

SWAZILAND



AGROMETEOROLOGICAL UPDATE

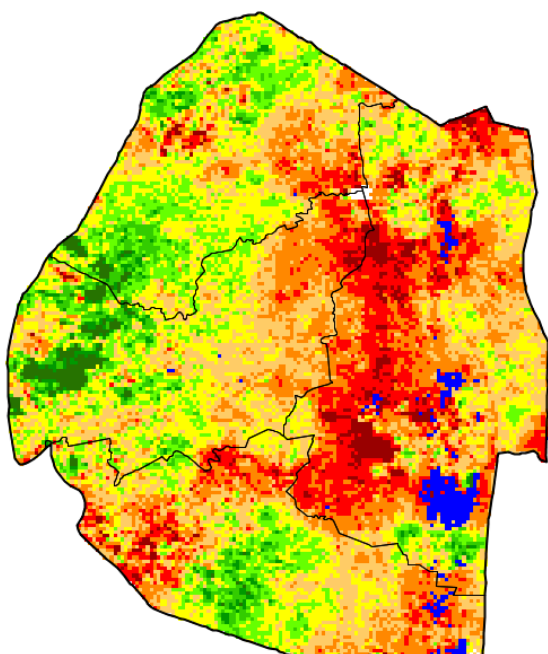


REPORTING PERIOD:
11 – 20 OCTOBER 2015

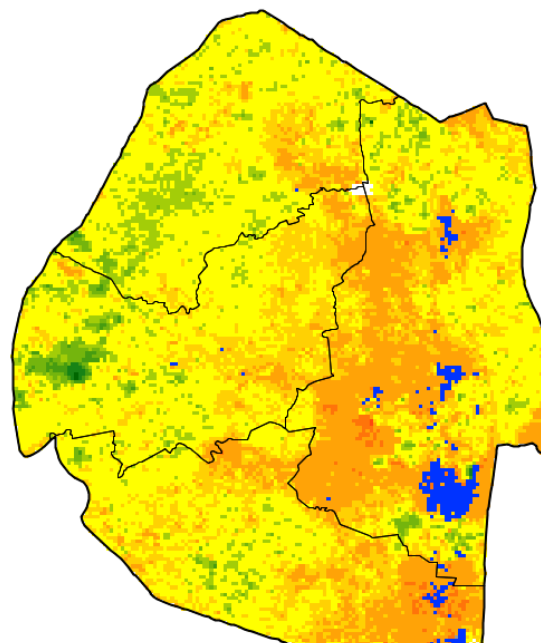
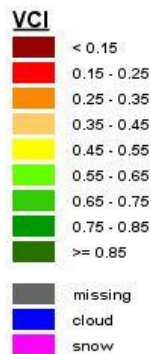
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HIGHLIGHTS

- Increased vegetation deterioration in most parts due to dryness....
- Cattle continue to die in numbers in the Lowveld.....
- Rivers and earth dams drying up....
- Very few farming activities noticed.....
- Below normal rainfall expected in the next dekad...
- Warmer temperatures forecasted.....
- A significant decrease in soil moisture expected....



Legend



Legend

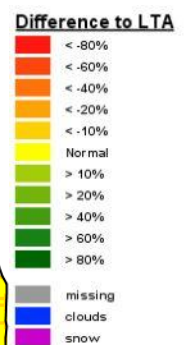


Image 1: Vegetation Condition Index image (2nd Dekad October 2015)

Image 2: Vegetation anomaly image (2nd dekad October 2015)

Compiled and Issued by: Agrometeorological Unit,
Swaziland Meteorological Service, Ministry of Tourism and Environmental Affairs.

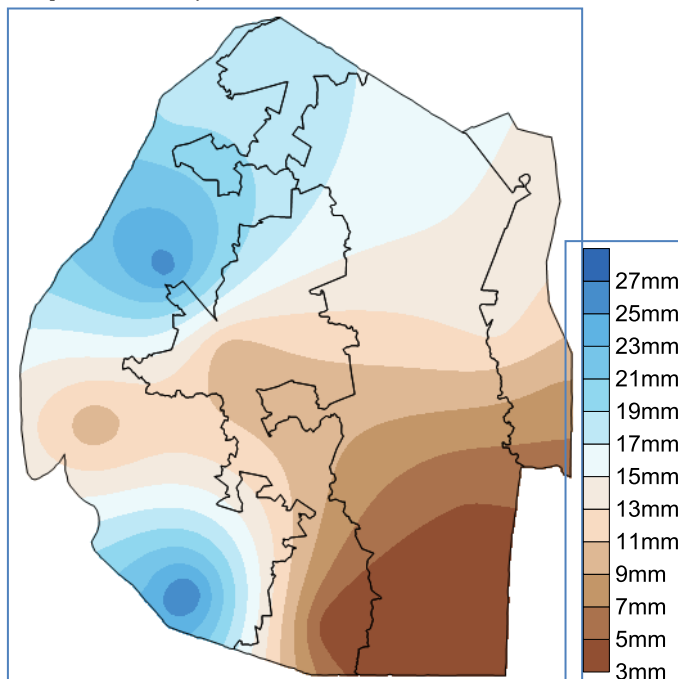
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MOISTURE AND HEAT STATUS

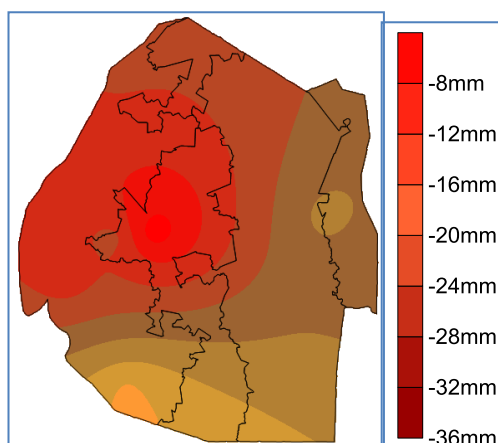
Rainfall

Insignificant rainfall fell in most parts of the country during the second dekad of October with the lower Lowveld areas recording less than 3 millimeters. (see *map 1 below*).



Map 1: Observed rainfall spatial distribution as of 2nd Dekad October 2015

These rains were much below the longterm average in all parts of the country (map 2 and Table 1)



Map 2: Anomaly rainfall distribution as of 2nd Dekad October 2015

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

Table 1: Rainfall (mm) of 2nd dekad October 2015

	HV	MV	LV	LP
2014/15	25	38	66	73
Average	42	36	24	28
2015/16	15	5	1	7
Anomaly	-27	-30	-23	-21

Temperatures

Hot temperatures were recorded in the lower Lowveld where persistently warm temperatures continue to be recorded (*Table 2 below*). The other parts of the country also remained warmer than usual with a few stations recording lower than average temperatures.

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

Station	Element	2 nd Dek October	Average	Depart
Mbabane	Max	24.7	25.9	-1.2
	Min	14.4	15.2	-0.9
Piggs Peak	Max	27.6	26.3	1.4
	Min	15.4	15.7	-0.3
Nhlangano	Max	25.1	26.1	-1.1
	Min	13.9	15.1	-1.2
Ngwempisi	Max	28.5	26.0	2.5
	Min	13.5	14.9	-1.4
Matsapha	Max	24.9	26.9	-2.1
	Min	16.6	16.0	0.6
Malkerns	Max	26.4	26.0	0.3
	Min	16.4	14.9	1.5
Siteki	Max	26.7	27.1	-0.4
	Min	16.3	16.8	-0.6
Bigbend	Max	32.3	27.5	4.8
	Min	18.7	17.0	1.7
Mhlume	Max	29.5	26.8	2.7
	Min	18.4	15.9	2.5

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CROP STATUS

Maize Crop Stage and Condition

No maize has been reported to have been planted during the reporting period. This is attributed to the prevalent drought conditions.

Other Crops

No crops have been reported to have planted as yet..

Current Farming Activity

There is currently little field activities as most crop farmers are still waiting for first rains to initiate land preparation and planting.

VEGETATION AND LIVESTOCK

Vegetation cover has significantly decreased (**Image 2**) due to lack of rainfall.

Rangeland conditions are critical with no grass for livestock. Livestock continue to die in large amounts, especially cattle.



Picture 1: A cow feeding on fodder while on its knees at Somntongo area in Lavumisa

WATER SITUATION

Water levels are reported to be declining in most major dams in the country. Some rivers and small dams have dried up. As a result, some water habitat animals have died due to water shortages in some rivers of the country. Underground water levels are also reported to be significantly dropping.

Outlook for 27 October – 05 November 2015

Rainfall

There is a probability for insignificant rains to fall countrywide during the outlook period.

Temperature

Average temperatures are expected during the forecast period

Soil Moisture

A low amount of soil moisture is also expected.

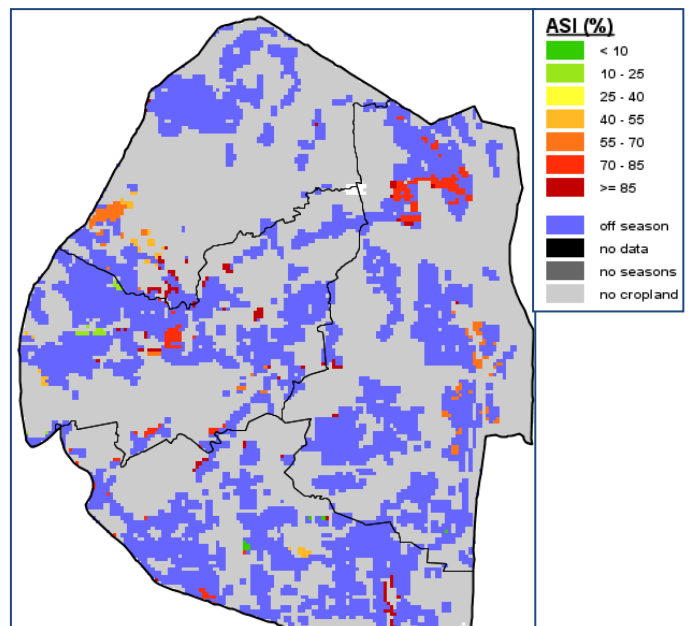


Image 3: Agricultural Stress Index for 2nd Dekad October 2015

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).