



AGROMETEOROLOGICAL UPDATE

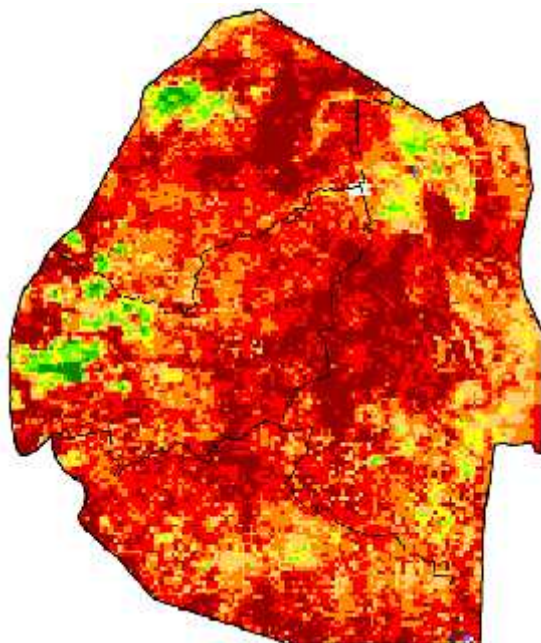


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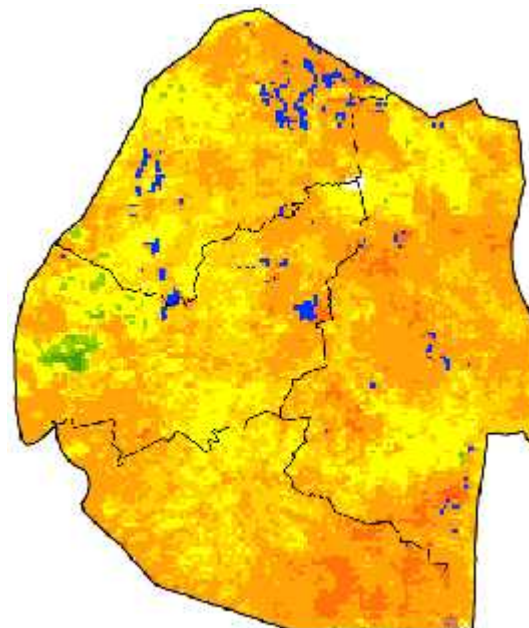
HIGHLIGHTS

- Reduced rainfall received in parts of the country...
- Vegetation shows slight improvement in some parts....
- Most farmers have started land preparation & planting....
- Insignificant rainfall expected in the next dekad...
- Above average temperatures forecasted in most parts.....
- Continued decline in soil moisture expected.....



Legend

Mean VHI	
Red	< 0.15
Dark Red	0.15 - 0.25
Orange-Red	0.25 - 0.35
Orange	0.35 - 0.45
Yellow-Orange	0.45 - 0.55
Yellow	0.55 - 0.65
Light Green	0.65 - 0.75
Green	0.75 - 0.85
Dark Green	>= 0.85
Blue	off season
Black	no data
Grey	no seasons



Legend

Difference to LTA	
Red	< -80%
Dark Red	< -60%
Orange-Red	< -40%
Orange	< -20%
Yellow-Orange	< -10%
Yellow	Normal
Light Green	> 10%
Green	> 20%
Dark Green	> 40%
Dark Green	> 60%
Dark Green	> 80%
Grey	missing
Blue	clouds
Purple	snow

Image 1: Mean Vegetation Health Index image (2nd Dekad December 2015)
Source: FAO-GIEWS

Image 2: Vegetation anomaly image (2nd Dekad December 2015)
Source: FAO-GIEWS

MOISTURE AND HEAT STATUS

Rainfall

Below average rainfall persist in most parts the country and also slightly below that of previous dekad (Figure 1).

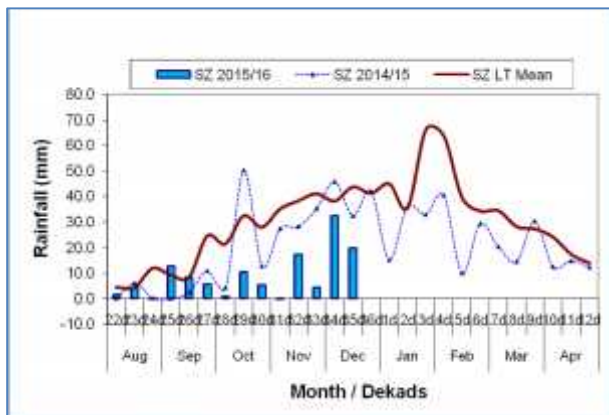
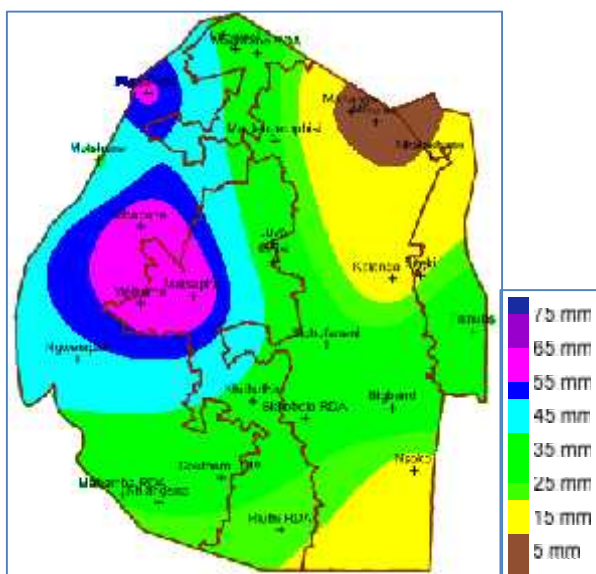


Figure 1: Rainfall distribution as second dekad of December 2015



Map 1: Spatial rainfall distribution for second dekad December 2015

Some parts of the Highveld and Middleveld received rainfall above 50mm (Map 1). A small portion of upper Lowveld and Lubombo plateau had the least amount of rainfall.

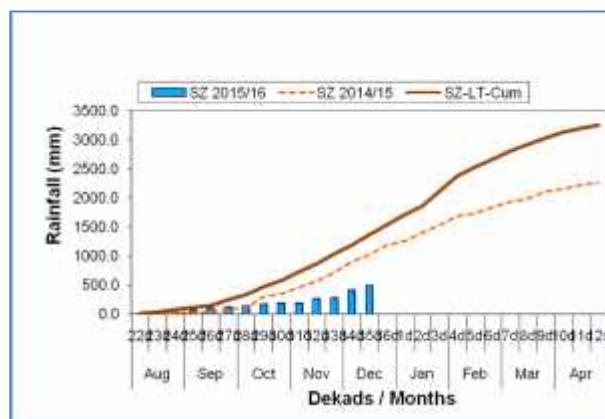


Figure 2: Cumulative seasonal rainfall as of second dekad of December 2015

Rainfall shows a slight increase since the start of the season (Figure 2), however these rains are still below the long term mean and last season (2014/2015)

Temperatures

Warmer than average temperatures were recorded by most stations in the country (Table 2 below).

Table 1: Temperatures (°C) for 2nd Dekad December 2015

Station	Element	2 nd dek December	Mean	Depart
Mbabane	Max	No Thermo	27.6	No Thermo
	Min	17.3	16.9	0.4
Piggs Peak	Max	26.7	28.0	-1.4
	Min	17.4	17.4	-0.1
Matsapha	Max	29.9	28.7	1.2
	Min	19.8	17.9	1.9
Siteki	Max	29.7	29.0	0.7
	Min	17.8	18.6	-0.9
Bigbend	Max	32.3	29.3	2.9
	Min	21.5	18.8	2.7
Mananga	Max	33.7	29.3	4.5
	Min	21.6	18.8	2.8

CROP STATUS

Maize Crop Stage and Condition

Some farmers who have planted maize mainly in the Highveld and Middleveld have their crop at 3rd leaf and in a fair condition.

Other Crops

No other crops have been observed during field visits yet.

Current Farming Activity

According to the ministry of Agriculture, tractors have serviced 26,000 hours from all the regions, out of 40,975 registered hours. This reflects that over 50% of hours bought by farmers have been serviced in only two weeks, after the rains that were received in almost all parts of the country.

VEGETATION AND LIVESTOCK.

Vegetation shows slight improvement in areas that received considerable amounts of rainfall, especially in parts of Highveld and Middleveld. Livestock is still struggling in the Lowveld.

WATER SITUATION

Water continues to recede in some Dams despite the rains received in the first and second dekad of December. As a result, the Swaziland Water Services Corporation (SWSC) continues with water rationing in parts of the capital city Mbabane.



Picture 1: Maguga dam levels along the Pigg's Peak road at Nkomati Bridge



Picture 2: State of Maguga Dam



Picture 3: Deputy Prime Minister being briefed by Peter Bhembe on the state of Hawane Dam

Outlook for 26 December 2015- 5 January 2016

Rainfall

Reduced rainfall expected in the forecast period.

Temperature

Above average temperatures anticipated during the outlook period.

Soil Moisture

Decline in soil moisture forecasted for the outlook period.

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).