

# SWAZILAND



## AGROMETEOROLOGICAL UPDATE



REPORTING PERIOD:  
01 – 10 OCTOBER 2008

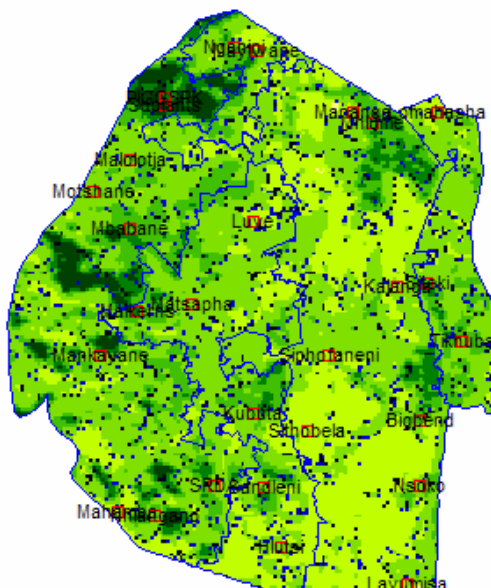
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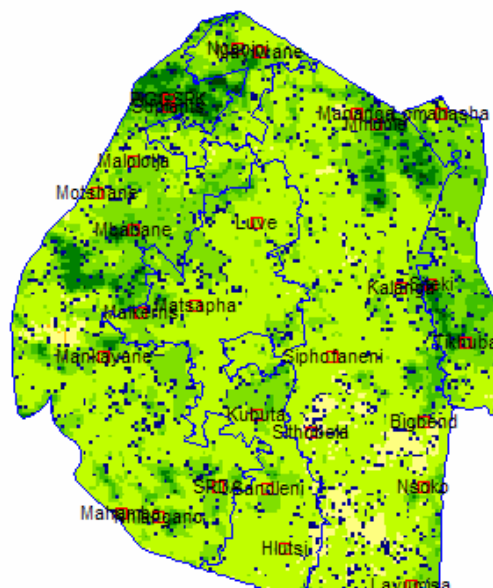
RELEASED: 15/10/2008

### HIGHLIGHTS

- No significant rains received so far...
- Vegetation images signal a no start to the season yet....
- Few farmers have started with land preparation...
- A small percent of the few farmers have dry planted...
- Some rains are expected over the coming dekad.....
- Warm temperatures are also expected.....
- A slight change in soil moisture expected....
- No major activities taking place at the moment.....



**Image 1:** Vegetation status as of 3<sup>rd</sup> dekad September 2008



**Image 2:** Vegetation status as of 1<sup>st</sup> dekad October 2008

### Legend

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

## MOISTURE AND HEAT STATUS

### Rainfall

Much reduced rains were received during the dekad as most weather systems are showing no significant trend towards a true start of the season.

This condition is similar to that of last season as reduced rains were received in the first ten days of October 2007.

**Table 1: Rainfall (mm) for 1<sup>st</sup> Dekad October 2008**

	2008-09	Average	Anomaly
Highveld	12.9	30.8	-17.9
Middleveld	2.0	30.6	-28.6
Lowveld	0.0	26.8	-26.8
Lubombo	4.8	37.7	-32.9

### Temperatures

Below average temperatures were observed in most stations in the country with the Highveld stations recording the lowest temperatures during the dekad.

**Table 2: Temperatures (°C) for 1st Dekad October 2008**

Station	Element	1 <sup>st</sup> dek October	Mean	Depart
Mbabane	Max	23.0	26.0	-3.0
	Min	12.5	14.0	-1.6
Piggs Peak	Max	26.5	26.6	0.0
	Min	10.8	14.5	-3.7
Nhlangano	Max	22.7	25.9	-3.2
	Min	12.9	14.0	-1.1
Siteki	Max	25.7	26.7	-1.0
	Min	14.0	15.6	-1.6
Bigbend	Max	30.8	27.0	3.8
	Min	14.7	15.7	-1.0

## CROP STATUS

### Maize Crop Stage and Condition

There are few farmers that have dry planted their fields while a majority of them are still awaiting the start of the rainfall season.

The prevalent increased input costs are expected to contribute to either a reduced area planted to maize or reduced yields due to a reduced use of commercial inputs such as fertilizer.

### Other Crops

No information has been obtained on other crops that might have been planted already together with maize.

### Current Farming Activity

Only a few farmers are dry ploughing and planting, otherwise a majority is awaiting a significant start of the rainfall season.

## VEGETATION AND LIVESTOCK

Vegetation images (Image 1 and 2) show a direct response of the vegetation to the dry winter season.

Grazing areas are in a poor state in the lower Lowveld (Image 2).

## Outlook for 15 – 25 October 2008

### Rainfall

Insignificant rains are expected in the next dekad over most parts of the country.

### Temperature

Warm temperatures are also anticipated due to the forecasted reduced cloud cover during most days of the outlook period.

### Soil Moisture

There is a slight change expected in soil moisture as insignificant rains are predicted for the outlook period.

## CONTRIBUTORS, PARTNERS AND SOURCES OF INFORMATION

**Please Note:** *This bulletin is issued in support of the efforts by the National Early Warning System (NEWS) for food Security 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).*