

AGROMETEOROLOGICAL UPDATE



REPORTING PERIOD:
21 – 31 MARCH 2017

ISSUE No.: 18

SEASON: 2016/17

RELEASED: 04/04/2017

CONTENTS

HIGHLIGHTS	1
CONTENTS.....	1
RAINFALL SYNOPSIS AND PROGNOSIS ...	1
RAINFALL AND TEMPERATURES	2
RAINFALL.....	2
TEMPERATURES	2
MAIZE AND OTHER CROPS	2
MAIZE CROP STAGE AND CONDITION .	2
OTHER CROPS	3
CURRENT FARMING ACTIVITY	3
LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES	3
WATER SITUATION	3
MEDIUM-TERM OUTLOOK	3
RAINFALL.....	3
TEMPERATURE.....	3
SOIL MOISTURE	3
WIND SPEED.....	3

HIGHLIGHTS

- Slight rainfall received in most parts...
- Slight improvement in vegetation....
- Harvesting activities observed....
- Insignificant rainfall forecasted.....
- Warm to hot temperatures anticipated.....
- Slight decrease in soil moisture expected.....

RAINFALL SYNOPSIS AND PROGNOSIS

➤ SYNOPSIS - PAST TEN DAYS

The upper level divergence that was coupled with low-level frontal systems resulted in improved rainfall over most parts of the country during the reporting period.

➤ PROGNOSIS - NEXT TEN DAYS

The coming dekad will be dominated by weak upper level subsidence due to the positioning of the convergence systems over the country combined with weak moisture pumping systems at low levels. This will result in rainfall subsiding during the next dekad.

RAINFALL AND TEMPERATURES

RAINFALL

Slight improvement in rainfall received during the dekad, however it was below the longterm average (**Figure 1**).

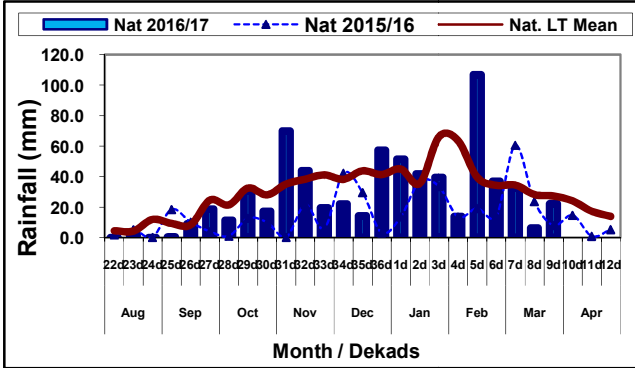
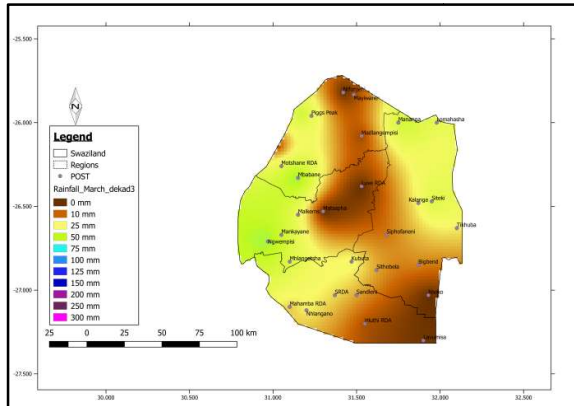


Figure 1: Rainfall distribution as third dekad of March 2017



Map 1: Spatial rainfall distribution for third dekad March 2017

Only stations in the Lubombo plateau and the Highveld recorded significant rainfall, otherwise most of the Lowveld and Middleveld stations recorded low rainfall amounts.

Lubombo Plateau is the only agro-zone that observed above average rainfall (**Table 1**).

Table 1: Rainfall (mm) for 3rd dekad March 2017

	HV	MV	LV	LP
2015/16	7	8	3	13
Average	36	28	22	24
2016/17	29	11	18	30
Anomaly	-6	-17	-4	6

TEMPERATURES

Cool to warm temperatures were experienced in most parts the country during the dekad (**Figure 2 and 3**).

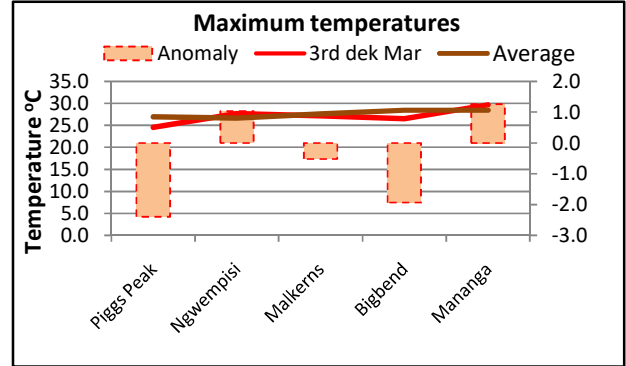


Figure 2: Maximum temperature as third dekad of March 2017

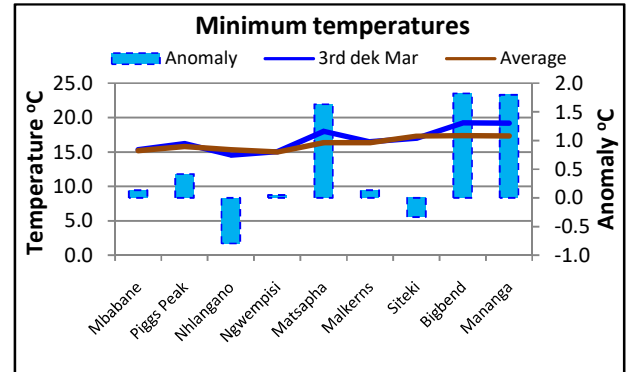


Figure 3: Minimum temperature as third dekad of March 2017

MAIZE AND OTHER CROPS

MAIZE CROP STAGE AND CONDITION

Maize is ready for harvesting (**Picture 1**) and late-planted crops are at maturity stage and a few at vegetative stage.



Picture 1: Maize ready for harvesting at Tikhuba

OTHER CROPS

Other crops such as beans, sweet potatoes are observed to be at vegetative to reproduction stage (Picture 2) and in good condition.



Picture 2: Beans at flowering stage at Mahlangatsha

CURRENT FARMING ACTIVITY

Farmers busy with early harvesting activities.

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES

Vegetation continues to improve except for an area in South-East part of the country that seems to be deteriorating (Image 1). Livestock reported to be doing

well in most areas.

WATER SITUATION

Water situation seems stable, levels in major dams continue to be adequate, and good flows observed in most rivers (Picture 3).



Picture 3: Hawane Dam levels at 100%

MEDIUM-TERM OUTLOOK

RAINFALL

Insignificant rainfall forecasted in the next dekad.

TEMPERATURE

Warm to hot temperatures expected in the next dekad.

SOIL MOISTURE

No improvement in soil moisture anticipated due to insignificant rainfall.

WIND SPEED

Winds will be light to moderate breeze speeds.

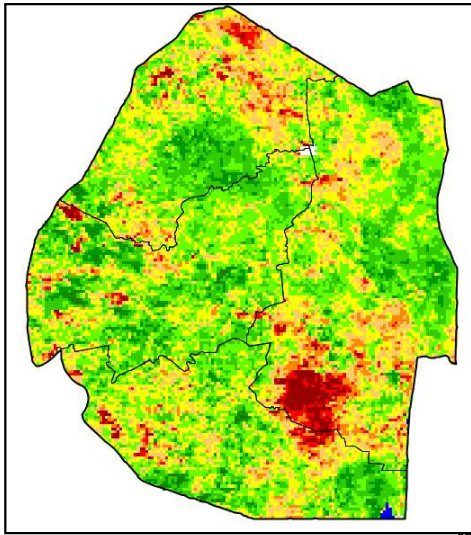


Image 1: Vegetation Health Index image (3rd Dekad March 2017) Source: FAO-GIEWS

Legend

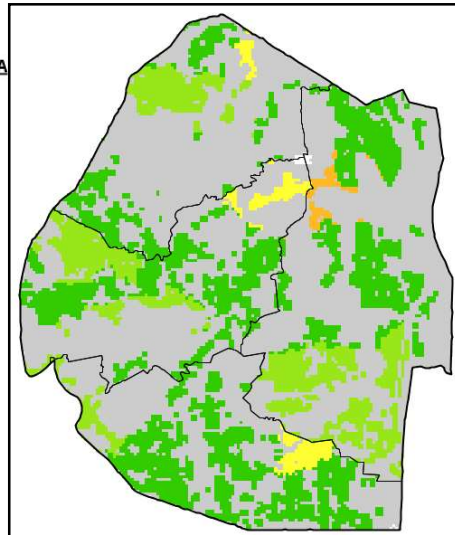
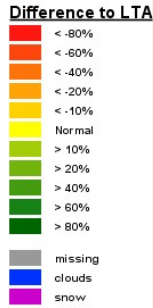


Image 2: Agriculture Stress Index image (3rd Dekad March 2017) Source: FAO-GIEWS

Legend

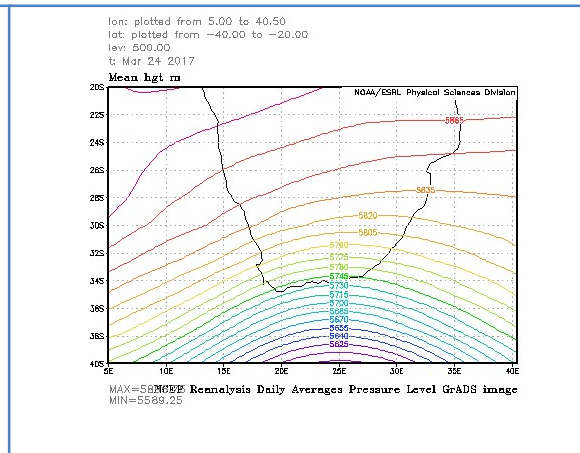
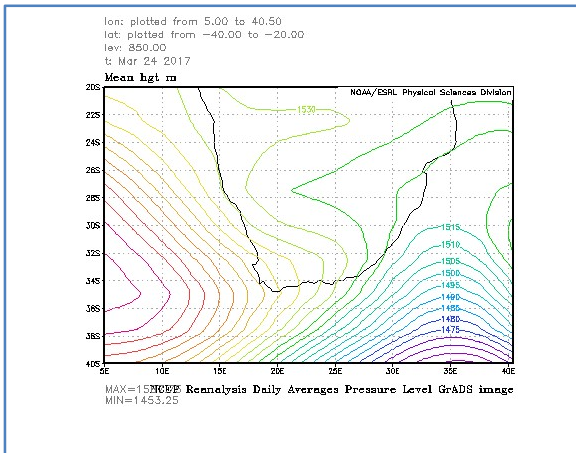
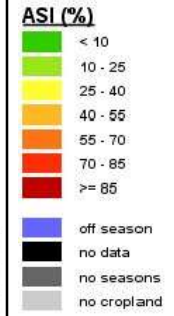


Figure 2: Low (left) and upper (right) levels daily summary pressure analysis for 24 March 2017