

SWAZILAND



AGROMETEOROLOGICAL UPDATE



REPORTING PERIOD:
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HIGHLIGHTS

- Much above average rainfall continue to be recorded...
- **Vegetation getting better in most areas....**
- Slow pace start in land preparation by maize farmers ...
- Heavy hailstorms affect some of the germinated crops...
- More rainfall forecasted.....
- Mild temperatures also expected....
- **An Increase in soil moisture also expected....**
- Land preparation and planting is still slow in some parts.....

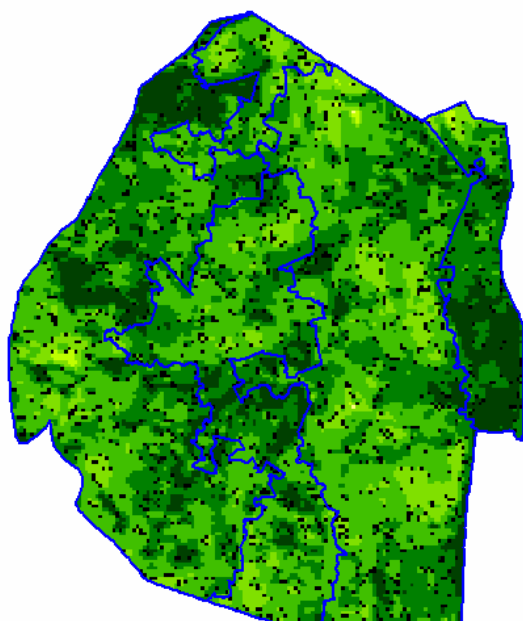


Image 1: Vegetation status as of 2nd dekad October 2009

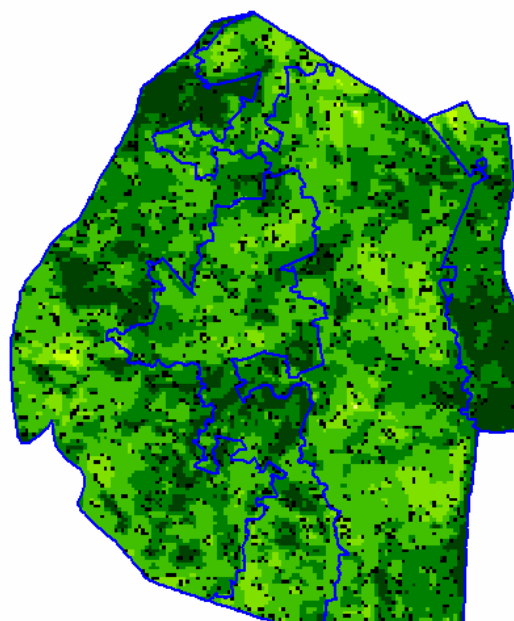


Image 2: Vegetation status as of 3rd dekad October 2009

Legend

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

MOISTURE AND HEAT STATUS

Rainfall

Above average rainfall continued to be received in most parts of the country especially in the Middleveld, Highveld and the Lubombo Plateau (Table1).

Table 1: Rainfall (mm) for 3rd October 2009

	HV	MV	LV	LP
2008/09	24	14	13	8
Average	38	30	20	24
2009/10	61	64	33	53
Anomaly	23	34	13	29

These rains were much above the longterm average and also rainfall received in the past season (2008/09) during the same period (see figure 1 below).

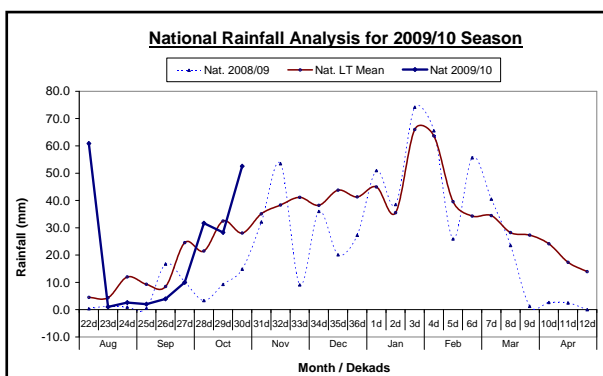


Figure 1: Seasonal rainfall distribution as of 3rd Dekad October 2009

Temperatures

Mild temperatures continued to prevail in most parts of the country and only slightly warmer in the Lowveld (**Table 2 below**).

Table 2: Temperatures (°C) for 3rd Dekad October 2009

Station	Element	3 rd dek October	Mean	Depart
Mbabane	Max	22.2	25.9	-3.7

	Min	13.0	14.7	-1.8
Piggs Peak	Max	22.7	26.4	-3.8
	Min	14.2	15.5	-1.3
Nhlangano	Max	22.1	26.0	-3.9
	Min	12.9	14.7	-1.8
Malkerns	Max	23.8	26.1	-2.3
	Min	15.0	14.5	0.5
Siteki	Max	23.4	26.5	-3.1
	Min	14.5	16.4	-2.0
Bigbend	Max	26.8	27.1	-0.3
	Min	18.0	16.5	1.5

CROP STATUS

Maize Crop Stage and Condition

A few of the early dry planted crops have germinated and are in a good state in some parts of the Lowveld, Lubombo Plateau and the Middleveld (Picture 1). There are still a lot of farmers that have not prepared their fields in readiness for planting due to fears of El Nino impacts as rumored in foreign media.

Other Crops

Maize intercropped crops were reported to have been planted, but none had germinated during the reporting period.

Current Farming Activity

There seems to be a remarkable slow pace in land preparation irrespective of the released seasonal outlook anticipating a decline in rainfall during the latter part of the season.

VEGETATION AND LIVESTOCK

During field tours, vegetation was found to be in a good state especially in communal pastures / rangelands. Satellite images are also in agreement with the field tours observations, though the satellites have a slight suppression due to persistent cloud

cover during the reporting period.

Livestock continue to be in a good state countrywide.

Outlook for 05 – 15 November 2009

Rainfall

More rains are expected to fall during the forecast period, especially in the west half of the country.

Temperature

Warmer temperatures are expected over the eastern half of the country during the forecast period.

Soil Moisture

A significant improvement in soil moisture is also expected especially in the western half of the country.



Picture 1: Germinating maize in the middleveld with some washed by the heavy rains



Picture 2: Germinating Maize in the Middleveld

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).