

SWAZILAND



AGROMETEOROLOGICAL UPDATE



REPORTING PERIOD:
01 – 10 OCTOBER 2009

ISSUE No.: 01

SEASON: 2009/10

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HIGHLIGHTS

- No significant rains received so far, save for winter rains...
- Much improved vegetation than last season same time....
- Livestock not yet herded thus delaying crop farmers.....
- A small portion of farmers have planted...
- More significant rains expected over the coming dekad.....
- Mild temperatures are also expected.....
- An increase in soil moisture level is also expected....
- Land preparation has commenced in a few areas of the country...

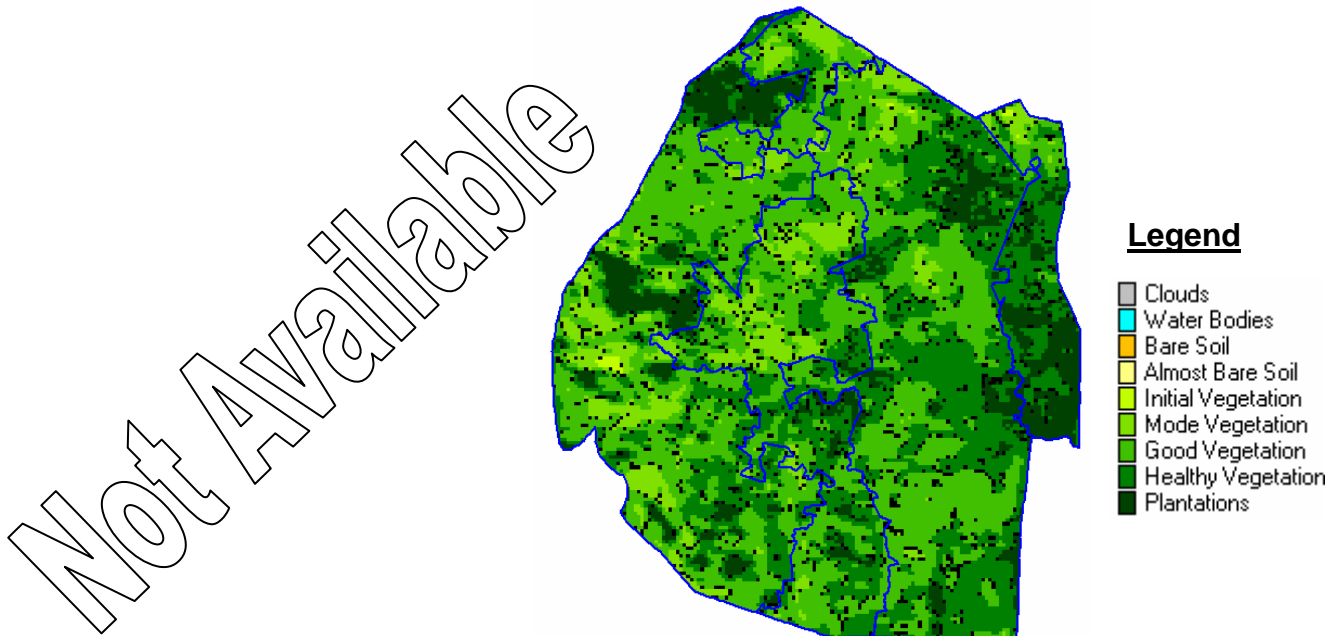


Image 1: Vegetation status as of 3rd dekad September 2009

Image 2: Vegetation status as of 1st dekad October 2009

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MOISTURE AND HEAT STATUS

Rainfall

Much significant rains were received during the reporting period in all four agro-ecological zones of the country (Table 1). These rains were much above both the longterm average and that of the previous season (2008/09).

Worth noting is the extremely above average rains that were recorded during the first dekad (ten-days) of August 2009 (Figure 1).

Table 1: Rainfall (mm) for 1st Dekad October 2009

	HV	MV	LV	LP
2008/09	5	5	0	2
Average	26	23	14	22
2009/10	39	31	29	28
Anomaly	13	8	14	6

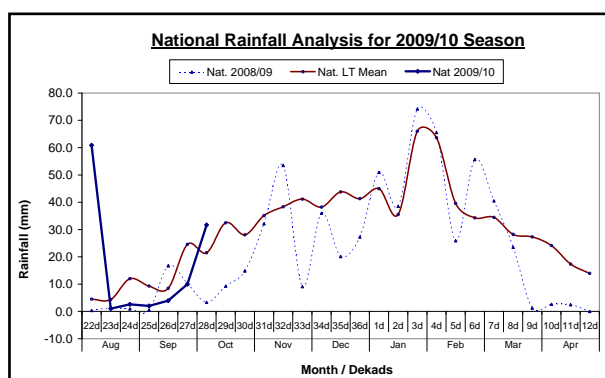


Figure 1: Seasonal rainfall distribution as of 1st Dekad October 2009

Temperatures

Mild temperatures were recorded in the Highveld and the Lubombo Plateau, while the Lowveld and Middleveld recorded warmer temperatures (Table 2).

Table 2: Temperatures (°C) for 1st Dekad October 2009

Station	Element	1 st dek October	Average	Depart
Mbabane	Max	23.9	26.0	-2.1
	Min	12.9	14.0	-1.2
Piggs Peak	Max	22.8	26.6	-3.8
	Min	13.9	14.5	-0.6
Nhlangano	Max	22.3	25.9	-3.6
	Min	12.8	14.0	-1.1
Malkerns	Max	25.0	25.9	-0.9
	Min	14.9	13.8	1.1
Siteki	Max	23.4	26.7	-3.3
	Min	14.7	15.6	-0.9
Bigbend	Max	28.0	27.0	1.0
	Min	17.7	15.7	2.0

CROP STATUS

Maize Crop Stage and Condition

Due to the wet winter conditions and the predicted seasonal rainfall outlook; some farmers have already planted their maize crops, especially in the Lowveld and Lubombo and Middleveld.

There is still a lot more farmers who have not planted as at the end of the dekad.

Other Crops

None have been observed germinating in the fields especially as most farmers have delayed their land preparation and planting due to the widespread news of an El Niño season from foreign media.

Current Farming Activity

Some farmers were found busy with land preparation in some parts of the Middleveld (Picture 1).

VEGETATION AND LIVESTOCK

Vegetation is better when compared to last season same due to the winter rains that were received in August in most parts of the country. Vegetation satellite images for 1st and 2nd dekads of October (Image 1 and 2) show a good vegetation state in most parts of the country.

Cattle are in a good state in most parts including the Lowveld (Picture 2) due to the presence of winter rains that fell this year.

Outlook for 14 – 25 October 2008

Rainfall

More significant rains are expected to fall in most parts of the country during the forecast period.

Temperature

Mild and below average temperatures are expected during the outlook period.

Soil Moisture

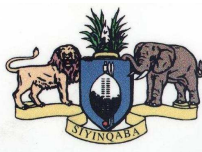
An increase in available soil moisture is also anticipated during the outlook period.



Picture 1: Unploughed fields



Picture 2: Cattle browsing at Gucuka in the Lowveld



SWAZILAND SEASONAL RAINFALL FORECAST FOR THE 2009/10 SEASON

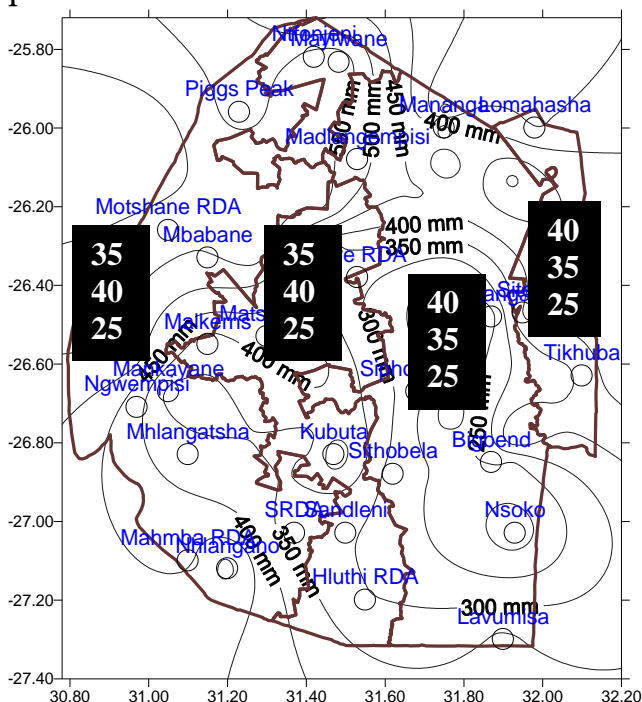
Overview

The country's seasonal rainfall outlook for the 2009/10 show a chance of Normal over the western parts of the country and an increased chance of Normal to Above-Normal rainfall over the eastern parts of the country during the October-November-December (OND) 2009 period. There is an increased chance for Above-Normal rainfall in the western half of the country with a Normal to below-Normal chance over the Eastern half of the country during the January, February and March (JFM) 2010 period. A regional perspective forecast is presented below;

October-November-December (OND) Rainfall

There is an increased chance for **Normal-to-Above-Normal** throughout the country during the October – November – December (OND) period of the 2009/10 season, with a **slight bias to Above-Normal** in the Lowveld and Lubombo Plateau zones. The Highveld and Middleveld regions are likely to receive Normal Rainfall during OND.

The regional breakdown of the predicted OND rainfall probabilities are as presented below:



Highveld

There is chance of Normal Rainfall in this region during the October-November-December (OND) 2009 period.

Middleveld

There is a high chance for Normal Rainfall over most parts of this region during the OND 2009 period.

Category

Above
Normal
Below

Lowveld

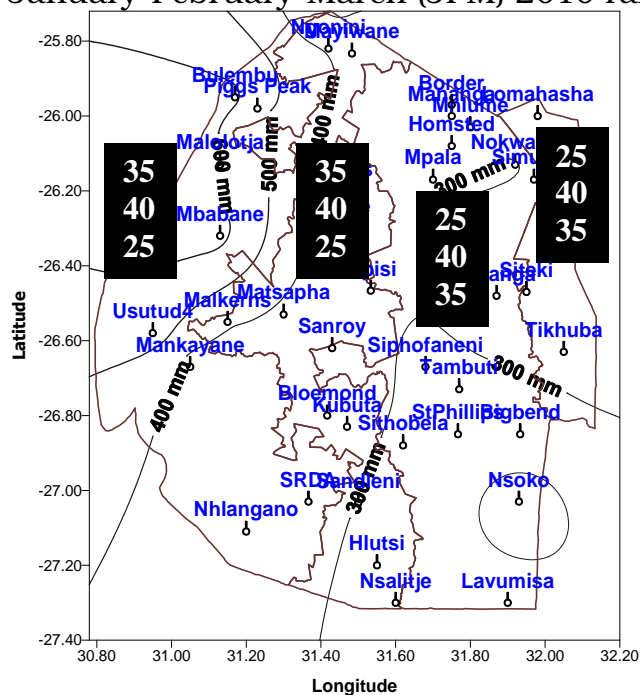
There is an increased chance for Normal to Above-Normal Rainfall over most parts of this region during the OND 2009 period.

Lubombo

There is a chance for Normal to Above-Normal Rainfall in this region during the OND 2009 period.

January –February –March (JFM) 2010 Rainfall

The July predictor (SST) used currently puts most parts of the country in a ***Normal to Below-Normal*** category. The regional breakdown of the predicted January-February-March (JFM) 2010 rainfall probabilities are as presented below:



Highveld

There is an increased chance of Normal rainfall over most areas within the region during the JFM period.

Middleveld

There is an increased chance of Normal rainfall over most of the region during the forecast period, JFM 2010.

Category

Above
Normal
Below

Lowveld

There is a chance for Normal to Below-Normal rainfall over the Lowveld region during the JFM period.

Lubombo

There is a chance for Normal to Below-Normal rainfall over the Lubombo Plateau during the JFM 2010 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).