

LESOTHO METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES (LEKALA LA TSA BOLEPI)



Ten-Day Agrometeorological Bulletin

11th – 20th March 2005



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

Contents

Weather Summary

Page 1

Rainfall Situation

Page 1

Temperature

Page 1

Crop Stage and Condition

Page 1

Dekadal Outlook

Page 2

**Rainfall and Temperature
Summaries**

Page 3

Glossary

Page 4

Highlights

- ❑ **Good rains experienced countrywide**
- ❑ **Cool temperatures experienced**
- ❑ **Crops maturing in most parts of the country**
- ❑ **Rains expected in the next dekad**
- ❑ **Frontal systems and cool temperatures expected**

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WEATHER SUMMARY

11th – 20th March 2005

The second dekad of March was mainly dominated by an interior trough. This resulted in isolated to widespread rain and thundershowers. Temperatures were generally cool and mild.

RAINFALL SITUATION

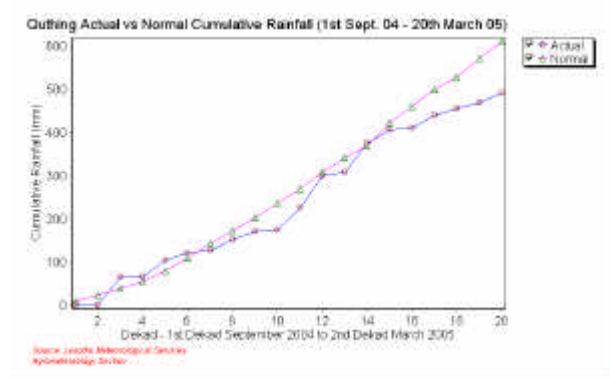
11th – 20th March 2005

The country has received normal to above normal dekadal rainfall during the period under review. Most of this rainfall came in the second half of the dekad. Quthing is the only station that has received below normal dekadal rainfall with 20.3mm. The highest dekadal rainfall of 73.2mm was recorded at Phuthiatsana. Mohale’s Hoek and Maseru followed with 58.2mm and 55.1mm respectively. The distribution of the rainfall with time was good as 5 to 6 rainy days were experienced, Quthing is the only exception since only 4 rainy days were observed (table 1, fig. 2).

Cumulative rainfall

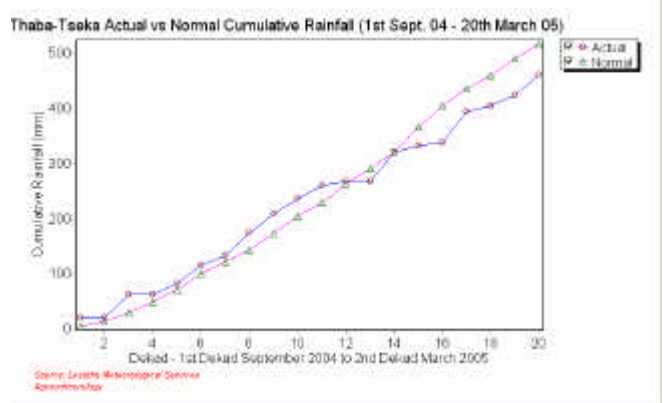
The cumulative rainfall since the first dekad of September 2004 to the second dekad of March 2005 is near normal to above normal in all the parts of the country. Qacha’s Nek and Leribe have the highest actual cumulative rainfall of 705.4mm and 699.4mm respectively. Mafeteng, Thaba-Tseka and Quthing have the lowest cumulative rainfall of 451.9mm, 460.5mm and 491.6mm respectively (table 1, fig.2) . *Graph 1* below reflects that Quthing has had above normal cumulative rainfall only in the first six dekads of the current season and since the first dekad of February (dekad 16 on the graph), the rainfall has been very poor.

Graph 1



Thaba-Tseka in the Northeast has experienced good and above normal rainfall for the most part of the season. Poor rainfall was experienced since last dekad of December (dekad 12 on graph 2).

Graph 2



Cumulative rainfall percentage departure from normal map (fig. 1 below) depicts that the Western tip of Mafeteng and the Southern part of Quthing have received relatively less accumulated rainfall as compared to the expected accumulated normal rainfall since September of 2004. Quthing has the lowest percentage departure from normal of -20%, Mafeteng and Thaba-Tseka follow with -15% and -11% respectively. Leribe with +20% has the highest cumulative rainfall percentage departure from normal.

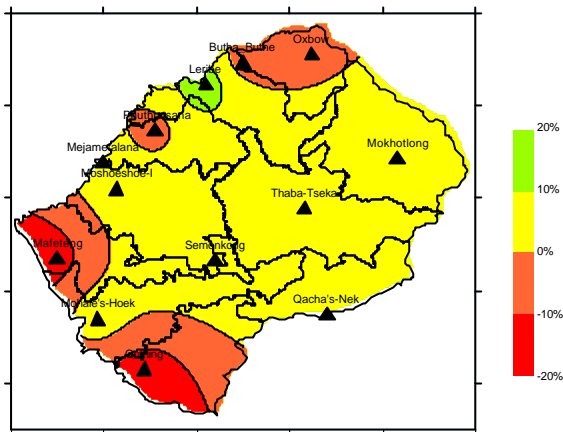


Fig.1: Cumulative rainfall percentage departure from normal since 1st September 2004 to 20th March 2005

TEMPERATURE

11th – 20th March 2005

The second dekad of March was cool and mild. The highest maximum daily temperature of 27.6°C was recorded at Phuthiatsana on the 11th. The minimum daily temperatures were mostly below 10.0°C in the high-lying areas, and they were mostly below 13.0°C in the low-lying areas. The deviations range from the lowest -2.2°C at the high-lying areas of Qacha's Nek and Semonkong to the highest value of -1.0°C at Maseru Airport in the low-lying areas.

CROP STAGE AND CONDITION

11th – 20th March 2005

Frost is expected anytime from now in the high-lying. It is therefore important that crops in these areas mature before they are destroyed.

The crops are generally in good conditions in most parts of the country. There are reports that some few parts of Mokhotlong have experienced hailstorms that have destroyed Summer wheat completely. Maize and sorghum crops are also affected.

A good fraction of cereal crops (maize and sorghum) have reached maturity stage in Mokhotlong. However, there are some few crops that have not matured. Most parts of the Senqu River Valley have received accumulated rainfall less than 500mm as is described by *graph 1* and *graph 2* above. The little rain that this region has received especially since January has retarded the development of Summer crops, and most crops are not in a satisfactory condition. Nevertheless, there are crops that are nearing maturity.

The crops in the low-lying areas are in conditions differing from tasseling to early stages of maturity. Their conditions are generally good.

DEKADAL OUTLOOK

21st – 31st March 2005

The third dekad of March is expected to experience wet and cool conditions as the interior trough is expected to be dominant in the central interior. Developments of frontal systems are also expected during this forecast period.

Rainfall and Temperature Summaries												
STATION	ALT.	Rainfall (mm)					Temperature (°C)					
		Actual	Normal	Rain	Total From Sept to end Dek Mar		%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		-	. ()	. (,)	.	.	- .
Leribe	 ()	. ()	.	.	- .
Mafeteng		-	. ()	. (,)	.	.	- .
Maseru Airport	 ()	. ()	.	.	- .
Mohale's hoek	 ()	. ()	.	.	- .
Mokhotlong	 ()	. ()	.	.	- .
Moshoeshoe I	 ()	. ()	.	.	- .
Phuthiatsana	 ()	. ()	.	.	- .
Qacha's Nek	 ()	. ()	.	.	- .
Quthing		-	. ()	. ()	.	.	- .
Semonkong	 ()	. ()	.	.	- .
Thaba-Tseka		-	. ()	. ()	.	.	- .

Fig.

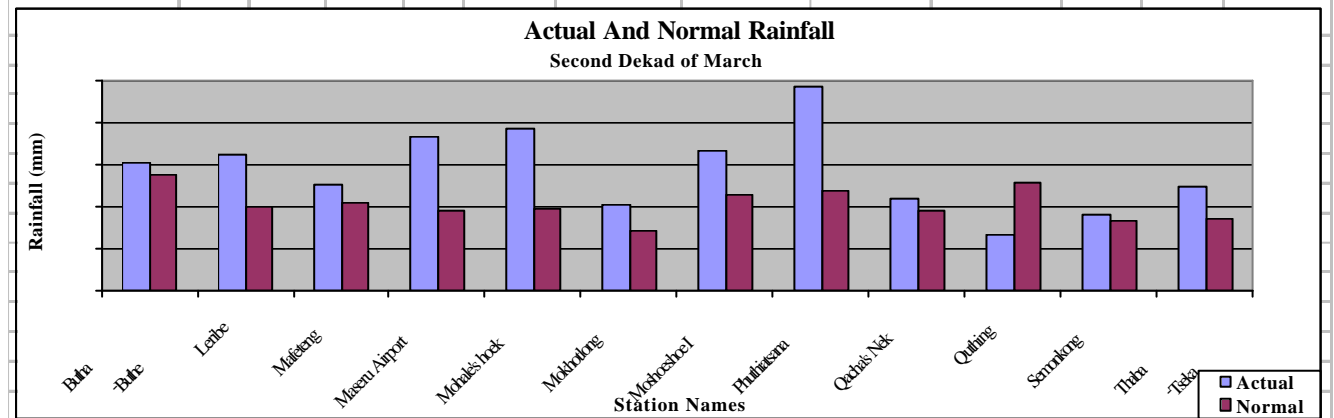
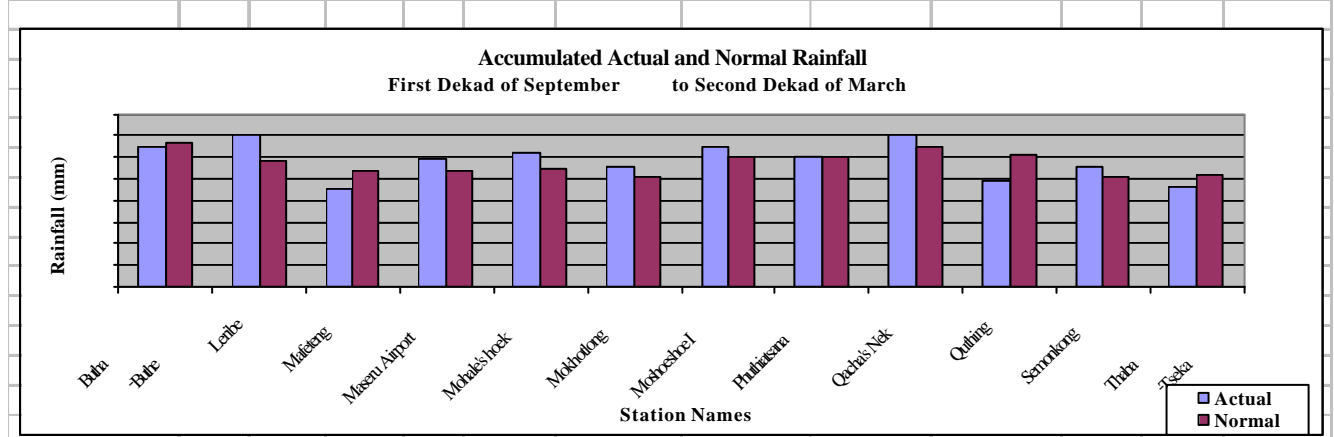


Fig.



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.