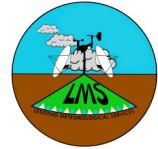# *LESOTHO METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES*

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Agro-Met Monthly Update: **September 2008**   **Date of issue: October 2008**

Highlights

> **1. Dry weather experienced countrywide**
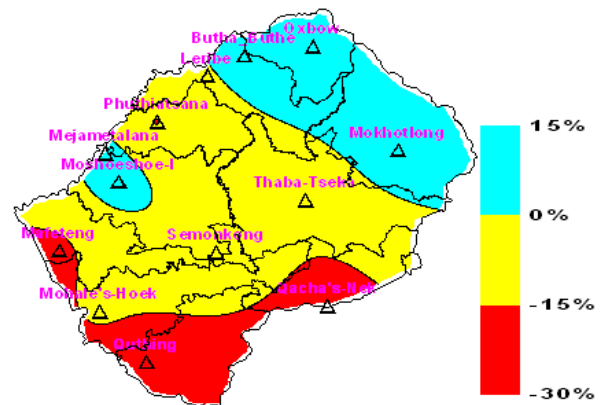> **2. Normal mean monthly temperatures experienced**

Rainfall

Monthly Actual Rainfall

The month of September 2008 experienced dry weather. That dry weather prevailed for three consecutive months since July. Monthly rainfall for the month under review was below normal countrywide except at Mokhotlong and Qacha's Nek, which had highest rainfall for the month. However, even though monthly rainfall was above normal at those places it was recorded on the 19th and 20th days of the month.

Cumulative Rainfall since May 2008

Dry spells that started in July continued for a third month into September. Cumulative rainfall percentage departure from normal has decreased drastically in the last three months. Southern parts of the country have highest cumulative rainfall deficits. Generally the cumulative rainfall is normal countrywide, down from above normal in the beginning two months of the reporting period (see Map 2 & Table 1).

Map 2: Rainfall % Dep. from Normal May - Septmeber 08

Temperatures

Monthly mean temperatures were mostly below normal during the month of September 2008. The only places that had above normal monthly mean temperature deviations were the highlands of Thaba-Tseka, Mokhotlong and Qacha's Nek (see Table 1).

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Crop Stage and Conditions

Dry spells persisted from July and continued into September. Soil moisture has been very poor since the beginning of August and the situation remains the same to date. This condition endangers crops which were planted in winter and those which were recently planted. Most of crops are stagnant at early vegetative stages while some could not germinate due to dry weather.

Water and livestock conditions

Rangelands are expected to be poor presently. Dry weather has put various natural resources under stress in the last three months. Water resources at some places are expected to be strained due to lack of rainfall and increasing seasonal mean temperatures.
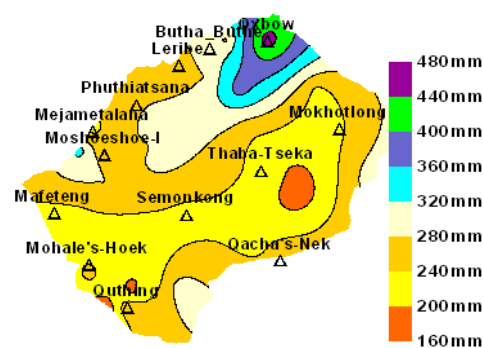
Vegetation monitoring

Generally the vegetation condition is very poor. Normally vegetation is largely in the low category during spring.
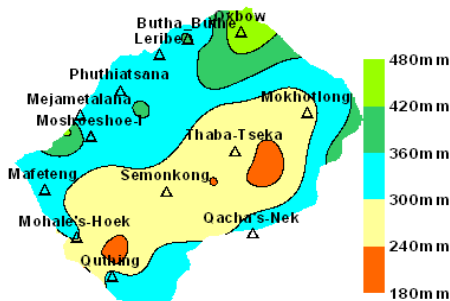
Weather Outlook (July – September 2008)

This year below normal rainfall is anticipated in the coming rainfall season. **Normal to Below Normal** rainfall is forecasted during October – December 2008 (OND) in the region including Leribe, Butha-Buthe, Oxbow, Mokhotlong, Thaba-Tseka, and Semonkong (Region 1). **Normal to Above Normal** rainfall is forecasted for OND in the region including Qacha's Nek, Quthing, Mohale's Hoek, Mafeteng, Maseru, and Phuthiatsana (Region 2).

However, in the second half of the season, January - March 2009 (JFM) Region 1 is forecasted to experience normal to above normal rainfall. Region 2 is more likely to continue receiving normal to below normal rainfall.

Please use the maps below for normal rainfall amounts in these two forecast periods.

OND Normal Rainfall

JFM Normal Rainfall

Table 1

Station	ALT.	Monthly	Monthly Rainfall (mm)		Cumulative R/Fall since May 2008			Temperatures		
Name	(M)	R/Days	Monthly R/Fall	Normal R/Fall	Actual R/Fall	Normal R/Fall	%Dep. from Normal	Monthly Mean Actual	Normal	Deviation
Butha-Buthe	**1770**	0	0	27.6	104.6	97.9	7	13.5	14.1	-0.6
Leribe	**1740**	2	9.4	29.3	91	92.5	-2	13.5	14.3	-0.8
Mafeteng	**1610**	0	0	25.3	79.3	98.2	-19	13.0	14.1	-1.1
Mejametalana	**1530**	1	1.6	27.4	95.6	91.7	4	14.1	14.8	-0.7
Mohale's Hoek	**1600**	1	0.6	30.5	96.1	108.7	-12	14.2	14.6	-0.4
Mokhotlong	**2200**	2	33.9	27.9	74.7	67.8	10	12.3	11.8	0.5
Moshoeshoe 1	**1628**	0	0	27.8	100	94.6	6	13.9	14.8	-0.9
OxBow	**2660**	*	*	54.4	*	175.4	*	*	7.1	*
Phuthiatsana	**1750**	0	0	31.1	83.9	99.6	-16	13.7	15.2	-1.5
Qacha's Nek	**1970**	2	38.2	35	76.5	97.5	-22	14.5	13.3	1.2
Quthing	**1740**	2	3	37.6	90.6	126.9	-29	14.0	14.4	-0.4
Semonkong	**2458**	3	13.3	40	118	118.1	0	8.4	9.3	-0.9
Thaba-Tseka	**2160**	1	16.9	30.2	69.1	79.4	-13	12.2	11.8	0.4