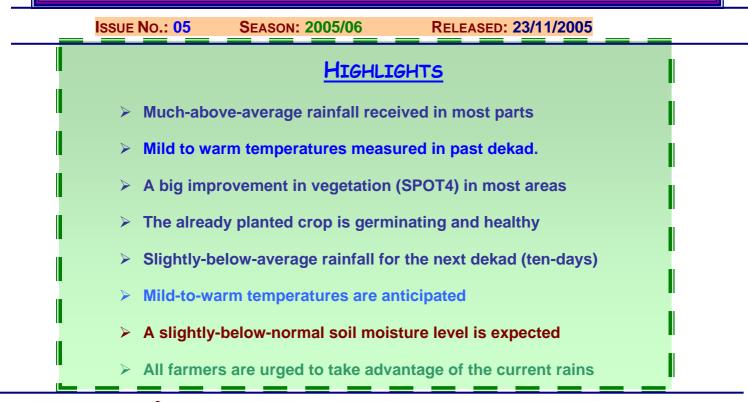


AGROMETEOROLOGICAL UPDATE

REPORTING PERIOD: 11 – 20 NOVEMBER 2005



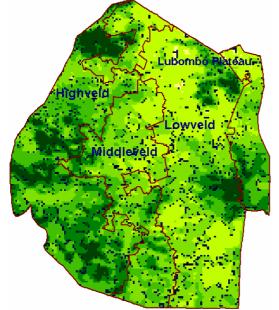
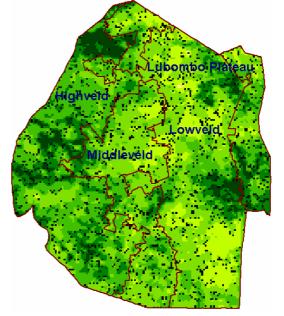


Image 2: Vegetation status during 1 - 10 November 2005



Legend

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

Image 1: Vegetation status during 11 - 20 November 2005

Compiled and Issued by: Agrometeorological Unit, Swaziland Meteorological Service, Ministry of Public Works and Transport. Box 58, Mbabane, Swaziland. The (+268) 404 8859 / 404 6274. Fax: 404 1530 E-mail: sunshine@swazimet.gov.sz

MOISTURE AND HEAT STATUS

Rainfall

Above-average rains continued to be received during the reporting period mostly in the southern parts of the country, with a few areas recording muchbelow-average rains (Table 1).

The distribution of these rains was good as it infiltrated into deeper layers of the soil, thus improving the levels of soil moisture content.

Table 1: Rainfall analysis for 11 - 20 November 2005

| Station | 2 nd dek Nov | Avg | Diff | Percent |
|--------------|----------------------------|------|-------|---------|
| Mbabane | 12.4 | 56.9 | -44.5 | -78% |
| Nhlangano | 76.3 | 36.1 | 40.2 | 111% |
| Ngwempisi | 46.9 | 34.5 | 12.4 | 36% |
| Malkerns | 54 | 27.3 | 26.7 | 98% |
| Matsapha | 53.5 | 32.9 | 20.6 | 62% |
| Luve | 63.8 | 43.1 | 20.7 | 48% |
| Bigbend | 32.2 | 23.9 | 8.3 | 35% |
| Mananga | 38.3 | 31.2 | 7.1 | 23% |
| Mhlume | 31.8 | 31.2 | 0.6 | 2% |
| Sipofaneni | 11 | 27.9 | -16.9 | -61% |
| Siteki | 9.7 | 40.1 | -30.4 | -76% |
| Tikhuba | 27.0 | 38.8 | -11.8 | -30% |
| Mahlangatsha | 77.5 | 39 | 38.5 | 99% |
| Sandleni | 46 | 38.6 | 7.4 | 19% |
| Kalanga | 22.5 | 29 | -6.5 | -22% |

Temperature

Mostly warm temperatures were recorded in the Lowveld and some parts of the Middleveld, while the Lubombo Plateau and the Highveld recorded slightly below average temperatures (Table 2).

<u>Table 2:</u> Temperature analysis for 11 - 20 November 2005

| | | 2 nd dek | | |
|-----------|---------|---------------------|---------|--------|
| Station | Element | Nov | Average | Depart |
| Mbabane | Max | 25.7 | 25.90 | -0.2 |
| | Min | 14.8 | 15.20 | -0.4 |
| Nhlangano | Max | 22.9 | 26.13 | -3.2 |
| | Min | 14.3 | 15.10 | -0.8 |
| Matsapha | Max | 29.1 | 26.90 | 2.2 |
| | Min | 17.1 | 16.00 | 1.1 |
| Ngwempisi | Max | 26.7 | 26.03 | 0.7 |
| | Min | 15.6 | 14.90 | 0.7 |
| Siteki | Max | 25.1 | 27.07 | -2.0 |
| | Min | 15.6 | 16.83 | -1.2 |
| Bigbend | Max | 29.6 | 27.47 | 2.1 |
| | Min | 19.6 | 16.97 | 2.6 |
| Mananga | Max | 28.8 | 27.57 | 1.2 |
| | Min | 18.7 | 16.87 | 1.8 |

CROP STATUS

Maize Crop Stage and Condition

A majority of farmers have commenced with land preparation in almost all parts of the country (Picture 1). Most of these maize farmers are also busy planting maize.

Most of the planted crop prior to the reporting period had already germinated and in a good state, as the rains continued to fall adequately in most parts of the country.

Other Crops

A small percentage of farmers were reported to have started planting cotton in the Lowveld and some parts of the Lubombo Plateau.

Current Farming Activity

Most farmers countrywide are bus with land preparation and planting. Though the number is significant, not all farmers have taken advantage of the rains. For some of

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VEGETATION AND LIVESTOCK

A remarkably improvement in vegetation is visible especially in the northern parts of the Lowveld (Image 1), where poor vegetation development was persistent during the past dekads. The improved vegetation development is hugely attributed to the prevailing good rains that the country has received so far.

The pick up in vegetation serves as a good indicator of the probable start of the season being the second dekad of November 2005 in most parts of the country.

Livestock such as Cattle, Goats and Sheep (Picture 2) are recovering but not yet in a good health weight size, as the process to recovery takes a long time.

Outlook for 22 – 30 November 2005

Rainfall

Slightly below normal rainfall is forecasted for the outlook period.

Temperature

Mild to warm temperatures are also expected, becoming hot towards the second part of the outlook period.

Soil Moisture

A slight decline in soil moisture is also forecasted for this outlook.



<u>Picture 1:</u> Fields being ploughed at Sithobela in the Lowveld



<u>Picture 2:</u> Sheep feeding at Lubulini area in the Lowveld

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CONTRIBUTORS, PARTNERS AND SOURCES OF INFORMATION

<u>Please Note</u>: This bulletin is issued in support of the efforts by the Early Warning System (NEWS) 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).