

SWAZILAND



AGROMETEOROLOGICAL UPDATE



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HIGHLIGHTS

- Improved rains fall in most parts of the country...
- **Vegetation continues to improve....**
- More and more farmers have started planting...
- Germinating maize crop is in a good state...
- More significant rains expected.....
- Cooler temperatures forecasted.....
- **A significant improvement in soil moisture expected....**
- Pastures are rapidly improving.....

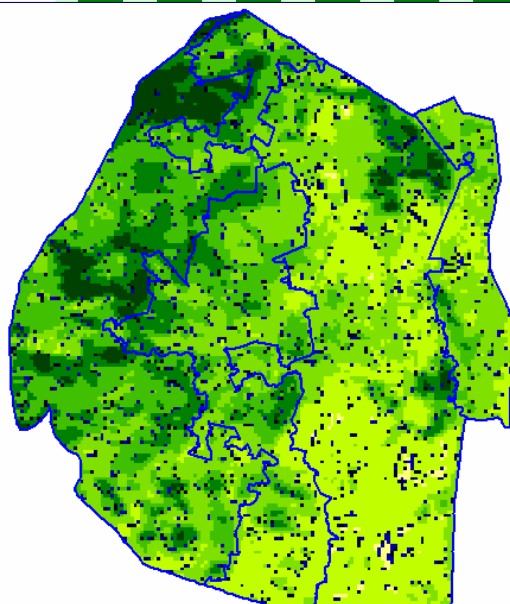


Image 1: Vegetation status as of 3rd dekad October 2008

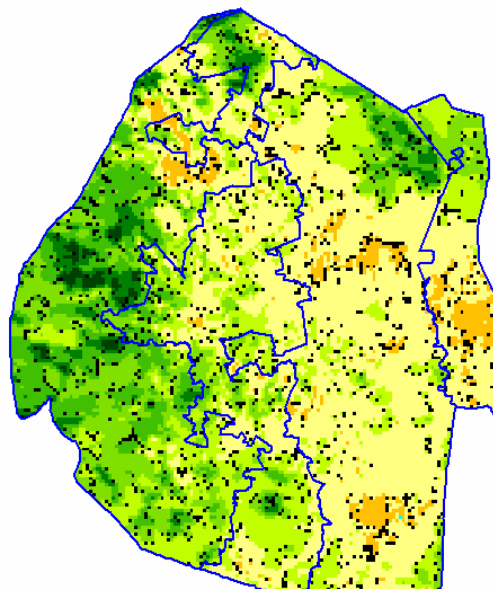


Image 2: Vegetation status as of 1st dekad November 2008

Legend

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

MOISTURE AND HEAT STATUS

Rainfall

Much improved rains fell during the reporting period though only just about the same as the longterm average and last season (see figure 1 below).

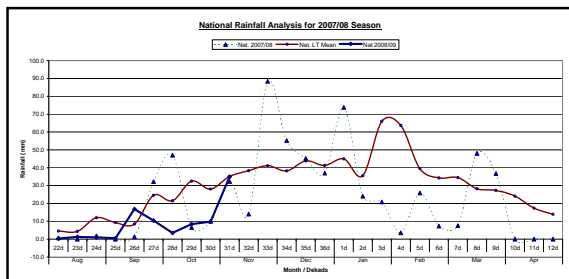


Figure 1: Seasonal rainfall distribution as of 1st Dekad November 2008

Temperatures

Warmer than average temperatures continued to be recorded in the Lowveld, while the regions recorded below average temperatures during the reporting period (**Table 2 below**).

Table 1: Temperatures (°C) for 1st Dekad November 2008

Station	Temp	1 st dek October	Avg	Depart
Mbabane	Max	24.6	26.3	-1.7
	Min	15.1	15.5	-0.3
Piggs Peak	Max	26.0	26.7	-0.7
	Min	13.6	15.9	-2.3
Malkerns	Max	26.8	26.4	0.3
	Min	14.8	15.2	-0.4
Siteki	Max	25.9	27.2	-1.2
	Min	15.5	16.9	-1.5
Bigbend	Max	28.5	27.4	1.1
	Min	18.5	17.1	1.4

CROP STATUS

Maize Crop Stage and Condition

The initially planted maize is now at early vegetative stages, though it's only a few

fields that were planted in the Highveld. More of the maize crop is being planted as a result of the improved rains received during the dekad.

Other Crops

Only intercropped crops such as melons, pumpkins, are reported to have been planted with maize.

Current Farming Activity

There is a sudden increase in the number of farmers ploughing and planting as a result of the improved rains received during the dekad.

VEGETATION AND LIVESTOCK

There is a continued improvement in vegetation even though the SPOT Satellite images (**Image 2**) don't show it as a result of the optical effect of clouds on the satellite sensors, as the past dekad experienced a mainly cloudy weather, which blocked the sensors, thus poor indication of vegetation status.

Pastures are improving rapidly in most parts of the country with an exception of a few patches in the southern Lowveld where almost bare soils are visible.

Outlook for 15 – 25 November 2008

Rainfall

There are improved chances of significant rainfall over most parts of the country.

Temperature

Cooler temperatures are expected during the forecast period.

Soil Moisture

An improvement in soil moisture is also

expected.

CONTRIBUTORS, PARTNERS AND SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Please Note: *This bulletin is issued in support of the efforts by the National Early Warning System (NEWS) for food Security 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).