

SWAZILAND



AGROMETEOROLOGICAL UPDATE



REPORTING PERIOD:
11 – 20 NOVEMBER 2008

ISSUE No.: 05

SEASON: 2008/09

RELEASED: 24/11/2008

HIGHLIGHTS

- Reduced rains fell in some areas of the country...
- Vegetation continues to improve countrywide....
- Planting continues earnestly in most areas...
- Maize crop in early vegetative stages...
- Reduced rains expected in most parts of the country.....
- Warmer temperatures expected in the next dekad.....
- **A significant reduction in soil moisture expected....**
- Grazing areas continue to show signs of improvement.....

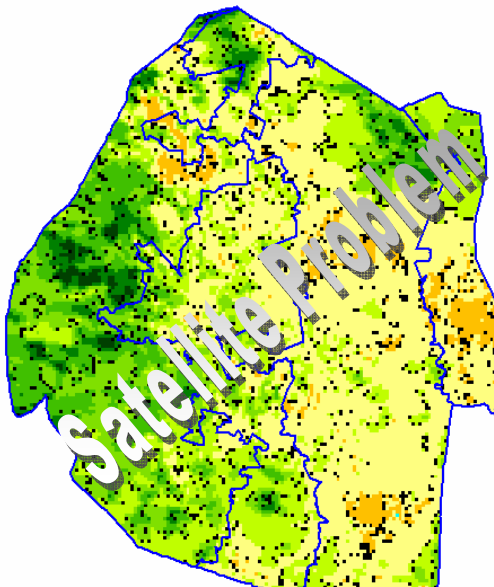


Image 1: Vegetation status as of 1st dekad November 2008

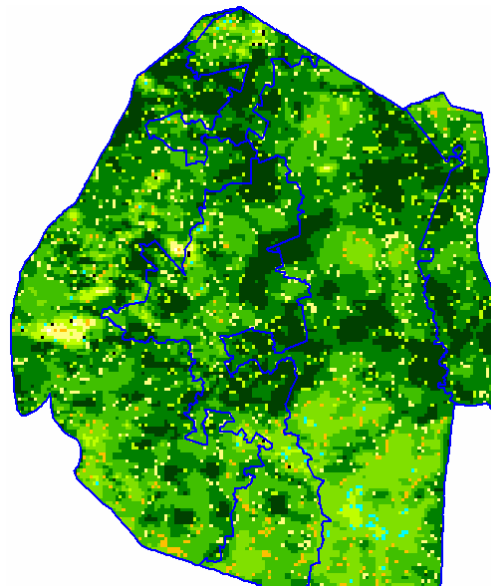


Image 2: Vegetation status as of 2nd dekad November 2008

Legend

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

MOISTURE AND HEAT STATUS

Rainfall

Reduced rains were recorded over most parts of the country during the reporting period. The Highveld was the only region that received about average rains, the others received below average rainfall.

Temperatures

Mild temperatures were recorded in most parts of the country with Bigbend in the Lowveld recording the highest maximum temperatures (**Table 2 below**). Most of these temperatures were above average.

Table 1: Temperatures (°C) for 2nd Dekad November 2008

Station	Temp	2 nd dek October	Average	Depart
Mbabane	Max	22.6	25.9	-3.3
	Min	16.1	15.2	0.9
Piggs Pk	Max	22.9	26.3	-3.4
	Min	14.7	15.7	-1.0
Nhlangano	Max	22.9	26.1	-3.3
	Min	15.9	15.1	0.8
Ngwempisi	Max	No Thermo	26.0	NR
	Min	16.6	14.9	1.7
Matsapha	Max	No Thermo	26.9	NR
	Min	18.2	16.0	2.2
Malkerns	Max	26.0	26.0	0.0
	Min	17.0	14.9	2.1
Siteki	Max	23.8	27.1	-3.2
	Min	17.3	16.8	0.5
Bigbend	Max	30.3	27.5	2.9
	Min	20.4	17.0	3.4

CROP STATUS

Maize Crop Stage and Condition

Most of the recently planted maize is at early vegetative stages with some still germinating (**picture 1**) in some parts. Some of the Lowveld early planted crop is

experiencing heat and water stress, which is not expected to cause serious crop losses as the crop is at its early stages. Land preparation and planting is still continuing in most parts.

Other Crops

Some few of the non intercropped crops are now visible in the fields, such as groundnuts, peanuts, sorghum and cotton in the Lowveld.

Current Farming Activity

More planting continues in most parts of the country, even the Lowveld, where rains have not been good so far.

VEGETATION AND LIVESTOCK

Steady development of vegetation can be seen in most parts of the country as it can be seen on the satellite images (image 1 & 2) and from field visits (**Picture 2**).

Livestock grazing areas (**Picture 2**) in the Highveld have improved from the poor winter conditions and from the scars of wild veld fires.

Outlook for 25 November – 05 December 2008

Rainfall

Reduced chances of significant rains in the next dekad are anticipated over most parts but more so in the Lowveld.

Temperature

Warmer than average temperatures are expected during the forecast period, more especially in the Lowveld

Soil Moisture

An improvement in soil moisture is also expected.



Picture 1: Germinating maize at Mnyokane in the Highveld



Picture 2: Grazing cattle and goats in Highveld

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).