

# SWAZILAND



## AGROMETEOROLOGICAL UPDATE



REPORTING PERIOD:  
01 – 10 NOVEMBER 2005

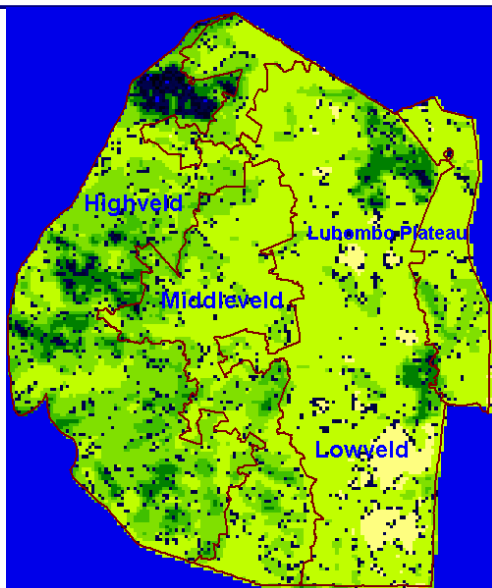
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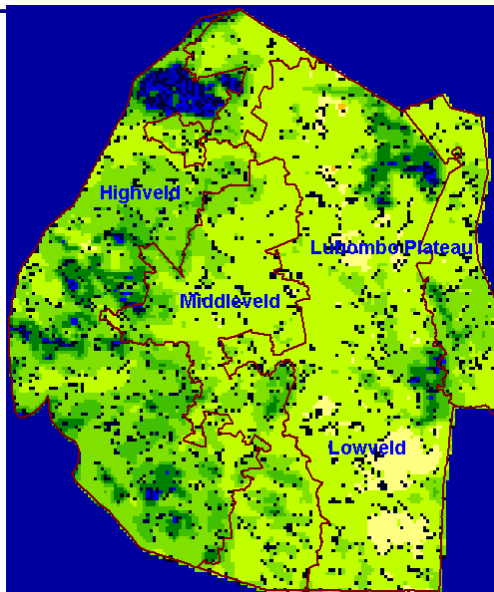
RELEASED: 13/11/2005

### HIGHLIGHTS

- Much-above-average rainfall received in most parts
- Mild to warm temperatures measured in past dekad.
- A slight improvement in vegetation (SPOT) in some areas
- A few maize farmers have already started planting in most parts
- 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 image for 21 - 31 October 2005



Map 1: Vegetation image for 21 - 31 October 2005

### Legend

- ☐ Clouds
- ☐ < 0
- ☐ Bare Soil
- ☐ Almost Bare Soil
- ☐ Initial Vegetation
- ☐ Moderate Vegetation
- ☐ Good Vegetation
- ☐ Healthy Vegetation
- ☐ Plantation Forests

## MOISTURE AND HEAT STATUS

### Rainfall

Much-above-average rains were received in most parts of the country except for a few areas where below average rainfall was recorded (Table 1).

These rains have encouraged most farmers to start with land preparation, and some farmers already planting. The distribution of the rains was good as most of it did not fall as storms, but continuous over long periods.

**Table 1: Rainfall analysis for 01 - 10 November 2005**

Station	1 <sup>st</sup> dek Nov	Avg	Diff	Percent
Mbabane	40.8	58.7	-17.9	-30%
Mankayane	82.6	36.7	45.9	125%
Piggs Peak	52.7	47.1	5.6	12%
Nhlangano	115.1	39.3	75.8	193%
Malkerns	54.3	28.7	25.6	89%
Matsapha	42.5	33.7	8.8	26%
Luve	35	43.5	-8.5	-19%
Bigbend	53.7	22.8	30.9	136%
Mhlume	90	31.3	58.7	187%
Siteki	48.4	39.9	8.5	21%

### Temperature

Mild to Warm temperatures continue to be recorded in most parts of the Highveld, Middleveld and Lubombo plateau while hot temperatures were recorded in most parts of the Lowveld (Table 2).

**Table 2: Temperature analysis for 01 - 10 November 2005**

Station	Element	1 <sup>st</sup> dek Nov	Average	Depart
Mbabane	Max	23.9	26.3	-2.4
	Min	14.7	15.5	-0.8
Piggs Peak	Max	25.3	26.7	-1.4
	Min	14.5	15.9	-1.4

Nhlangano	Max	25.0	26.4	-1.4
	Min	13.8	15.4	-1.6
Matsapha	Max	25.2	27.2	-2.0
	Min	17.3	16.3	1.0
Malkerns	Max	28.3	26.4	1.9
	Min	16.0	15.2	0.8
Siteki	Max	26.6	27.2	-0.6
	Min	15.9	16.9	-1.0
Bigbend	Max	32.4	27.4	5.0
	Min	18.6	17.1	1.5
Mhlume	Max	29.8	27.7	2.1
	Min	18.7	17.1	1.6

## CROP STATUS

### Maize Crop Stage and Condition

A small percent of farmers have started planting (Picture 1) with a majority busy with land preparation.

The already planted crop which has already emerged is in a good condition especially in the Highveld, moist Middleveld and Lubombo Plateau.

### 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 a limiting factor.

### Current Farming Activity

Some farmers have already started in earnest to prepare their land for planting, while a few were seen planting in some parts in all the agro-ecological zones

## VEGETATION AND LIVESTOCK

Vegetation is slowly getting green in the Lubombo Plateau, Moist Middleveld and much green in the Highveld. The Lowveld continues to suffer due to the dry

conditions. Cattle were seen feeding on almost bare soil (Picture 2) during the reporting period in the Dry Middleveld and Lowveld.

Cattle have not yet begun recovering in the dry Middleveld and Lowveld due to the prevailing dry conditions. In the Moist Middleveld, Lubombo Plateau and Highveld the recovery process has commenced with cattle showing no signs of weight loss, as they have enough fodder and drinking water. Goats have not been remarkably affected by the prevailing dry conditions.

### Outlook for 13 – 23 November 2005

#### Rainfall

Normal rainfall is expected in the first half of the outlook with an improvement in the second part of the outlook period.

#### Temperature

Normal to slightly below normal temperatures are anticipated during the outlook period.

#### Soil Moisture

An increase in soil moisture levels is also expected in the outlook period.



**Picture 1:** A farmer planting maize at Kalanga



**Picture 2:** Cattle feeding on almost bare soil at Ngculwini in the Lowveld

**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 the National Early Warning Unit (NEWU) of Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, the Agromet Unit of the National Meteorology Department and the Agricultural Statistics Unit of Central Statistics Office (CSO).*