

SWAZILAND



AGROMETEOROLOGICAL UPDATE



REPORTING PERIOD:
11 – 20 APRIL 2006

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HIGHLIGHTS

- Much-above-average rains continue to fall...
- Mild-to-warm temperatures measured...
- The country's vegetation status remains good...
- Harvesting dominates farming activities...
- Decrease in rains anticipated.....
- Mild temperatures expected.....
- Decline in soil moisture levels forecasted....
- Decline in area planted to maize anticipated...

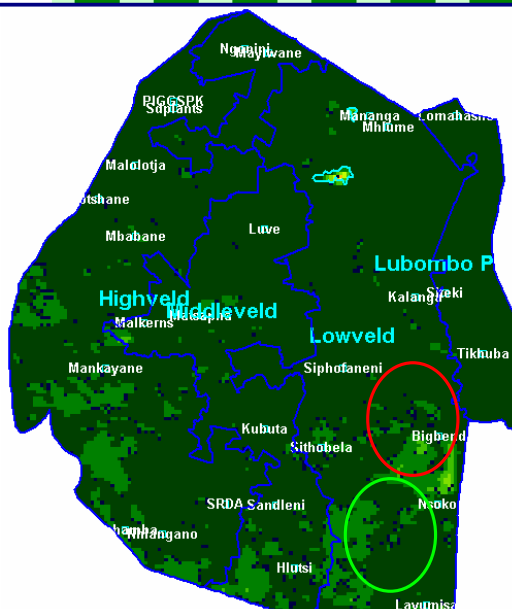


Image 1: Vegetation status as of 1st dekad April 2006

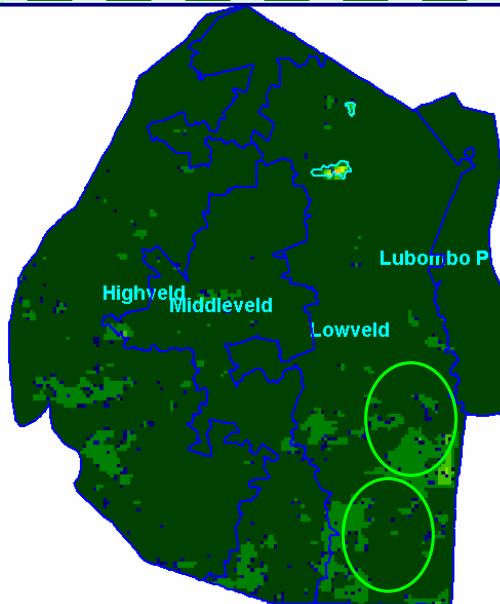


Image 2: Vegetation status as of 2nd dekad April 2006

Legend

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

Image Pixel Reso

1km by 1km

MOISTURE AND HEAT STATUS

Rainfall

Much-above average (**Table 1**) rains continue to fall over most parts of the country even in these past ten-days (dekad).

These rains will continue to have a negative effect on the already ripe maize crop, causing internal cob germination. As for the late planted crops, these rains will have a positive effect as it is still a requirement.

Table 1: Rainfall dekadal data analysis for 11 - 20 April 2006

Station	2 nd dek March	Avg	Diff	Percent
Mbabane	17.1	10.9	6.2	57%
SD_Plants	36.1	8.3	27.8	335%
Ngwempisi	29	5	24.0	480%
Malkerns	21.7	5.6	16.1	288%
Matsapha	30.5	5	25.5	510%
Mananga	45.3	6.3	39.0	619%
Siphofaneni	23.1	4	19.1	478%
Siteki	28.8	11	17.8	162%
Kalanga	10	4	6.0	150%

Temperature

Warm but mainly mild temperatures have been experienced in most parts of the country, but cool in the Highveld.

CROP STATUS

Maize Crop Stage and Condition

Most farmers continue to harvest their ripe maize crops (**Picture 1**) while fighting against the persistent rains which are causing cob germination that may reduce the anticipated yields.

As for the late planted crop, it continues to progress well with most at cob formation

stage.



Picture 1: Ripe maize in the Middleveld

Other Crops

Melons (**Picture 2**) and pumpkins intercropped with maize were found to be ready for harvesting in some parts.



Picture 2: Ripe Melons in the Dry Middleveld

Current Farming Activity

Harvesting and crib construction are the main activities for most farmers.

MAIZE PRODUCTION FORECAST

Provisional area planted to maize obtained from the Central Statistics Office (CSO) show a decline compared to that of last season. The decrease is expected to

result in reduced production compared to that of last season.

VEGETATION AND LIVESTOCK

A good vegetation status continues to prevail in most parts of the country, except for a few spots in the Lowveld as it can be seen on this dekad's vegetation satellite picture (*Image 2*) compared to that of last dekad (*Image 1*).

No serious livestock problems have been reported, except for concerns on pasture deterioration by army worms in the Shiselweni region and a national level of preparedness for a possible invasion by avian flu (Bird Flu)



Picture 4: Cattle grazing at Nsanawini in the Hiahveld

Outlook for 27 April – 12 May 2006

Rainfall

Reduced rains can be expected during the outlook period.

Temperature

Mild but normal temperatures can be anticipated for the for the forecast period.

Soil Moisture

Reduced soil moisture levels are also expected.



Picture 3: An almost ripe pumpkin in the Hiahveld



Picture 5: A river on full flow in the Middleveld

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Vote of thanks to our:

CONTRIBUTORS, PARTNERS AND SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Please Note: *This bulletin is issued in support of the efforts by the National 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 which includes the National Early Warning Unit (NEWU) of Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, the National Meteorology Department and the Agricultural Statistics Unit of Central Statistics Office (CSO).

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