



# AGROMETEOROLOGICAL UPDATE



REPORTING PERIOD:  
11 – 20 FEBRUARY 2016

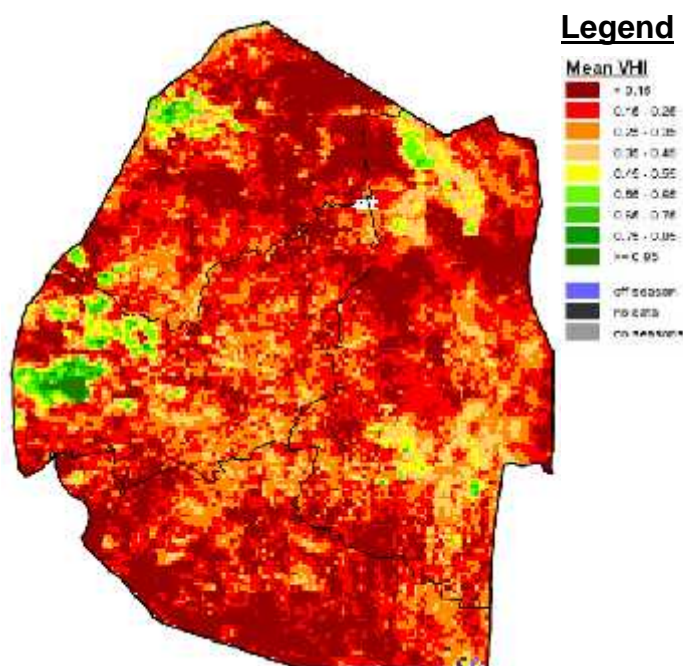
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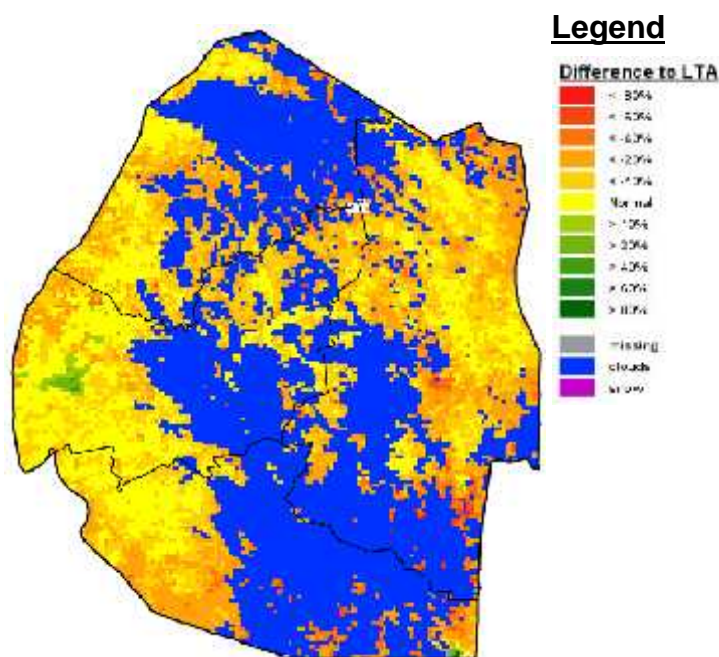
RELEASED: 24/02/2016

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Much improved rainfall received in most past during the dekad...
- Vegetation showing little or no signs of improvement....
- Few farmers engaged in farming activities....
- Below average rainfall expected in the next dekad...
- Above average temperatures forecasted in most parts.....
- Reduction in soil moisture expected.....



**Image 1:** Mean Vegetation Health Index image (2<sup>nd</sup> Dekad February 2016) Source: FAO-GIEWS



**Image 2:** Vegetation anomaly image (2<sup>nd</sup> Dekad February 2016) Source: FAO-GIEWS

## MOISTURE AND HEAT STATUS

### Rainfall

Rainfall that is above the 2014/15 season was received during the dekad but is still much below the longterm average (Figure 1).

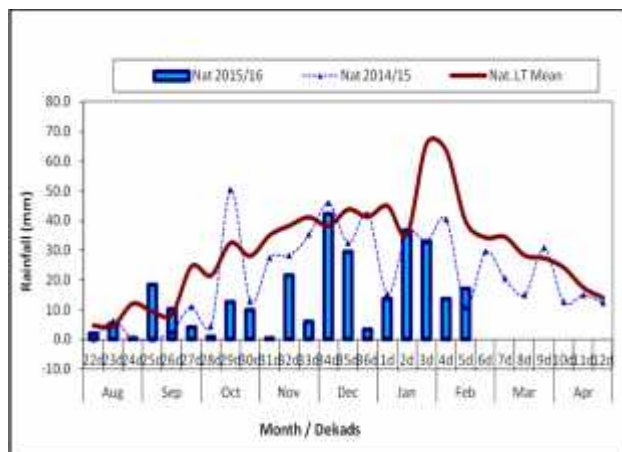
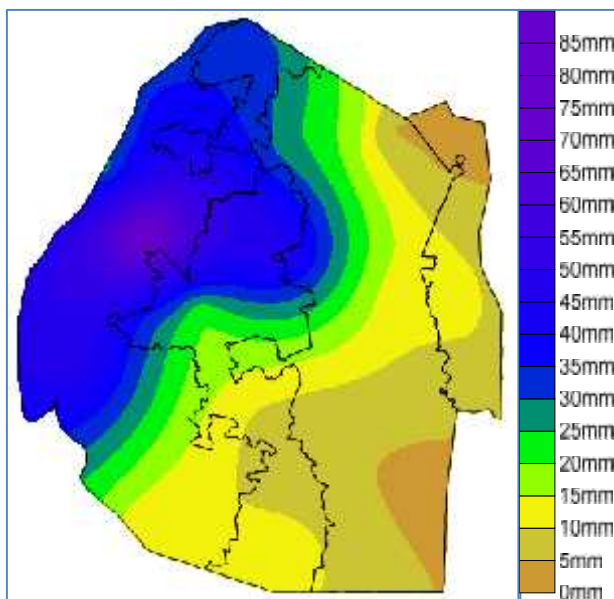


Figure 1: Rainfall distribution as second dekad of February 2016



Map 1: Spatial rainfall distribution for second dekad February 2016

Table 1: Rainfall (mm) for 2<sup>nd</sup> dekad February 2016

	HV	MV	LV	LP
2014/15	10	13	13	7
<b>Average</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>42</b>
2015/16	31	21	10	11
<b>Anomaly</b>	<b>-20</b>	<b>-14</b>	<b>-21</b>	<b>-31</b>

### Temperatures

Most weather stations recorded slightly above average temperatures. Warmer temperatures were experienced mostly in Middleveld and Lowveld while below average temperatures were observed in portions of the Highveld (Table 2 below).

Table 2: Temperatures (°C) for 2<sup>nd</sup> Dekad February 2016

Station	Element	2 <sup>nd</sup> dek Feb	Average	Depart
Mbabane	Max	NR	28.50	NR
	Min	17.9	18.00	-0.1
Piggs Peak	Max	27.0	28.80	-1.8
	Min	17.7	18.40	-0.7
Nhlangano	Max	29.1	28.60	0.5
	Min	17.4	17.80	-0.4
Ngwempisi	Max	30.0	28.50	1.5
	Min	19.4	17.60	1.8
Matsapha	Max	31.5	29.60	1.9
	Min	20.7	18.80	1.9
Malkerns	Max	31.0	29.60	1.4
	Min	19.7	18.80	0.9
Siteki	Max	30.1	29.80	0.3
	Min	19.2	19.80	-0.6
Mananga	Max	34.9	30.20	4.7
	Min	22.4	19.90	2.5

## CROP STATUS

### Maize Crop Stage and Condition

Most maize crop is in late vegetative to tasselling stage and is observed to be in good condition in the Highveld and some

parts of the Middleveld. However, in most parts of the Lowveld, the crop has wilted (**Picture 1**) and drying up.



**Picture 1: Maize crop wilting and drying up at Matsanjeni in lower Lowveld in Shiselweni**

### Other Crops

Some legumes observed growing in some parts of the country.

### Current Farming Activity

Very few farmers who planted late busy weeding their maize crops.

## VEGETATION AND LIVESTOCK.

Vegetation shows little or no signs of improvement (**Image 1**) due to insufficient moisture and high temperatures. Livestock observed to be in good condition and the slightly affected areas in the Lowveld seems to be recovering, but with winter fast approaching, cattle deaths numbers may escalate again.

## WATER SITUATION

Water situation continues to deteriorate due to continued insufficient rainfall. Most water sources are reported to have dried up or at very low levels. Water extraction from major dams (**Picture 1**) was suspended due to very low water levels. Most people in rural areas are seeking

alternative water sources, such as, rivers and tankered water, while water rationing continues in urban areas.

**Table 3: Selected major dams storage levels as of 20 February 2016**

<i>Dam</i>	<i>Water Level (%)</i>
Mnjoli	4.9
Maguga	31
Lubovane	65

## Outlook for 26 February- 5 March 2016

### Rainfall

Below average rainfall forecasted in the outlook period.

### Temperature

Slightly above temperatures anticipated in the outlook period.

### Soil Moisture

A decrease in soil moisture expected in the outlook period.



**Picture 2: Water levels at Mnjoli dam**

## 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).