

SWAZILAND



AGROMETEOROLOGICAL UPDATE



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HIGHLIGHTS

- Reduced rains continue to fall in most parts of the country...
- Vegetation continues to show a significant improvement....
- 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.....

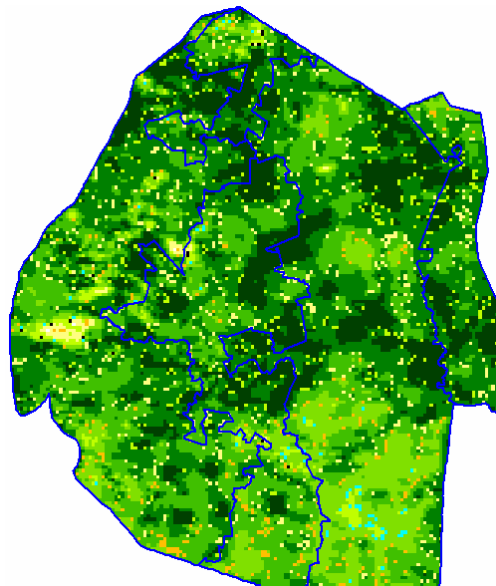


Image 1: Vegetation status as of 2nd dekad November 2008

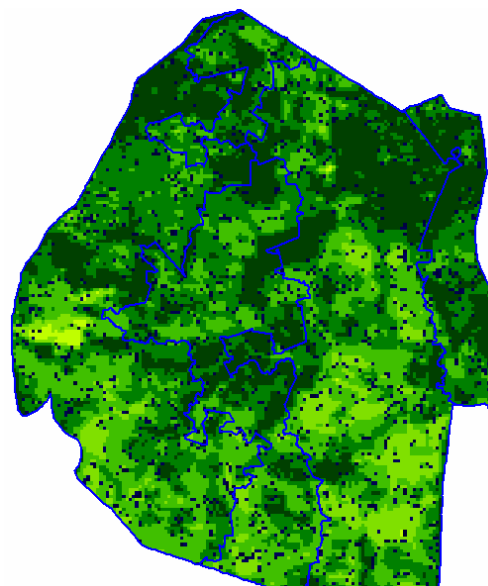


Image 2: Vegetation status as of 3rd dekad November 2008

Legend

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

MOISTURE AND HEAT STATUS

Rainfall

Much reduced rains fell during the reporting period and were much below longterm and that of last season (2007/08) (see figure 1 below). The Lowveld continued to experience drier conditions when compared to the other regions.

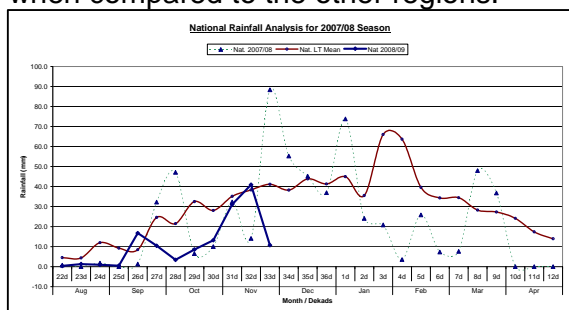


Figure 1: Rainfall distribution as of 3rd Dekad November 2008

Temperatures

Warmer than average temperatures were recorded over most parts of the country (**Table 2 below**) with an exception of Piggs Peak in the Highveld, where mild temperatures were recorded.

Table 1: Temperatures (°C) for 3rd Dekad November 2008

Station	Temp	3 rd dek October	Avg	Depart
Mbabane	Max	27.0	26.8	0.2
	Min	16.7	16.3	0.4
Piggs Pk	Max	25.7	27.3	-1.6
	Min	14.4	16.3	-2.0
Nhlangano	Max	27.3	27.0	0.3
	Min	17.3	16.2	1.1
Ngwempisi	Max	No Thermo	27.1	NR
	Min	17.7	16.1	1.6
Matsapha	Max	No Thermo	27.8	NR
	Min	19.7	17.1	2.6
Malkerns	Max	30.6	27.1	3.5
	Min	18.2	16.1	2.1
Siteki	Max	29.5	27.7	1.8
	Min	18.1	17.9	0.2

Bigbend	Max	No Thermo	28.2	*NR
	Min	22.5	18.0	4.5

*NR – No Record due to lack of a maximum thermometer

CROP STATUS

Maize Crop Stage and Condition

Earlier planted crops are now approaching mid vegetative stages even though this not a majority of the crop. This crop is in a good condition especially in the Highveld and Middleveld. Late planted crops are mainly at early vegetative stages with a majority still germinating.

Other Crops

Most of the germinated legume crops such as beans, groundnuts and peanuts are in a good state, though are still at early vegetative stages.

Current Farming Activity

Subsistence farmers are still ploughing and planting in almost all parts of the country. Farmers in the lower Lowveld such as Lavumisa are reported to have started neither ploughing nor planting due to insufficient rains.

VEGETATION AND LIVESTOCK

Vegetation has continued to improve remarkably over the past dekads including the current dekad. This can be seen on the 2nd and 3rd dekad SPOT vegetation images above where a significant improvement from previous dekads (excluding the 1st Dekad November image) is evident.

Pastures have also continued to improve remarkably, thus livestock are in a good state, though water availability is still a problem.

Outlook for 05 – 15 December 2008

Rainfall

Reduced rains are expected over most parts of the country, especially in the eastern parts.

Temperature

Warmer temperatures are expected in most parts of the country during the forecast period.

Soil Moisture

A significant reduction in soil moisture expected during the forecast period.

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).