

SWAZILAND



AGROMETEOROLOGICAL UPDATE



REPORTING PERIOD:
21 – 30 NOVEMBER 2005

ISSUE No.: 06

SEASON: 2005/06

RELEASED: 02/12/2005

HIGHLIGHTS

- Slightly-below-average rains fall in most parts of the country
- Warm temperatures measured in most parts
- Most areas now have a good vegetation cover
- A significant percent of maize farmers have already planted
- Slightly-below-average rainfall for the next dekad (ten-days)
- Mild-to-warm temperatures are anticipated
- **A slightly-below-normal soil moisture level is expected**
- Farmers are still encouraged to take advantage of the available soil moisture

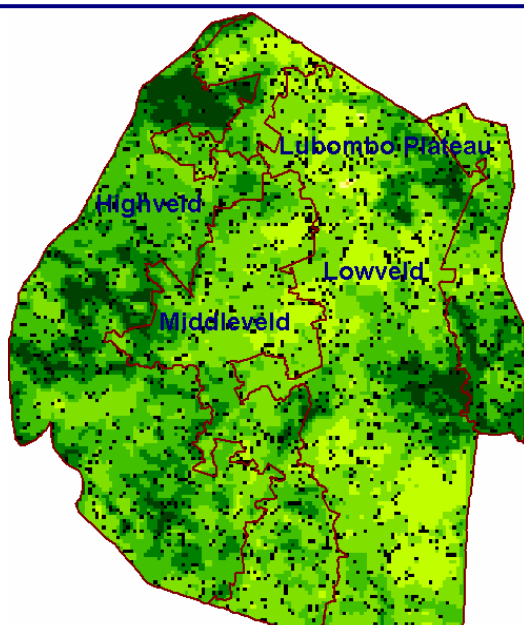


Image 1: Vegetation status during 11 - 20 November 2005

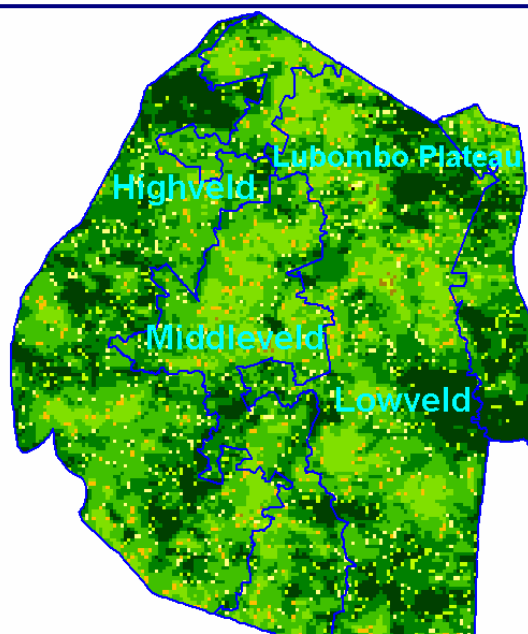


Image 2: Vegetation status during 21 - 30 November 2005

Legend

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

MOISTURE AND HEAT STATUS

Rainfall

Slightly below average rains were received in most parts of the country with only the southern parts of the country receiving better amounts of rainfall compared to the rest of the country (Image 3).

These rains did not improve the soil moisture profile significantly, but their distribution was a welcome breather for areas that have been receiving heavy falls that impeded land preparation.

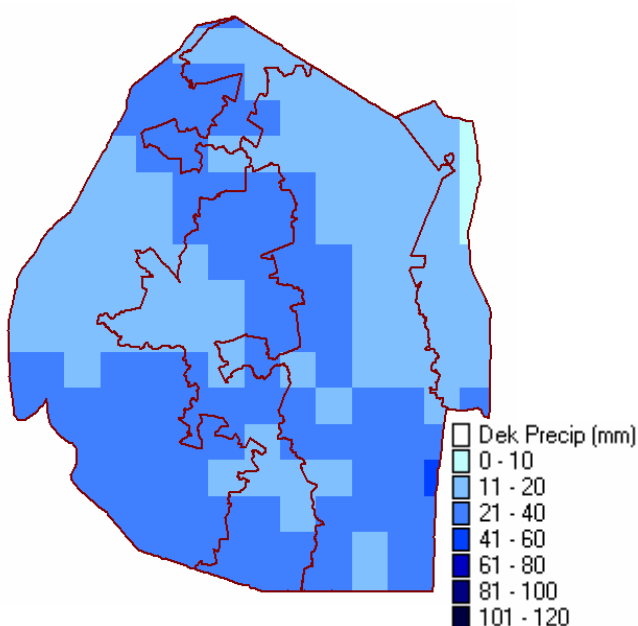


Image 3: Rainfall estimates for 21 - 30 November 2005

Temperature

Slightly warmer than average temperatures were recorded in some parts of the Lowveld and the rest of the country recording mild to warm temperatures (Table 2).

Table 1: Temperature analysis for 21 - 30 November 2005

Station	Element	3 rd dek November	Average	Depart
Mbabane	Max	24.3	26.77	-2.5
	Min	15.0	16.30	-1.4
Nhlangano	Max	26.4	27.00	-0.6
	Min	16.2	16.17	0.1
Matsapha	Max	25.3	27.80	-2.5
	Min	19.7	17.13	2.6
Malkerns	Max	26.0	27.07	-1.1
	Min	16.6	16.10	0.5
Siteki	Max	26.1	27.67	-1.6
	Min	17.8	17.87	-0.1
Bigbend	Max	30.6	28.23	2.3
	Min	17.1	18.03	-1.0
Mhlume	Max	29.7	28.27	1.4
	Min	20.1	18.03	2.0

CROP STATUS

Maize Crop Stage and Condition

The already emerged crop is still at an early vegetative stage and in a good condition so far with some fields already requiring early weeding as weeds were seen competing with the maize crop.

A majority of the maize farmers are still busy with land preparation and planting in most parts of the country.

Other Crops

Cotton (Picture 1) crops were seen at vegetative stage during a field visit to Lavumisa in the Lowveld, where weeding had already begun in earnest. Some fields were found to have intercropped maize with pumpkins and dry beans (Picture 2)

Current Farming Activity

Land preparation and planting are still the major farming activities in most parts of the country.

VEGETATION AND LIVESTOCK

Vegetation continues to improve countrywide with most parts now having a good and healthy vegetative cover (Image 1 and 2), save for a few parts that have their vegetation still at initial stages.

Livestock such as cattle that suffered during the dry period when fodder was limited are also improving though some are getting sick due to the rain and heat related diseases while some are overwhelmed by the sudden abundant fodder availability.

Outlook for 02 – 17 December 2005

Rainfall

Much-below-normal rains are expected for the first half of the forecast period improving towards the end.

Temperature

Averagely-warmer temperatures are also expected during the outlook period.

Soil Moisture

A significant decline in soil moisture is forecasted for this outlook period.



Picture 1: Cotton fields at Lavumisa in the Lowveld



Picture 2: Intercropped field in the Lowveld

Vote of thanks to our:

CONTRIBUTORS, PARTNERS AND SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Please Note: *This bulletin is issued in support of the efforts by the National 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).