

SWAZILAND

AGROMETEOROLOGICAL UPDATE

REPORTING PERIOD:
01 – 10 APRIL 2006



ISSUE No.: 19

SEASON: 2005/06

RELEASED: 13/04/2006

HIGHLIGHTS

- Much reduced rains fell during the past ten-days...
- Warm-to-warmer temperatures were observed...
- Persistent rains keep the country's vegetation status good...
- Harvesting continues to be a major activity though a bit premature...
- Increase in rains anticipated.....
- Cold-to-Mild temperatures expected.....
- **Normal soil moisture levels forecasted....**
- Internal cob germination observed in harvested maize parts...

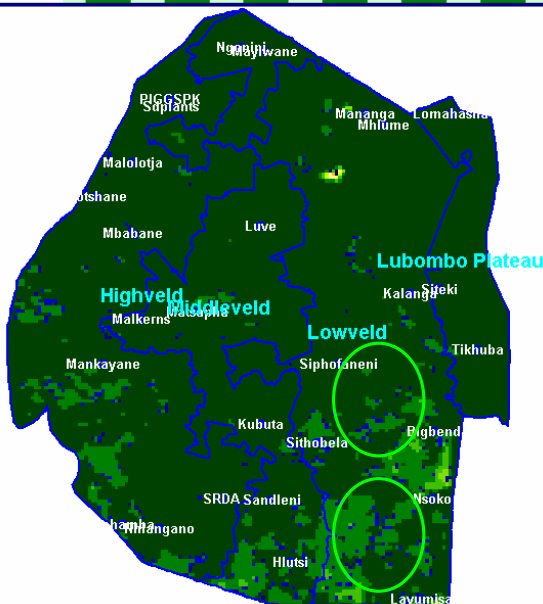


Image 1: Vegetation status as of 3rd dekad March 2006



Image 2: Vegetation status as of 1st dekad April 2006

Legend

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

Image Pixel Reso

1km by 1km

Compiled and Issued by:

Swaziland Meteorological Service, Ministry of Public Works and Transport.

Box 58, Mbabane, Swaziland. ☎ (+268) 404 8859 / 404 6274. Fax: 404 1530

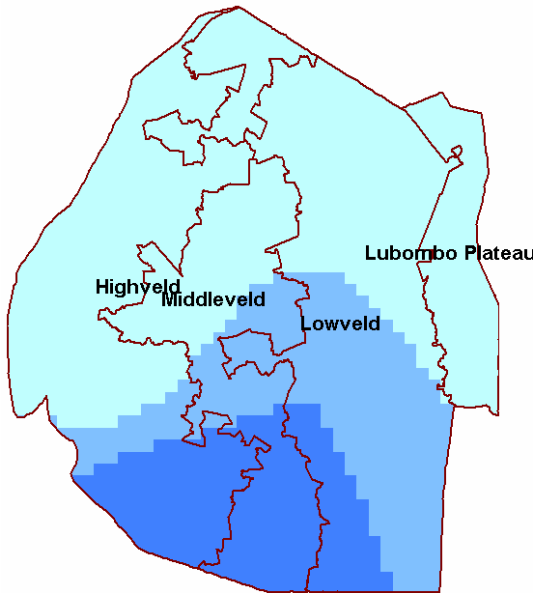
Director's email: ed_dlamini@swazimet.gov.sz

MOISTURE AND HEAT STATUS

Rainfall

Much reduced (**Table 1**) rains were recorded in most parts of the country during the reporting period with an exception of Southern parts where above average rains were recorded.

This reduction in rains came as a sigh of relief to farmers as they have been waiting for a dry period to start harvesting. The late planted vegetative crops also benefited during this break in rains.



Map 1: Dekadal rainfall distribution totals for 01 - 10 April 2006

Temperature

Warm temperatures were recorded in most parts of the country (**Table 2**) with the Lowveld weather stations recording warmer temperatures, followed by the Middleveld.

Table 2: Temperature data analysis for 01 - 10 April 2006

Station	Element	1 st dek April	Avg	Depart
Mbabane	Max	24.2	25.97	-1.8
	Min	14.0	14.00	0.0
Nhlangano	Max	25.2	26.07	-0.8
	Min	14.4	14.47	-0.1
Matsapha	Max	27.3	27.03	0.3
	Min	16.8	15.03	1.8
Malkerns	Max	26.6	25.90	0.7
	Min	15.4	14.00	1.4
Siteki	Max	25.9	27.20	-1.3
	Min	17.1	16.27	0.9
Mananga	Max	28.8	27.60	1.2
	Min	18.4	16.27	2.1

CROP STATUS

Maize Crop Stage and Condition

A majority of farmers have started harvesting their already mature and dry maize crops. The late planted but physiologically mature (**Picture 1**) maize crops were found to be in a good state.



Picture 1: Physiologically mature maize at Edilini in the Highveld

Internal cob germination was witnessed in some of the already harvested maize crops, where the bottom grains on the cob had germinated due to the persistent rains that have been falling in the past

dekads. Harvest losses as a result of this problem will not be huge if farmers will irrespective of the rains utilize dry days to harvest as much as they can.

Other Crops

Sorghum ears (**Picture 3**) were seen mature and some already dry and ready for harvest in some parts of the Middleveld. Hail damaged pumpkins were found to be rotting as a consequence of the damage (**Picture 2**)



Picture 2: Hail stone damaged pumpkins at Emphondvweni under Ntandozi Inkhundla

Current Farming Activity

A significant number of farmers were found busy with harvesting of their already maize crop.

MAIZE PRODUCTION FORECAST

Area planted to maize is still being finalized by CSO, after which the maize crop production for the season will be determined. With the persistent rains, there is a good chance for late planted maize crops to succeed.

VEGETATION AND LIVESTOCK

Vegetation continues to be good in most parts of the country as it can be seen on the satellite **images 1 and 2** above.

Livestock was found to be doing well in most parts and specifically in the middle Highveld, where pastures are in a very good state (**Picture 4**).



Picture 4: Cattle, Goats and Sheep grazing at Nsangwini in the Shiselweni region

Outlook for 14 – 25 April 2006

Rainfall

Normal-to-slightly above normal rains can be expected during the outlook period.

Temperature

Cold-to-mild temperatures are anticipated during the forecast period but warm in the Lowveld.

Soil Moisture

There is no significant change in soil moisture levels expected during the outlook period.



Picture 3: Mature and already dry sorghum ears at Eluzelweni

Compiled and Issued by:

Swaziland Meteorological Service, Ministry of Public Works and Transport.

Box 58, Mbabane, Swaziland. ☎ (+268) 404 8859 / 404 6274. Fax: 404 1530

Director's email: ed_dlamini@swazimet.gov.sz

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 which includes the National Early Warning Unit (NEWU) of Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, the National Meteorology Department and the Agricultural Statistics Unit of Central Statistics Office (CSO).