

# SWAZILAND



## AGROMETEOROLOGICAL UPDATE



REPORTING PERIOD:  
01 – 10 DECEMBER 2008

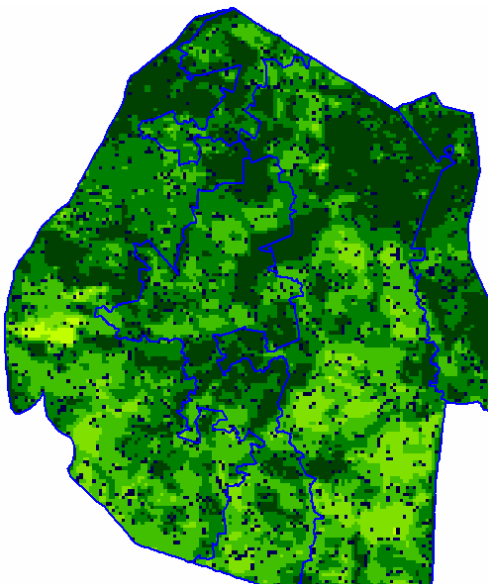
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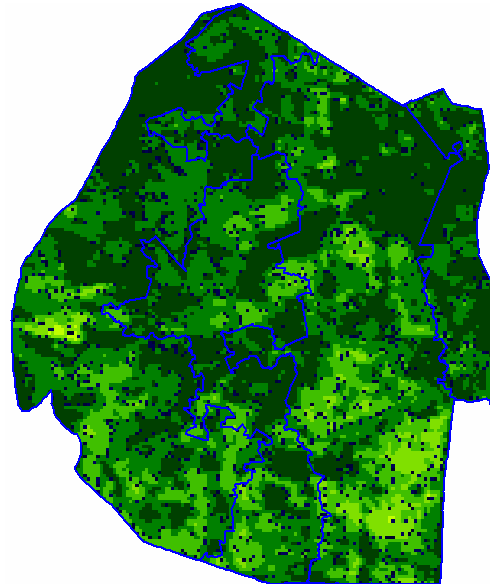
RELEASED: 15/12/2008

### HIGHLIGHTS

- Below average rains continue to fall...
- A steady progression in vegetation development....
- Weeding is a major activity in most areas...
- Few farmers have planted in Lavumisa area due to poor rains...
- Significant rains expected, but will reduce later.....
- Average temperatures expected in most parts.....
- Improved soil moisture anticipated....
- Most livestock are in a good state.....



**Image 1:** Vegetation status as of 3<sup>rd</sup> dekad November 2008



**Image 2:** Vegetation status as of 1<sup>st</sup> dekad December 2008

### Legend

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

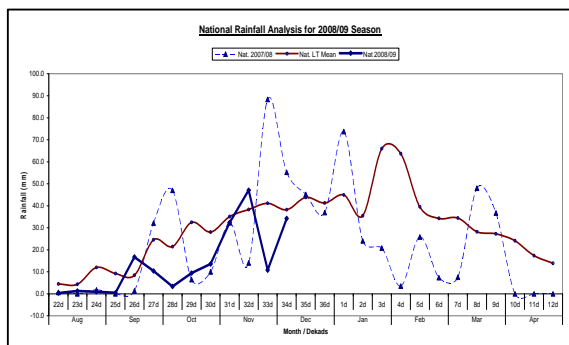
## MOISTURE AND HEAT STATUS

### Rainfall

Below average rains were received in most parts of the country with the exception of the Lubombo Plateau where above average rainfall was received (Table 1 below). The distribution of the rains so far is generally below average since this season began (Figure 1 below).

**Table 1: Regional Rainfall averages for 1 - 10 December 2008**

Region	Highveld	Middleveld	Lowveld	Lubombo
Average	54	39	30	30
2008/09	25	29	24	59
Anomaly	-29	-9	-6	29



**Figure 1: Rainfall distribution as of 1<sup>st</sup> Dekad December 2008**

### Temperatures

Below average temperatures were recorded in most parts of the Highveld (**Table 2**) with the other parts of the country recording above average temperatures with warmer temperatures recorded in the Lowveld and Lubombo Plateau.

**Table 2: Temperatures (°C) for 1<sup>st</sup> Dekad December 2008**

Station	Temp	1 <sup>st</sup> dek December	Average	Depart
Mbabane	Max	26.4	27.63	-1.2
	Min	15.3	16.73	-1.5
Piggs Pk	Max	25.5	28.00	-2.5
	Min	14.1	17.43	-3.3
Nhlangano	Max	26.9	27.80	-0.9
	Min	16.1	16.60	-0.5
Ngwempisi	Max	-	27.83	-
	Min	17.4	16.50	0.9
Matsapha	Max	-	28.57	-
	Min	18.7	17.63	1.1
Siteki	Max	29.0	28.73	0.2
	Min	17.3	18.57	-1.3
Bigbend	Max	-	29.23	-
	Min	20.5	18.60	1.9
Mananga	Max	31.5	29.10	2.4
	Min	19.8	18.73	1.1

- stands for No Record due to lack of a maximum thermometer

## CROP STATUS

### Maize Crop Stage and Condition

Maize crops in the Highveld and Middleveld are mainly at early vegetative stages and in a good state. The Lowveld crops are in a poor state especially those in the lower Lowveld due to poor rains received so far in these parts of the country.

### Other Crops

Beans and Peanuts were reported to have been planted in some parts of the Highveld including those under Motshane RDA.

### Current Farming Activity

Weeding is now a major activity in most parts of the country, while others are still busy with land preparation and planting.

## VEGETATION AND LIVESTOCK

Satellite images continue to depict good vegetation development over most parts of the country, even in the lower Lowveld where rains have not been enough for land preparation and planting.

Domesticated livestock and even wild game are in a good state in most parts of the country as enough fodder and drinking water are currently sufficient.

### Outlook for 15 – 25 December 2008

#### Rainfall

Significant rains are expected in the north eastern parts of the country during the first

half of the forecast period with reduced rains in the second half in most areas.

#### Temperature

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

#### Soil Moisture

A significant improvement in soil moisture is expected during the forecast period especially to the north-eastern parts of the country.

## 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).*