainfalls of 721.5mm, 543.9mm and 509.4mm are recorded at Oxbow, Leribe and Qacha's Nek (Table 1 and Fig. 3). Mafeteng, Maseru Airport, Moshoeshe I and Phuthiatsana stations are the only stations which have received cumulative rainfall of less than 400mm.

TEMPERATURE

The country experienced near normal temperatures with the deviation from normal ranging from -0.7°C to 1°C (Table 1). As seen also from table 1, all the stations registered maximum temperatures of less than 30°C for the entire period. Even though the temperatures are normal, there were places like Oxbow, Mokhotlong and Semonkong which recorded daily minimum temperatures of less than the 10°C.

CROP STAGE AND CONDITION

The summer crops (maize, sorghum) are generally at vegetative to flowering stage with few localities where the crops are at grain-filling stage. The conditions are good at some places like Mokhotlong, Leribe and Butha-Buthe, but countrywide there are still cases of hail damage which had negatively affected the progress of the crops. Also reported at Mafeteng are the infestation of grasshoppers which are destroying both the vegetables and peach trees.

DEKADAL OUTLOOK

1st – 11th February 2005

The first dekad is expected to be dominated by both the Indian High Pressure system over the eastern parts of the subregion and the trough over the western parts. As the High Pressure will still be more dominant, moisture will be insufficient over the interior and thus rainfall situation will remain the same as the previous dekad. Temperatures are expected to be higher than those experienced in the previous dekad.

Table 1

Rainfall and Temperature Summaries												
STATION	ALT. (M)	Rainfall (mm)						Temperature (°C)				
		21 - 31 Jan 2005			Total From Sept 04 to 31 Jan 05			21 - 31 Jan 2005				
		Actual	Normal	Rain	%Dept. from		Normal	Minimum	Maximum	Dekadal	Dekadal	Deviation
NAME	(M)	R/Fall	R/Fall	Days	Actual	Normal		Lowest(Day)	Highest (Day)	Mean	Normal	
Butha-Buthe	1770	51.8	58.0	7	485.8	474.3	2	12.8(31)	27.6(23)	19.9	20	-0.1
Leribe	1740	77.8	50.5	5	543.9	410.9	32	12.2(31)	28.2(26)	20.5	20.6	-0.1
Mafeteng	1610	43.3	50.6	7	321.5	365.6	-12	12.2(31)	28.4(27)	20.0	20.7	-0.7
Maseru Airport	1530	17.1	47.1	3	384.0	375.1	2	13.0(31)	N/A	N/A	21.6	N/A
Mohale's hoek	1600	31.5	47.9	4	464.4	383.8	21	12.0(26)	28.5(29)	20.6	21.2	-0.6
Mokhotlong	2200	20.8	48.2	3	415.4	372.0	12	9.7(27)	26.4(25)	17.8	17.8	0.0
Moshoeshoe I	1628	27.0	55.6	5	376.7	410.3	-8	12.2(24)	29.5(23)	20.9	21.3	-0.4
Ox-Bow	2600	51.6	72.5	4	721.5	697.1	4	5.1(24)	20.0(25)	13.4	12.8	0.6
Phuthatsana	1750	32.2	58.2	4	378.4	429.8	-12	13.0(31)	28.8(25)	21.2	21.1	0.1
Oacha's Nek	1970	14.1	62.0	4	509.4	456.2	12	11.4(27)	27.8(28)	19.4	18.4	1.0
Quthing	1740	31.6	51.3	5	406.8	422.3	-4	12.9(31)	29.7(27)	20.8	21.0	-0.2
Semonkong	2458	41.9	46.2	7	421.6	367.8	15	5.0(26)	24.6(29)	15.6	16.0	-0.4

Fig. 2

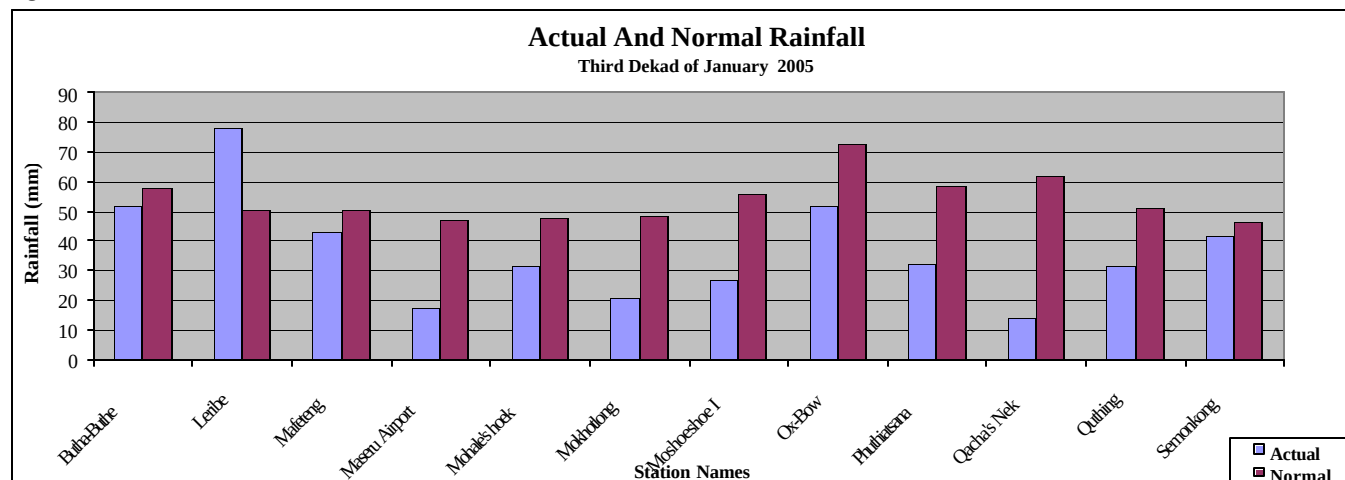
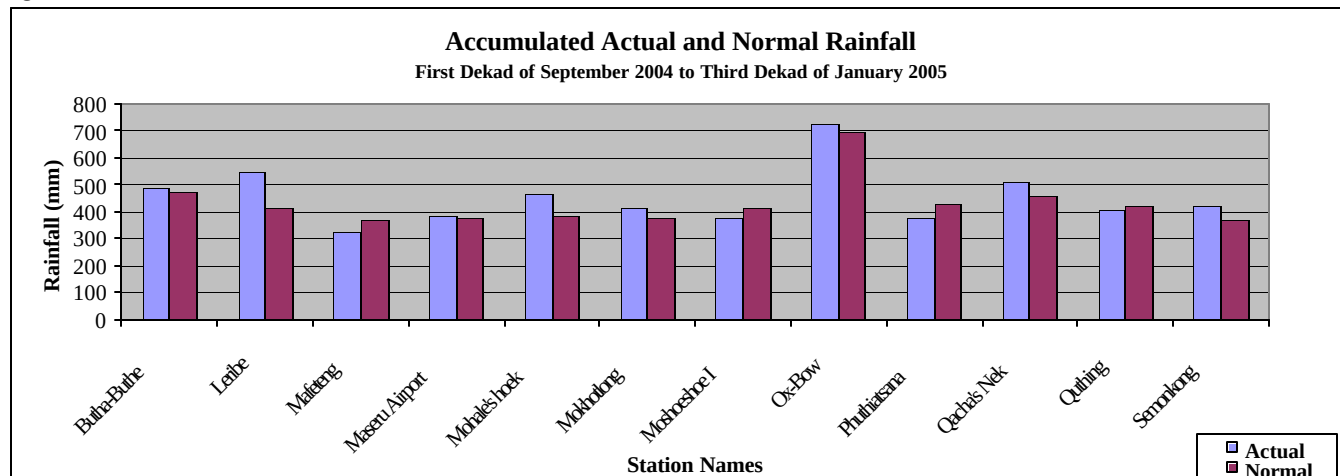


Fig. 3



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