

SWAZILAND



AGROMETEOROLOGICAL UPDATE



REPORTING PERIOD:
21 – 31 OCTOBER 2005

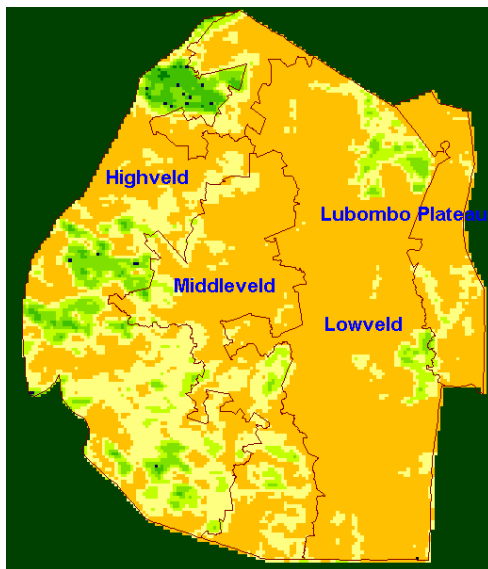
ISSUE No.: 03

SEASON: 2005/06

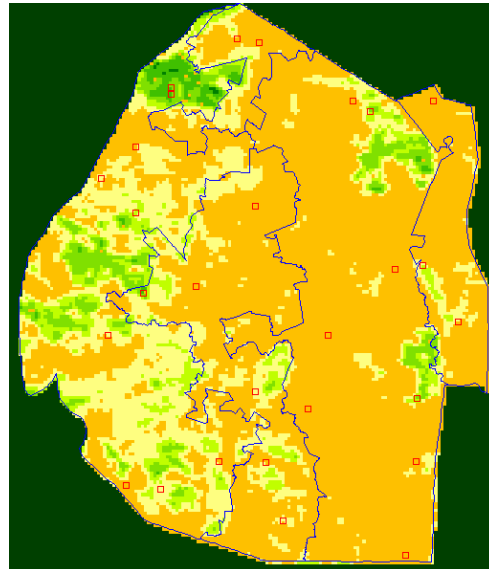
RELEASED: 03/11/2005

HIGHLIGHTS

- Below average rainfall persist in most parts
- Mild to warm temperatures measured.
- A slight improvement in vegetation (SPOT) in some areas
- A few maize farmers have already planted in the Highveld
- Above average rainfall for the next dekad (ten-days)
- Mild temperatures expected
- An above normal soil moisture level is forecasted
- **Maize farmers are urged to plant early especially in the Highveld**



Map 2: Vegetation status as of 1st dekad October 2005



Map 1: Vegetation image for 11 - 20 October 2005

MOISTURE AND HEAT STATUS

Rainfall

Insignificant rainfall persists in most parts of the country (Table 1). Most of the areas recorded much below total dekadal rainfall, impeding on a continuous build-up in soil moisture.

These little rains fell in certain parts of the country with some areas not receiving any rains at all during the ten-day (dekad) reporting period.

Table 1: Rainfall analysis for 21 - 31 October 2005

Station	3 rd dek October	Avg	Diff	Percentage
Mbabane	42.7	51.2	-8.5	-17%
Mankayane	13.6	33.9	-20.3	-60%
Piggs Peak	21	41.9	-20.9	-50%
Nhlangano	17.6	37.3	-19.7	-53%
Ngwempisi	5.1	33.9	-28.8	-85%
Malkerns	19.9	25.1	-5.2	-21%
Matsapha	5.1	30.0	-24.9	-83%
Luve	10.9	40.1	-29.2	-73%
Bigbend	16	22.9	-6.9	-30%
Sipofaneni	0	27.2	-27.2	-100%
Siteki	7.4	37.7	-30.3	-80%
Tikhuba	0	37.9	-37.9	-100%

Temperature

Mild to Warm temperatures were measured in some parts of the Highveld, Middleveld and Lubombo plateau while warmer temperatures were recorded in the Lowveld (Table 2).

Table 2: Temperature analysis for 21 - 31 October 2005

Station	Element	3 rd dek October	Average	Depart
Mbabane	Max	24.8	25.90	-1.1
	Min	13.7	14.73	-1.0
Nhlangano	Max	23.5	26.00	-2.5

	Min	13.1	14.70	-1.6
Matsapha	Max	25.9	26.87	-1.0
	Min	16.7	15.67	1.0
Malkerns	Max	27.8	26.13	1.6
	Min	14.9	14.50	0.4
Siteki	Max	26.3	26.50	-0.2
	Min	14.5	16.43	-2.0
Bigbend	Max	30.5	27.10	3.4
	Min	19.5	16.53	3.0

SEASONAL FORECAST 2005/06

The seasonal forecast for 2005/06 points towards a **normal rainfall season** in the **Highveld, Middleveld and Lubombo Plateau** from October to March while the **Lowveld** is expected to receive **normal to below normal rainfall** in the same period (Map 3 corrected).

This forecast gives the total seasonal rainfall situation without consideration of its distribution during the season, which is vital in effective planning for agricultural production. Continuous updates to this forecast will be available in the form of ten to 14 day updates to be issued every dekad of the season (October to April).

CROP STATUS

Maize Crop Stage and Condition

During the dekad, it was found that a significant number of farmers in the southern parts of the Highveld have already started planting and their maize crop has germinated (Picture 1). In the Lowveld, nothing in terms of crop farming has taken place as no significant rains have been received so far

Other Crops

A small fraction of other field crops were observed and a majority is garden

vegetables in the Highveld and Middleveld where water is not limited.

Current Farming Activity

Some farmers were seen planting in the southern parts of the Highveld during the dekad. A majority of farmers are busy with preparations for land preparation and planting such as buying seeds and fertilizer.

VEGETATION AND LIVESTOCK

The vegetation situation continues to be bad in the Lowveld while already green in the Highveld and slowly greening in the Middleveld and Lubombo Plateau.

Comparing the current situation with the previous dekad (Map1) it can be seen that the Highveld shows signs of greening (Map 2).

Outlook for 03 – 13 November 2005

Rainfall

Above average rainfall is predicted for the aforementioned period, more pronounced in the first half.

Temperature

Mild temperatures can be expected in the outlook period.

Soil Moisture

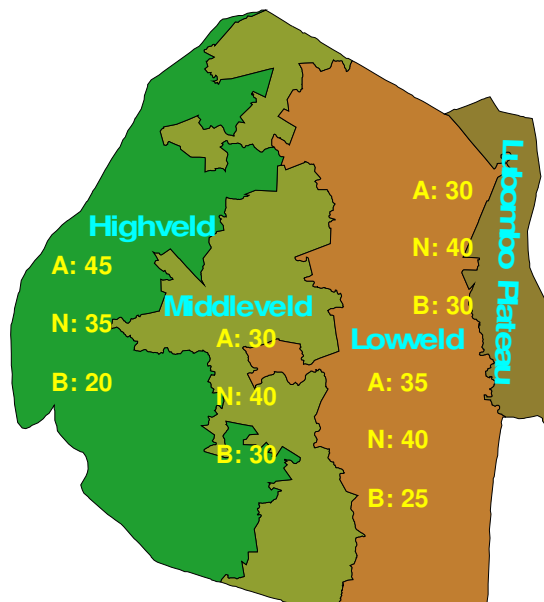
A significant build-up in soil moisture is forecasted during the outlook period.



Picture 1: Germinating maize crop at Magubeleni



Picture 2: A planted maize crop emerging



Map 3: Seasonal forecast for 2005/06 season

Compiled and Issued by: Agrometeorological Unit, Swaziland Meteorological Service, Ministry of Public Works and Transport.

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Many thanks to our:

CONTRIBUTORS, PARTNERS AND SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Please Note: *This bulletin is issued in support of the efforts by the Early Warning System (NEWS) to provide Swaziland's current cropping and meteorological developments to users, stakeholders, government authorities and international organizations during the farming season.*

The NEWS is currently made-up of a core group of National Early Warning Unit (NEWU), the Meteorology Department and Central Statistics Office (CSO).