



AGROMETEOROLOGICAL UPDATE



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HIGHLIGHTS

- Below average rainfall received during the dekad...
- Vegetation continues to be poor in most parts....
- Most farmers engaged in farming activities....
- Below average rainfall expected in the next dekad countrywide.....
- Slightly above average temperatures forecasted in most parts.....
- A decrease in soil moisture expected.....

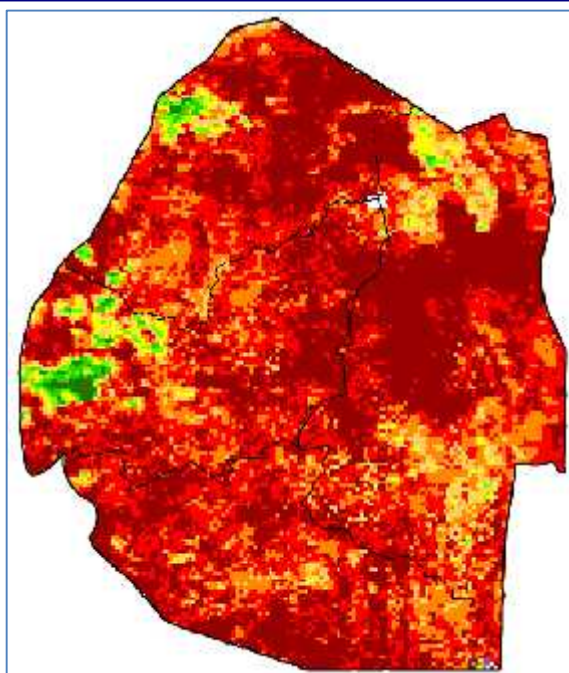


Image 1: Mean Vegetation Health Index image (1st Dekad January 2016) Source: FAO-GIEWS

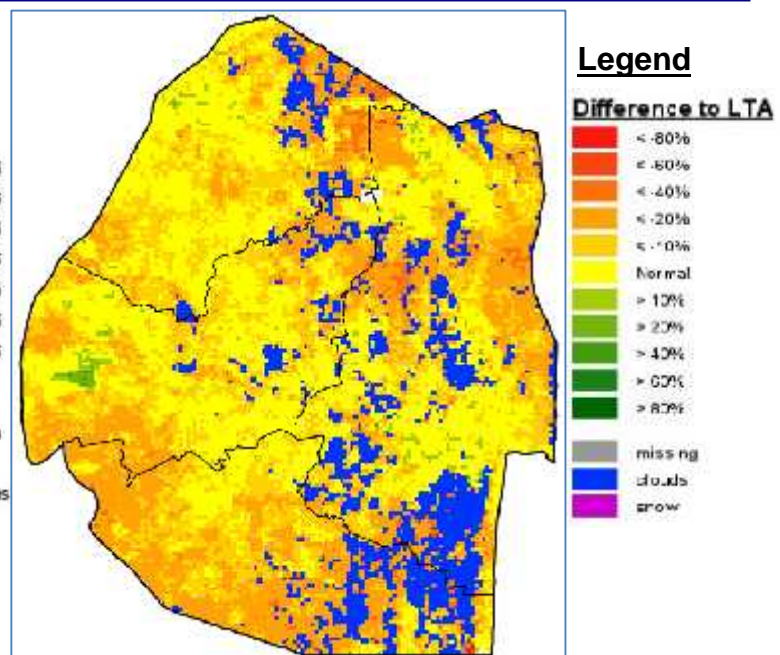


Image 2: Vegetation anomaly image (1st Dekad January 2016) Source: FAO-GIEWS

MOISTURE AND HEAT STATUS

Rainfall

Much below longterm average rainfall was received in during the reporting ten-day period over most parts of the country (Figure 1 & Table 1).

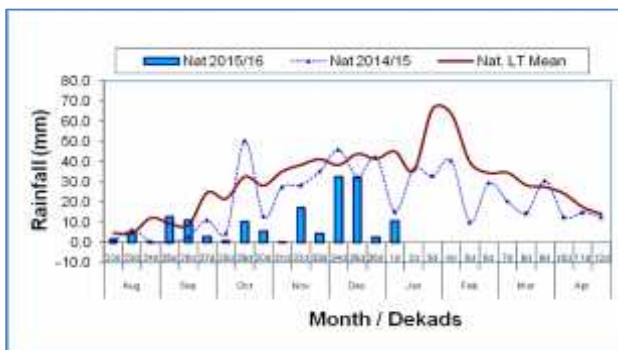
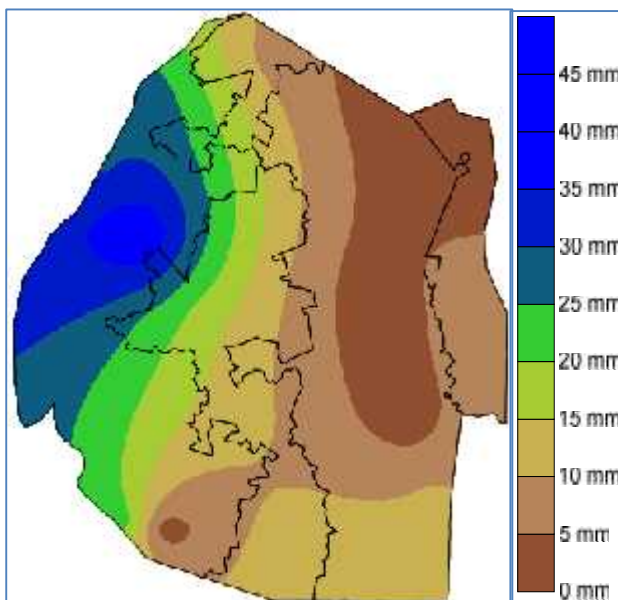


Figure 1: Rainfall distribution as of first dekad January 2016



Map 1: Spatial rainfall distribution for first dekad January 2016

Spatial distribution of rainfall during the dekad shows more than mm of rainfall having been received in some parts of the Highveld and almost zero amounts over most parts of the Lowveld and Lubombo Plateau.

Table 1: Rainfall (mm) for 1st dekad January 2016

	HV	MV	LV	LP
2014/15	18	6	5	32
Average	57	40	36	46
2015/16	18	12	3	9
Anomaly	-40	-28	-33	-37

Temperatures

Averagely hot temperatures were recorded in the Lowveld and some parts of the Middleveld, while mild temperatures were observed in the Highveld and Lubombo Plateau (Table 2).

Table 2: Temperatures (°C) for 1st Dekad January 2016

Station	Element	1 st dek Jan	Mean	Depart
Mbabane	Max		28.8	
	Min	16.2	18.1	-1.9
Piggs Peak	Max	27.0	29.2	-2.1
	Min	16.8	18.7	-1.9
Nhlangano	Max	29.1	29.1	-0.1
	Min	15.4	17.9	-2.5
Matsapha	Max	30.1	29.9	0.1
	Min	19.3	19.0	0.3
Malkerns	Max	30.1	29.9	0.2
	Min	18.2	19.0	-0.8
Siteki	Max	30.8	30.3	0.5
	Min	19.0	19.8	-0.8
Bigbend	Max	35.7	30.7	5.0
	Min	19.1	19.9	-0.9
Mananga	Max	34.0	30.5	3.5
	Min	22.0	20.0	2.0

CROP STATUS

Maize Crop Stage and Condition

Some of the late planted maize crop is at early vegetative stages while early planted maize is now at late vegetative to flowering stages. The condition of the crop is varying as some wilting while

others are in a good state.

Other Crops

Due to the prevailing dry conditions, not many farmers have planted other crops except for a few fields planted with beans and groundnuts.

Current Farming Activity

Farmers were found busy with weeding of their fields (Picture 1) while some reported replanting their poorly germinated maize plants

VEGETATION AND LIVESTOCK.

Vegetation continues to decline in most rangelands in the Lowveld due to the heightened temperatures (Table 2). The mean vegetation health index (Image 1) continues to depict a grim situation, thus about 38,000 cattle have been reported to have died since June 2015 to date.

Table 3: Cattle deaths since June 2015 to date (source: Ministry of Agriculture, LVDS)

Sub-region	Deaths
	June to Date
Malindza	7102
Siphofaneni	3586
Mliba	3904
Sithobela	3307
Hluti	8306
Lomahasha	1805
Lavumisa	6384
Lubuli	3014
Mayiwane	792
Total	38 200

WATER SITUATION

Dam and river levels continue to decline in most areas of the country including the Highveld. Maguga dam continues to

decline even further (Picture 3).

Outlook for 15 - 25 January 2016

Rainfall

Slight increase in rainfall in some parts of the country expected during the outlook period.

Temperature

About average temperatures expected in most parts of the country, but hot in Lowveld areas.

Soil Moisture

Slight increase in soil moisture anticipated.



Picture 1: Maize crop at early vegetative stage being weeded at Maguga area in the Highveld



Picture 2: Maize crop at late vegetative stages with slightly sun burnt leaves at Mnyokane

Compiled and Issued by: Agrometeorological Unit,

Swaziland Meteorological Service, Ministry of Tourism and Environmental Affairs.

Box 2652, Mbabane, Swaziland. ☎ (+268) 2404 8859 / 2404 6274. Fax: 2404 1530

E-mail: dudu@swazimet.gov.sz



Picture 3: Current water levels at Maguga dam



Figure 2: Cattle grazing in poor grazing area in Nsangwini

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).