



AGROMETEOROLOGICAL UPDATE



REPORTING PERIOD:
21 – 29 FEBRUARY 2016

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SEASON: 2015/16

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HIGHLIGHTS

- Much reduced rains fell in eastern parts of the country...
- Less improvement in vegetation due to insufficient moisture....
- Very few farming activities noticed....
- Slight increase but below average rainfall in the next dekad...
- About average temperatures forecasted in most parts.....
- Slight improvement in soil moisture expected.....

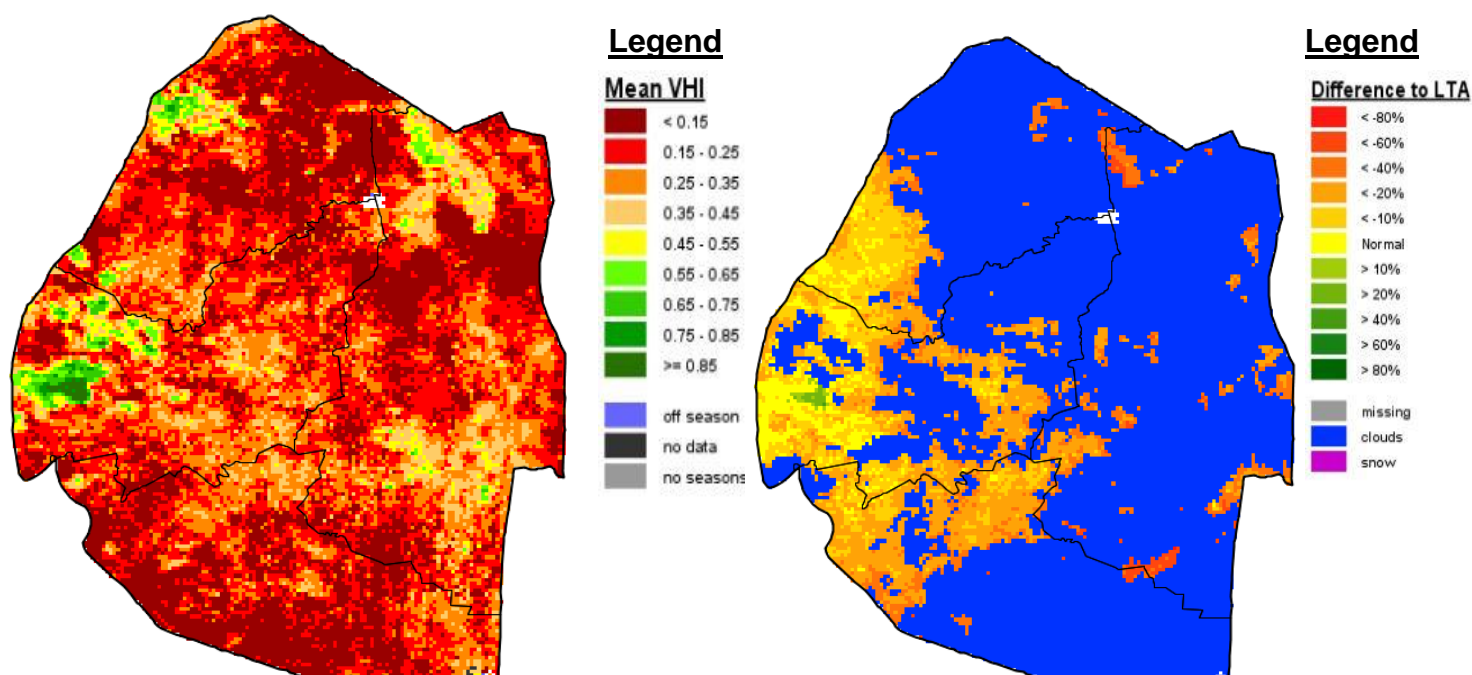


Image 1: Mean Vegetation Health Index image (3rd Dekad February 2016) Source: FAO-GIEWS

Image 2: Vegetation anomaly image (3rd Dekad February 2016) Source: FAO-GIEWS

MOISTURE AND HEAT STATUS

Rainfall

Insignificant rains fell in most parts of the country. Most of the country received less than 40mm and amounts recorded were below the longterm average and that of the previous season of 2014/15 (**Figure 1 and Map 1 below**).

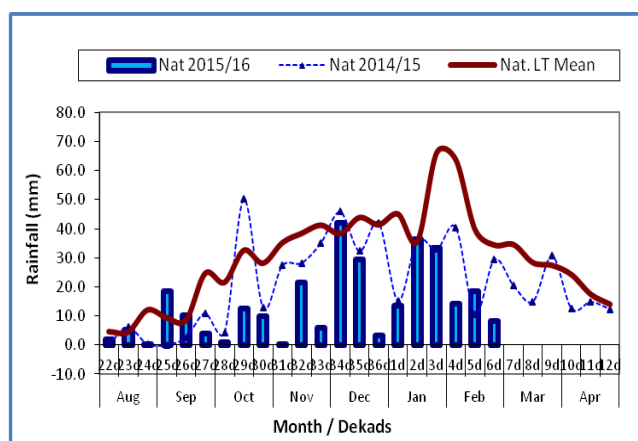


Figure 1: Observed rainfall distribution as of 3rd Dekad February 2016

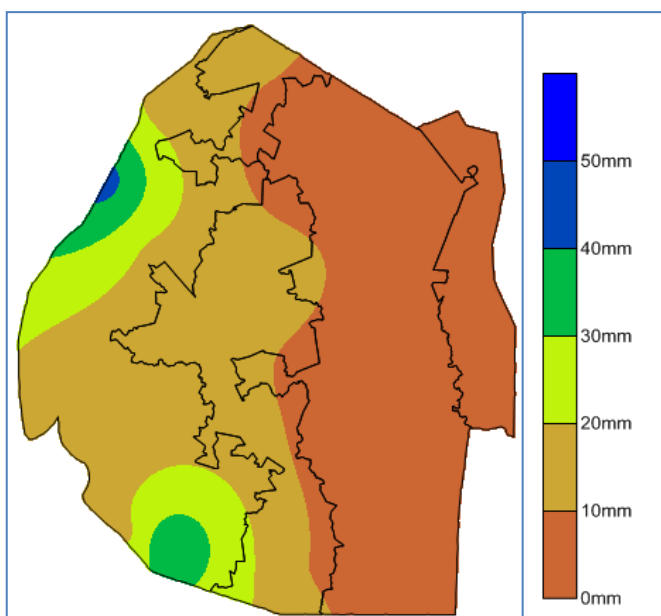


Figure 2: Anomaly rainfall distribution as of 3rd Dekad February 2016

The Lowveld recorded a total average of

3mm while the Middleveld and Lubombo Plateau recorded 7mm respectively. Only the Highveld recorded a significant rainfall average of 21mm (**Table 1**)

Table 1: Rainfall (mm) of 3rd dekad February 2016

	HV	MV	LV	LP
2014/15	16	24	16	62
Average	49	36	20	32
2015/16	21	7	3	7
Anomaly	-27	-30	-17	-25

Temperatures

Most stations recorded below average temperatures while a few parts of the country experienced warmer than average temperatures (**Table 2 below**).

Table 2: Temperatures (°C) for 3rd Dekad February 2016

Station	Element	3 rd dek Jan	Average	Depart
Mbabane	Max	NR	28.10	NR
	Min	17.0	17.70	-0.7
Piggs Peak	Max	23.1	28.53	-5.4
	Min	16.7	18.20	-1.5
Nhlangano	Max	28.6	28.67	-0.1
	Min	16.5	17.67	-1.2
Ngwempisi	Max	28.3	28.47	-0.2
	Min	17.9	17.50	0.4
Matsapha	Max	27.0	29.67	-2.7
	Min	20.2	18.60	1.6
Malkerns	Max	25.8	29.67	-3.9
	Min	19.8	18.60	1.2
Siteki	Max	26.7	29.67	-2.9
	Min	18.9	19.53	-0.7
Mananga	Max	29.3	30.03	-0.7
	Min	22.4	19.63	2.8

CROP STATUS

Maize Crop Stage and Condition

Most maize crops have started producing cobs while some are at tasselling. The crop is observed to be in good condition, especially in areas in the Highveld and Moist Middleveld. Most parts of the Lowveld the crop has failed.



Picture 1: Tasseling maize crop at Ezulwini, Hhohho

Other Crops

Some legumes grown in some parts of the country is doing well and in good condition.

Current Farming Activity

Very few farming activity observed as approaching the end of the season.

VEGETATION AND LIVESTOCK.

Vegetation continues to decrease (**Image 1**). Most livestock observed to be in good condition.

WATER SITUATION

Water shortages continue to prevail as Dam and river levels are severely low and

boreholes are reported to have dried up in the Lowveld. Water rationing and tankered water provision is still ongoing in the Mbabane.



Picture 2: Maguga dam levels

Outlook for 5 – 15 March 2016

Rainfall

Slight improvement, but below average rainfall forecasted in the outlook period.

Temperature

About average to slightly above average temperatures in the outlook period.

Soil Moisture

Slight improvement in soil moisture expected in some parts in 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).