



AGROMETEOROLOGICAL UPDATE



REPORTING PERIOD:
21 – 31 DECEMBER 2015

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HIGHLIGHTS

- Insignificant rains fell in some parts of the country during the dekad...
- Vegetation continues to decrease due to insufficient moisture....
- Some farmers have started land preparation and planting....
- About average rainfall expected in the next dekad...
- Warm to hot temperatures forecasted in most parts.....
- Slight increase in soil moisture expected.....

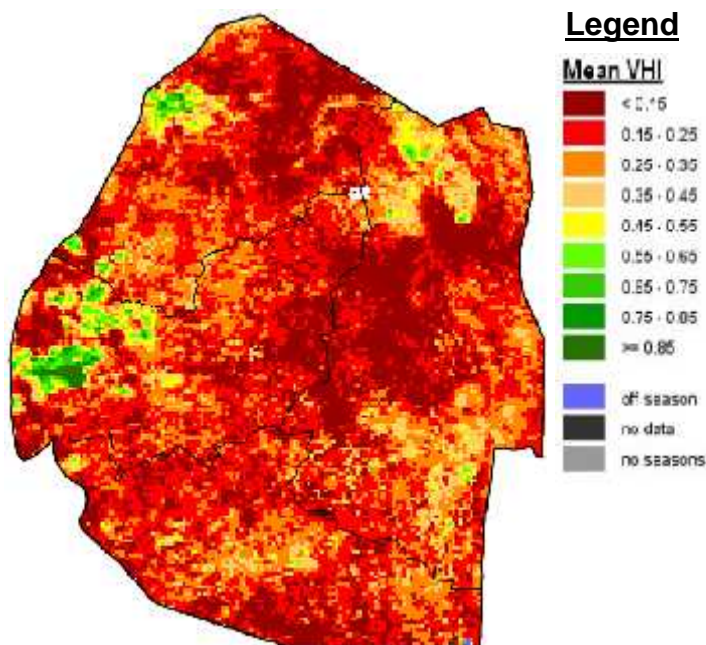


Image 1: Mean Vegetation Health Index image (3rd Dekad December 2015)
Source: FAO-GIEWS

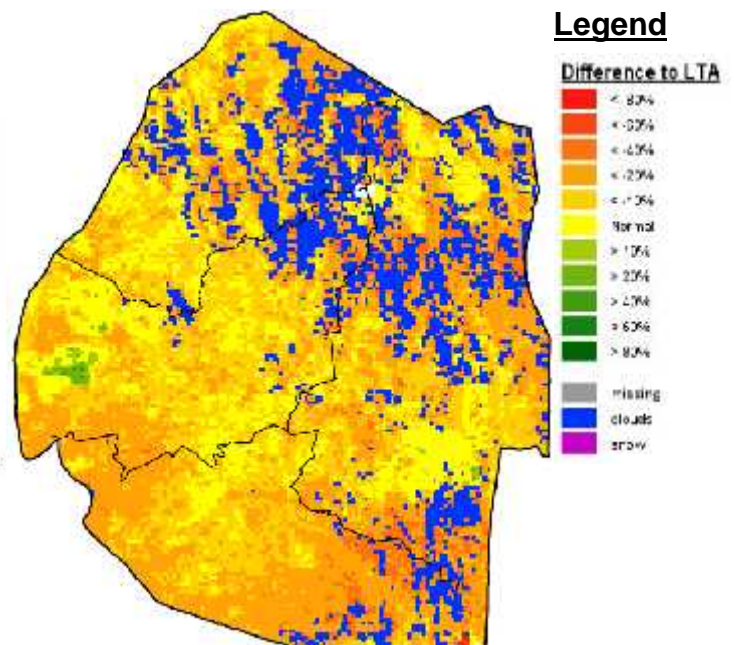


Image 2: Vegetation anomaly image (3rd Dekad December 2015)
Source: FAO-GIEWS

MOISTURE AND HEAT STATUS

Rainfall

Insignificant rainfall fell in some parts of the country during the third dekad of December (Figure 1 below).

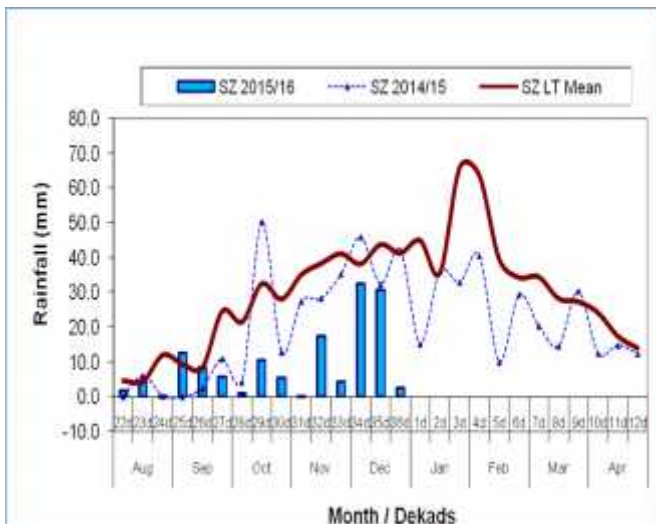
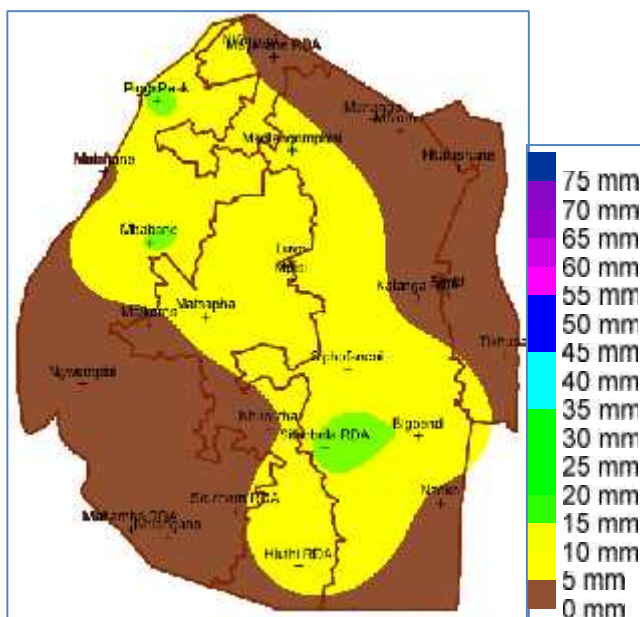


Figure 1: Observed rainfall distribution as of 3rd Dekad December 2015



Map 1: Recorded spatial rainfall distribution as of 3rd Dekad December 2015

Most parts of the country received less than 15mm average rainfall during the reporting period (Map 1).

Table 1: Rainfall (mm) of 3rd dekad December 2015

	HV	MV	LV	LP
2014/15	51	65	28	25
Average	59	37	30	39
2015/16	4	3	3	0
Anomaly	-55	-34	-27	-39

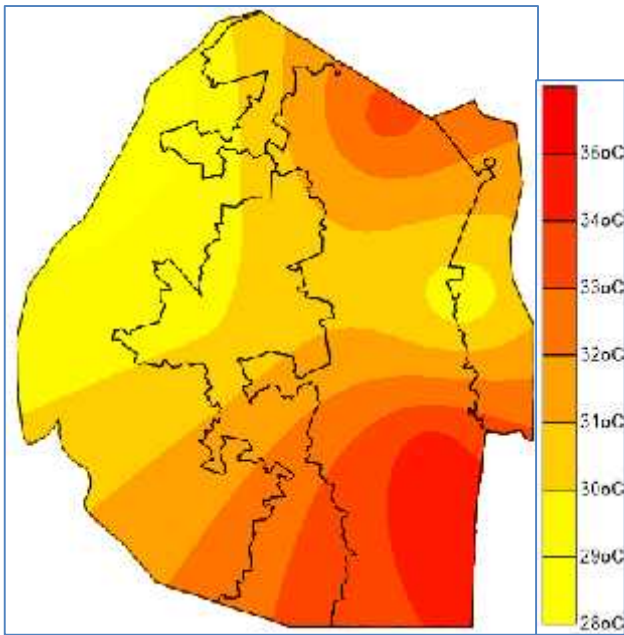
Temperatures

Warm to hot temperatures were experienced throughout the country during the dekad (Table 2 below).

Table 2: Temperatures (°C) for 3rd Dekad December 2015

Station	Element	3 rd dek Dec	Mean	Depart
Mbabane	Max	NR	28.3	NR
	Min	16.5	17.4	-0.9
Piggs Peak	Max	28.3	28.7	-0.3
	Min	16.7	17.8	-1.1
Matsapha	Max	29.9	29.4	0.5
	Min	19.9	18.1	1.8
Siteki	Max	29.2	29.5	-0.3
	Min	17.4	19.0	-1.5
Bigbend	Max	34.6	29.9	4.7
	Min	21.6	19.1	2.5
Mananga	Max	33.5	30.0	3.5
	Min	21.8	19.2	2.6

Hot temperatures were mostly recorded in most stations in the Lowveld with a dekadal average of 34.6°C in Bigbend and 33.5°C in Mananga (Table 2 above and Figure 3 below).



Map 2: Temperatures (°C) for 3rd Dekad December 2015

CROP STATUS

Maize Crop Stage and Condition

Maize that was planted early has emerged and knee high in the Highveld (**Picture 1**) and parts of the Middleveld. Most maize is still in the planting stage.

Other Crops

Some bean crops were observed planted in some parts of the Highveld.

Current Farming Activity

Most farmers have started land preparation and planting activities. Some farmers who planted maize early are in the process of weeding in some parts of the Highveld.



Picture 1: Maize growing at Endushulweni in the Highveld

VEGETATION AND LIVESTOCK.

Vegetation condition is showing little or no improvement due to shortage of moisture (**Image 1**). Livestock continue to slowly recuperate in the Lowveld.

WATER SITUATION

Most of the major Dams water levels remain significantly low. According to Swaziland Water Services Corporation (swsc) Hawane Dam has been less than 10 per cent for over a month. As a result, the organization is extending its water rationing strategy from 20 hours a day to 48 hours.

Outlook for 5 – 15 January 2016

Rainfall

Average rainfall is expected in throughout the country in the outlook period.

Temperature

Slightly above average temperatures expected during the outlook period.

Soil Moisture

Slight increase in soil moisture is expected in some parts of the country.

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).