

# SWAZILAND



## AGROMETEOROLOGICAL UPDATE



REPORTING PERIOD:  
21 – 31 JANUARY 2006

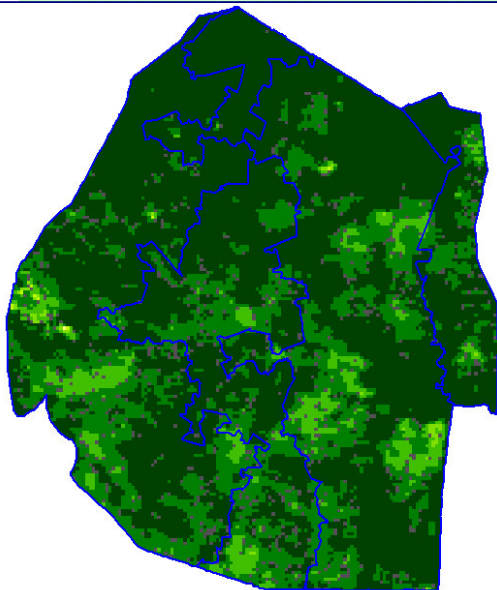
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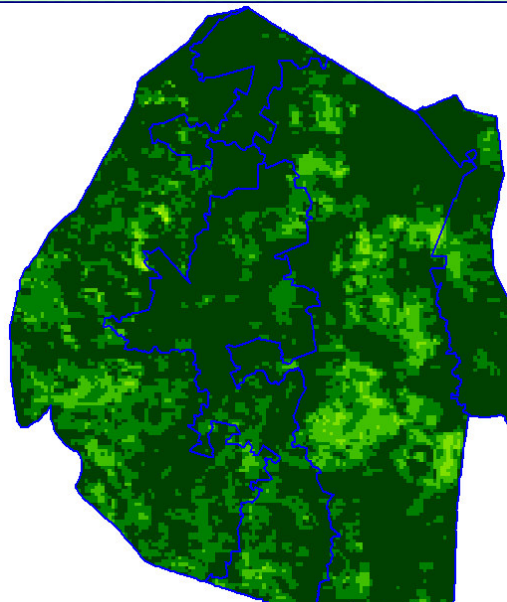
RELEASED: 03/02/2006

### HIGHLIGHTS

- More significant rains received
- Warmer temperatures experienced in most parts
- Vegetation status remains good in most parts
- Majority of the early planted maize crop is tasseling and cobing
- Below normal rains expected.....
- Warmer temperatures envisaged.....
- **A decline in soil moisture anticipated....**
- Weeding and application of fertilizers continues



**Image 1:** Vegetation status as of 2<sup>nd</sup> dekad Januarv 2006



**Image 2:** Vegetation status as of 3<sup>rd</sup> dekad Januarv 2006

### Legend

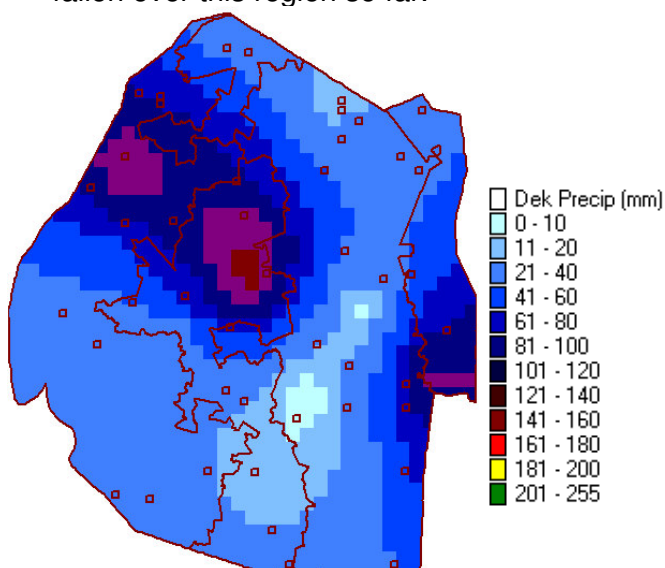
- ☐ Clouds
- ☐ Water Bodies
- ☐ Bare Soil
- ☐ Almost Bare Soil
- ☐ Initial Vegetation
- ☐ Mode Vegetation
- ☐ Good Vegetation
- ☐ Healthy Vegetation
- ☐ Plantations

## MOISTURE AND HEAT STATUS

### Rainfall

More significant rains continued to be recorded in some parts of the country with an exception of the lower and central Lowveld. The Highveld, Middleveld and the Lubombo Plateau received good rains in some parts (Image 3).

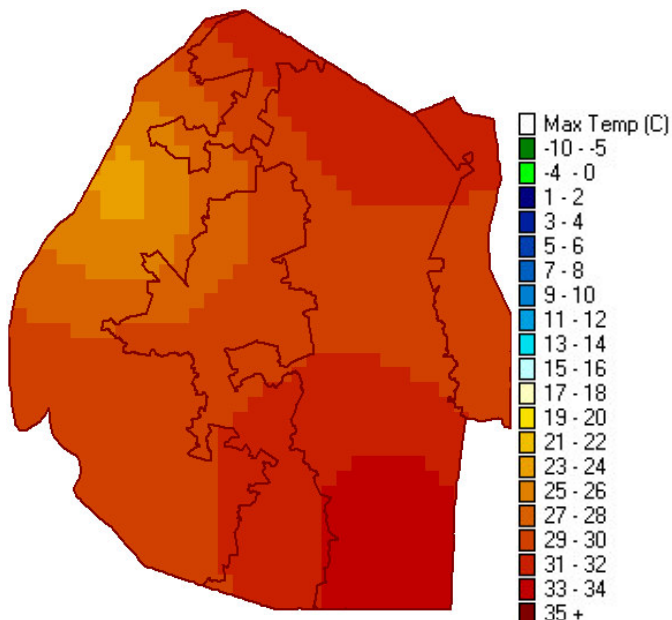
Water sources in the most critical areas such as the Lowveld have not increased their levels due to the intensity, frequency, duration and quantity of the rain that has fallen over this region so far.



**Image 3:** Actual observed rainfall for 11 - 20 January 2006

### Temperature

Warmer than normal temperatures were recorded in the Lowveld with the northwestern Highveld measuring mild temperatures (Image 4).



**Image 2:** Maximum temperatures for 21 - 31 January 2006

## CROP STATUS

### Maize Crop Stage and Condition

The early-planted crop is at tasseling (Picture 1) and cobing (Picture 2) stages, though the condition in the Lowveld is not impressive as the crop is stunted and not likely to produce any yield.

In most parts of the country the tasseling and cobing crops are in a very good state save for the rains to continue falling consistently. Traces of downy mildew were reported in the Lubombo Plateau.

### Other Crops

Sweet potatoe plants (Picture 3) were seen planted over half a maize field at Madlangempisi in the northern Lowveld and this crop is in a good state.

### Current Farming Activity

Weeding and application of top dresser fertilizers (Makhabeni) continued as a major activity.

## VEGETATION AND LIVESTOCK

The country's vegetation status continues to be good even during this dekad in most parts of the country (Image 1 and 2). This can be attributed to well-distributed and consistent rains that have been falling over the past two dekads.

Livestock is currently doing well as most pastures have improved and drinking water sources continue to increase their levels.

### Outlook for 04 – 14 January 2006

#### Rainfall

Below normal rains are expected during the first half of the forecast period improving in the second half of this period. This as a result of tropical cyclonic activities over the Mozambique channel which drags all moisture towards itself.

#### Temperature

Warm temperatures expected over most parts of the country getting warmer in lower Lowveld areas.

#### Soil Moisture

The will be a significant decline in soil moisture over most parts of the country during the outlook period.



**Picture 1: Tasseling maize in the northern Lowveld**



**Picture 2: Cobing maize in the Middleveld**



**Picture 3: Sweet potato plants at Madlangempsi in the northern 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).*