

SWAZILAND



AGROMETEOROLOGICAL UPDATE



REPORTING PERIOD:
11 – 20 NOVEMBER 2005

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HIGHLIGHTS

- Much-above-average rainfall received in most parts
- Mild to warm temperatures measured in past dekad.
- A big improvement in vegetation (SPOT4) in most areas
- The already planted crop is germinating and healthy
- Slightly-below-average rainfall for the next dekad (ten-days)
- Mild-to-warm temperatures are anticipated
- **A slightly-below-normal soil moisture level is expected**
- All farmers are urged to take advantage of the current rains

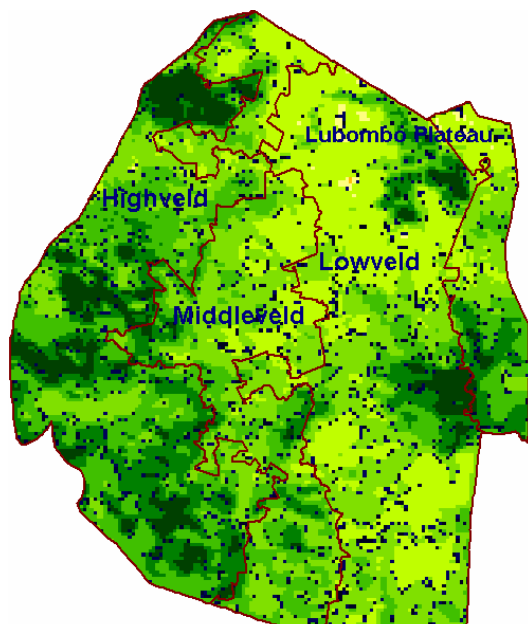


Image 2: Vegetation status during 1 - 10 November 2005

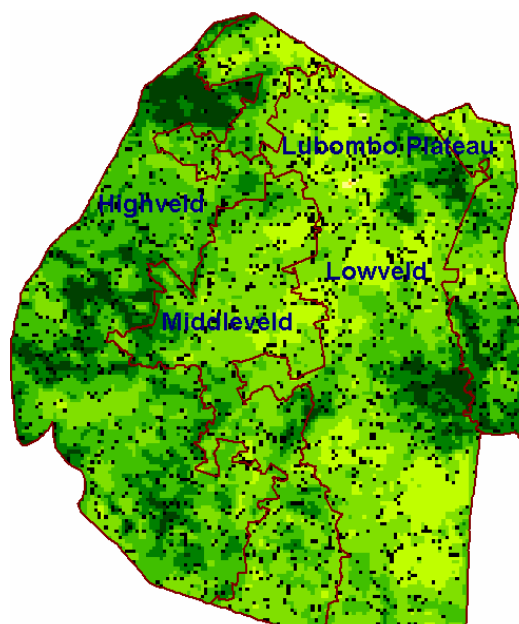


Image 1: Vegetation status during 11 - 20 November 2005

Legend

- ☐ Clouds
- ☐ Water Bodies
- ☐ Bare Soil
- ☐ Almost Bare Soil
- ☐ Initial Vegetation
- ☐ Mode Vegetation
- ☐ Good Vegetation
- ☐ Healthy Vegetation
- ☐ Plantations

MOISTURE AND HEAT STATUS

Rainfall

Above-average rains continued to be received during the reporting period mostly in the southern parts of the country, with a few areas recording much-below-average rains (Table 1).

The distribution of these rains was good as it infiltrated into deeper layers of the soil, thus improving the levels of soil moisture content.

Table 1: Rainfall analysis for 11 - 20 November 2005

Station	2 nd dek Nov	Avg	Diff	Percent
Mbabane	12.4	56.9	-44.5	-78%
Nhlangano	76.3	36.1	40.2	111%
Ngwempisi	46.9	34.5	12.4	36%
Malkerns	54	27.3	26.7	98%
Matsapha	53.5	32.9	20.6	62%
Luve	63.8	43.1	20.7	48%
Bigbend	32.2	23.9	8.3	35%
Mananga	38.3	31.2	7.1	23%
Mhlume	31.8	31.2	0.6	2%
Sipofaneni	11	27.9	-16.9	-61%
Siteki	9.7	40.1	-30.4	-76%
Tikhuba	27.0	38.8	-11.8	-30%
Mahlangatsha	77.5	39	38.5	99%
Sandleni	46	38.6	7.4	19%
Kalanga	22.5	29	-6.5	-22%

Temperature

Mostly warm temperatures were recorded in the Lowveld and some parts of the Middleveld, while the Lubombo Plateau and the Highveld recorded slightly below average temperatures (Table 2).

Table 2: Temperature analysis for 11 - 20 November 2005

Station	Element	2 nd dek Nov	Average	Depart
Mbabane	Max	25.7	25.90	-0.2
	Min	14.8	15.20	-0.4
Nhlangano	Max	22.9	26.13	-3.2
	Min	14.3	15.10	-0.8
Matsapha	Max	29.1	26.90	2.2
	Min	17.1	16.00	1.1
Ngwempisi	Max	26.7	26.03	0.7
	Min	15.6	14.90	0.7
Siteki	Max	25.1	27.07	-2.0
	Min	15.6	16.83	-1.2
Bigbend	Max	29.6	27.47	2.1
	Min	19.6	16.97	2.6
Mananga	Max	28.8	27.57	1.2
	Min	18.7	16.87	1.8

CROP STATUS

Maize Crop Stage and Condition

A majority of farmers have commenced with land preparation in almost all parts of the country (Picture 1). Most of these maize farmers are also busy planting maize.

Most of the planted crop prior to the reporting period had already germinated and in a good state, as the rains continued to fall adequately in most parts of the country.

Other Crops

A small percentage of farmers were reported to have started planting cotton in the Lowveld and some parts of the Lubombo Plateau.

Current Farming Activity

Most farmers countrywide are busy with land preparation and planting. Though the number is significant, not all farmers have taken advantage of the rains. For some of

these farmers it's due to tractor unavailability or lack of funds to hire these tractors

VEGETATION AND LIVESTOCK

A remarkably improvement in vegetation is visible especially in the northern parts of the Lowveld (Image 1), where poor vegetation development was persistent during the past dekads. The improved vegetation development is hugely attributed to the prevailing good rains that the country has received so far.

The pick up in vegetation serves as a good indicator of the probable start of the season being the second dekad of November 2005 in most parts of the country.

Livestock such as Cattle, Goats and Sheep (Picture 2) are recovering but not yet in a good health weight size, as the process to recovery takes a long time.

Outlook for 22 – 30 November 2005

Rainfall

Slightly below normal rainfall is forecasted for the outlook period.

Temperature

Mild to warm temperatures are also expected, becoming hot towards the second part of the outlook period.

Soil Moisture

A slight decline in soil moisture is also forecasted for this outlook.



Picture 1: Fields being ploughed at Sithobela in the Lowveld



Picture 2: Sheep feeding at Lubulini area in the Lowveld

Vote of 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).