

AGROMETEOROLOGICAL UPDATE



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HIGHLIGHTS

- **Reduced rainfall received in some parts...**
- **Less improvement in vegetation....**
- **Very few farming activity observed....**
- **Maize in a good state in most parts with good harvest prospects**
- **Increased rainfall forecasted.....**
- **Mild to warm temperatures anticipated.....**
- **Improvement in soil moisture expected.....**

RAINFALL SYNOPSIS AND PROGNOSIS

➤ SYNOPSIS - PAST TEN DAYS

The strength of tropical systems over Democratic Republic of Congo pulled most of the moisture towards it, thus rendering our area in the region drier, thus the reduced rainfall during the reporting period.

➤ PROGNOSIS - NEXT TEN DAYS

An increase in rainfall episodes is expected in the coming dekad due to an expected increase in advection from the Indian Ocean due to a tropical depression.

RAINFALL AND TEMPERATURES

RAINFALL

Below average rainfall was received in most parts of the country (**Figure 1**). These rains were similar to that of the 2015/16 season during the same period.

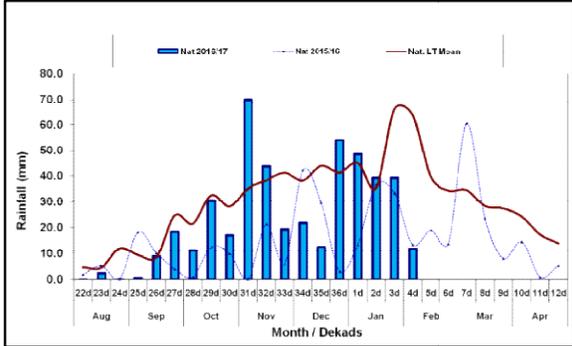
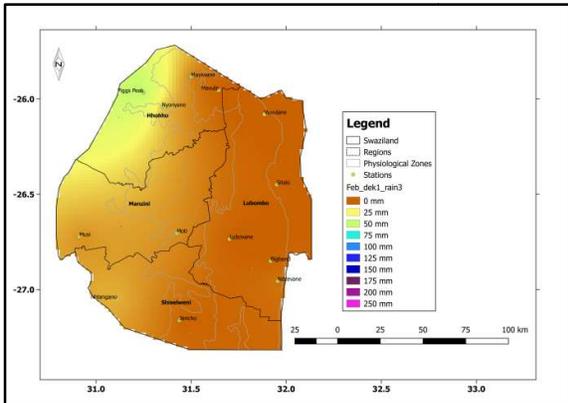


Figure 1: Rainfall distribution as first dekad of February 2017



Map 2: Spatial rainfall distribution for first dekad February 2017

Much reduced rainfall was received in most parts of the Lubombo, Shiselweni and Manzini regions, while some parts of Hhohho region (**Map 1**) had some slightly wet episodes.

The four agro-ecological zones all received below average rainfall as it can be seen on the table below (**Table 1**).

Table 1: Rainfall (mm) for 1st dekad February 2017

	HV	MV	LV	LP
2015/16	18	10	3	23
Average	84	60	48	63
2016/17	24	20	3	0
Anomaly	-59	-40	-45	-63

TEMPERATURES

Temperatures were warmer than the longterm average by about 1.5oC to 3oC in Malkerns and Bigbend respectively (**Figure 2**).

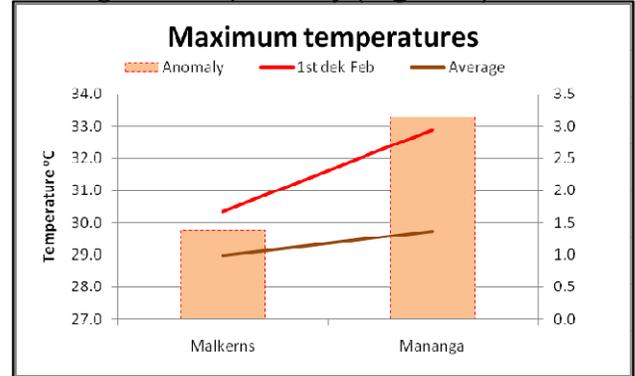


Figure 2: Maximum temperature as first dekad of February 2017

Stations in the Middleveld and Lowveld recorded warmer average minimum temperatures while the Highveld and Lubombo Plateau recorded below average minimum temperatures (**Figure 3**).

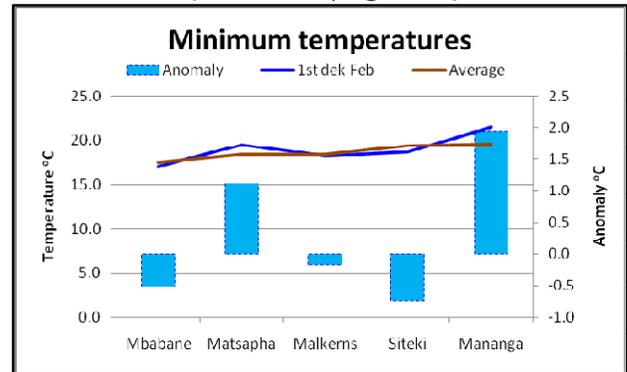


Figure 3: Minimum temperature as first dekad of February 2017

MAIZE AND OTHER CROPS

MAIZE CROP STAGE AND CONDITION

Early planted maize is now at maturity stage (Picture 1) and already in the drying stage. The condition of the crop is good in all ecological zones except in the Lowveld.



Picture 1: Mature maize in Nkomanzi area

OTHER CROPS

Legumes observed to be in good condition.

CURRENT FARMING ACTIVITY

Some very few farmers are busy planting legumes such as dry beans.

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES

There were no major livestock diseases reported during the reporting period and grazing areas are all in good condition irrespective of the December 2016 dry spells.

CROP WATER STRESS

Maize water requirement satisfaction index (WRSI) ranges from an index of 40 in the south east of the country to 100 in the north western parts of the country. The areas with a less than 50 index value

which normally translates to a poor yield prospects are mostly in the Lowveld.

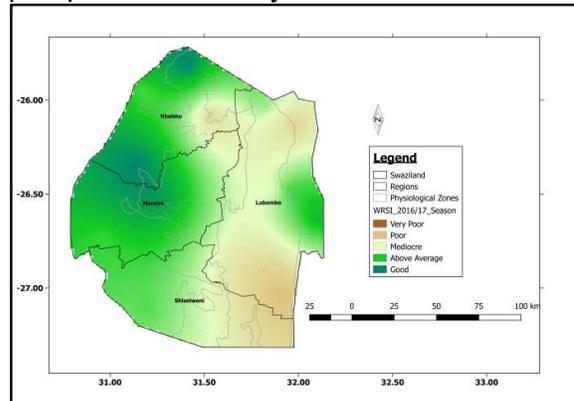


Figure 3: Water Requirement Satisfaction Index as of February 2017

MEDIUM-TERM OUTLOOK

RAINFALL

An increase in rainfall of up to 100mm in some areas forecasted for the early part of the outlook period.

TEMPERATURE

Mild to warm temperatures anticipated in the outlook period.

SOIL MOISTURE

An improvement in soil moisture expected.

WIND SPEED

Strong winds of up to 70km/hr forecasted at the start of the outlook period and becoming light towards the end.

Legend

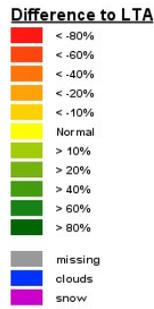
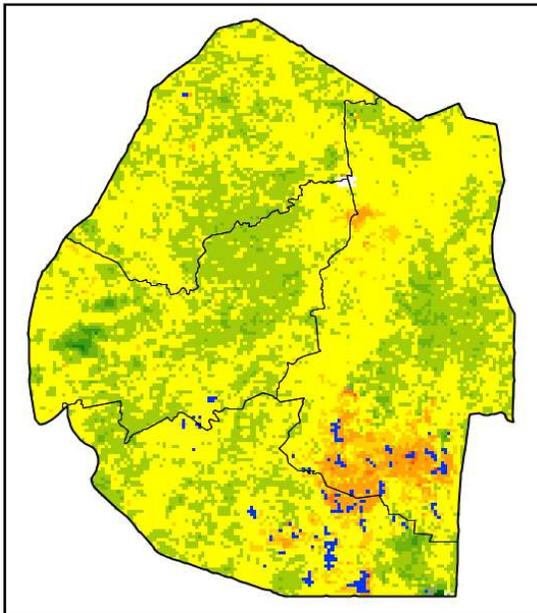


Image 1: Vegetation Health Index image (2nd Dekad February 2017) *Source: FAO-GIEWS*

Legend

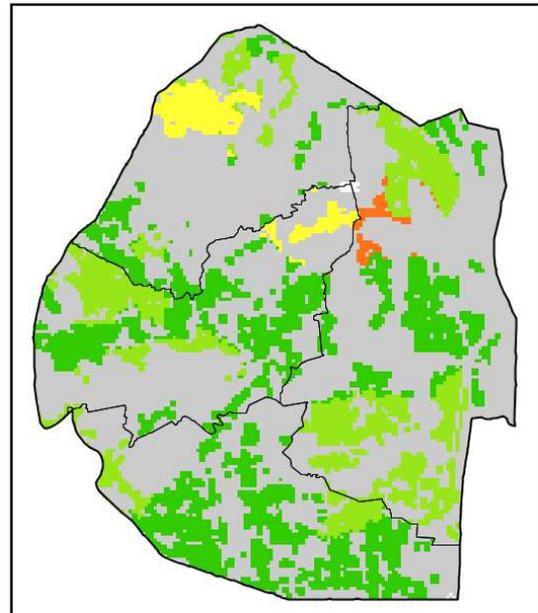


Image 2: Agriculture Stress Index image (2nd Dekad February 2017) *Source: FAO-GIEWS*