

SWAZILAND



AGROMETEOROLOGICAL UPDATE



REPORTING PERIOD:
01 – 10 OCTOBER 2015

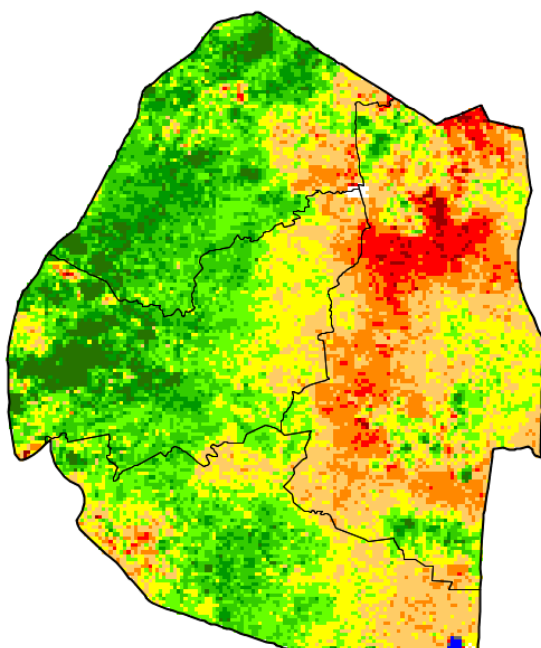
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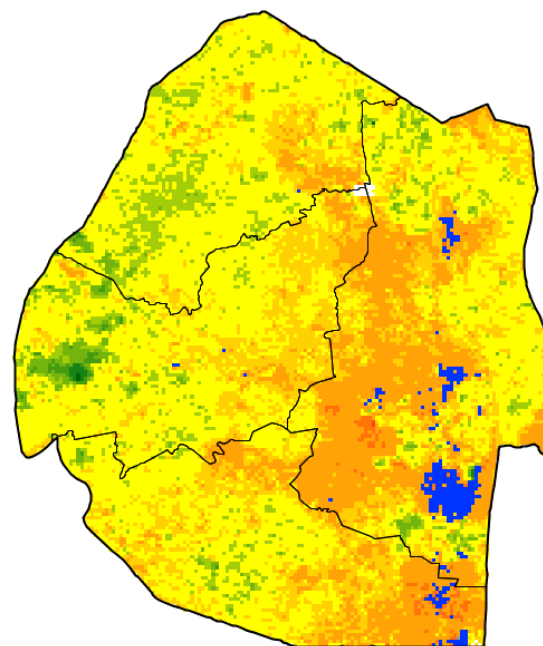
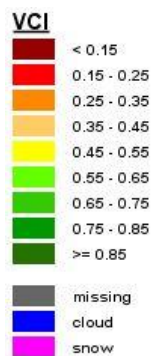
RELEASED: 14/10/2015

HIGHLIGHTS

- Reduced rains fell in most parts of the country...
- Vegetation shows a negative development due to dry spells....
- Very few farmers have ploughed and are planting
- Below normal rainfall expected in the next dekad...
- Warmer temperatures forecasted.....
- A significant decrease in soil moisture expected....
- Cattle continue to die in numbers in the Lowveld.....



Legend



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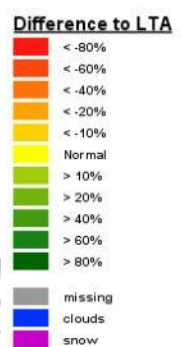


Image 1: Vegetation Condition Index image (1st Dekad October 2015)

Image 2: Vegetation anomaly image for 1st dekad October 2015

MOISTURE AND HEAT STATUS

Rainfall

Reduced rains fell during the reporting period, as most rainfall stations recorded close to zero amounts with some recording zero (see *map 1 below*).

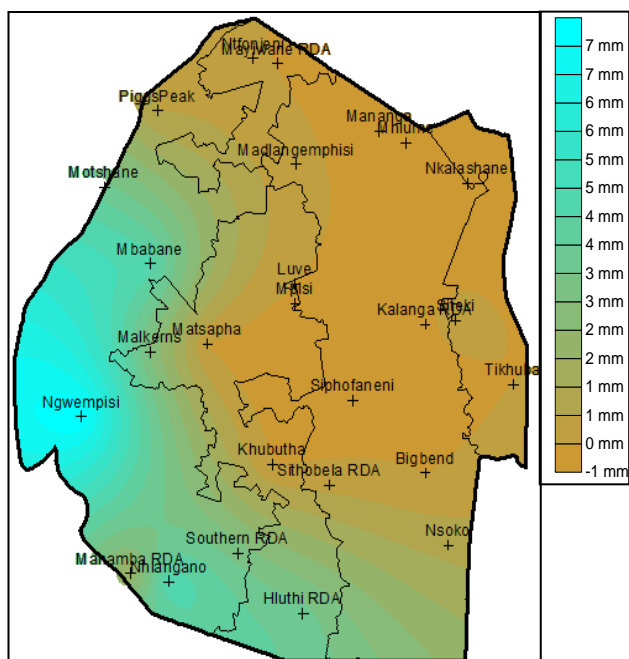


Figure 1: Observed rainfall distribution as of 1st Dekad October 2015

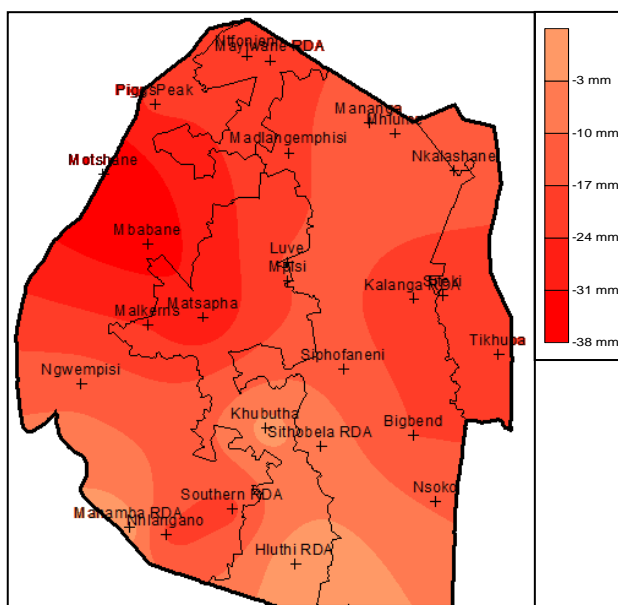


Figure 2: Anomaly rainfall distribution as of 1st Dekad October 2015

All the agro-ecological zones received below average rainfall during the reporting period (*Table 1 below*).

Table 1: Rainfall (mm) of 1st dekad October 2015

	HV	MV	LV	LP
2014/15	5	3	3	6
Average	26	23	14	22
2015/16	3	1	0	0
Anomaly	-24	-22	-14	-22

Temperatures

Warm to hot day temperatures were experienced in some parts of the country especially in the Lowveld where persistently warm temperatures continue to be recorded (*Table 2 below*).

Table 2: Temperatures (°C) for 1st Dekad October 2015

Station	Element	1 st dek October	Mean	Anom
Mbabane	Max	29.8	26.3	3.5
	Min	16.0	15.5	0.5
Piggs Peak	Max	29.0	26.7	2.3
	Min	16.7	15.9	0.9
Nhlhlangano	Max	31.1	26.4	4.8
	Min	14.1	15.4	-1.3
Ngwempisi	Max	32.2	26.4	5.7
	Min	15.6	15.2	0.4
Matsapha	Max	32.5	27.2	5.2
	Min	18.6	16.3	2.3
Malkerns	Max	32.0	26.4	5.6
	Min	17.4	15.2	2.2
Siteki	Max	31.7	27.2	4.5
	Min	18.3	16.9	1.4
Bigbend	Max	36.4	27.4	8.9
	Min	20.2	17.1	3.1
Mananga	Max	34.7	27.5	7.2
	Min	20.3	15.7	4.6

CROP STATUS

Maize Crop Stage and Condition

Very few farmers busy with land preparation in readiness to plant maize. Some fields are still to be ploughed.

Other Crops

There are no other crops reported to have been planted as yet.

Current Farming Activity

Currently there are very few farmers that have commenced with land preparation, otherwise most are yet to start. The lack of significant rainfall (> 30 mm) observed in most parts of the country during the 1st dekad of October is a major reason for the delayed land preparation (*Image 3*).

VEGETATION AND LIVESTOCK

Most parts of the Lowveld continue to report cattle deaths due (**Picture 1**) to the sustained dry conditions from late last season through winter to the current period. The projected El Nino conditions are expected to exacerbate this prevailing climate.



Picture 1: A cattle that died due to the ongoing drought

WATER CONDITION

Water levels are reported to be declining in most major dams in the country and river flows are also at minimum levels.

Outlook for 17 – 25 October 2015

Rainfall

There is a probability of insignificant rainfall to fall countrywide during the outlook period

Temperature

Average to above average temperatures are expected during the forecast period.

Soil Moisture

A lower soil moisture to below average is also expected.

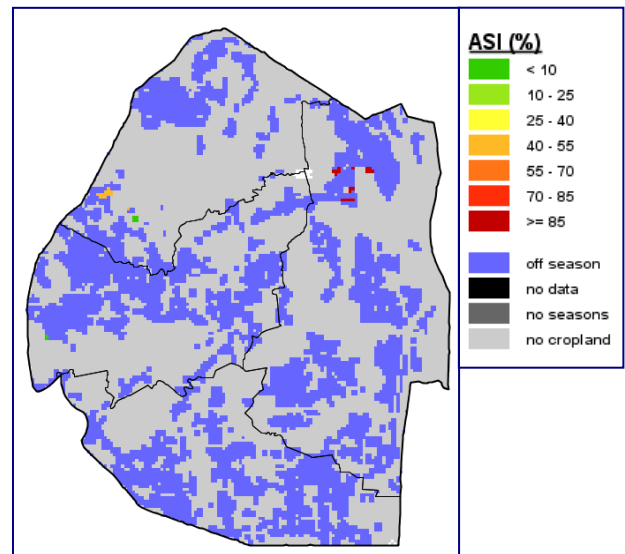


Image 3: Agricultural Stress Index for 1st Dekad October 2015

CONTRIBUTORS, PARTNERS AND SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Please Note: *This bulletin is issued in support of the efforts by the National Early Warning Office (NEWU) for food Security in the Ministry of Agriculture to provide Swaziland's current agronomic and meteorological developments to users, stakeholders, government authorities and international organizations during the farming season.*

The NEWS is currently made-up of a core team of the National Early Warning Unit (NEWU) of Ministry of Agriculture, the Advisory Unit of the National Meteorology Department and the Agricultural Statistics Unit of Central Statistics Office (CSO).