

SWAZILAND



AGROMETEOROLOGICAL UPDATE



REPORTING PERIOD:
21 – 31 OCTOBER 2008

ISSUE No.: 03

SEASON: 2008/09

RELEASED: 04/11/2008

HIGHLIGHTS

- Still no significant rains received...
- Continued improvement in vegetation for most areas....
- A slight increase in farmers planting maize ...
- Increased maize germination in already planted fields...
- Increased rainfall chances in the forecast period.....
- Mild temperatures anticipated.....
- **An improvement in soil moisture also expected....**
- Land preparation and planting continues in some parts.....

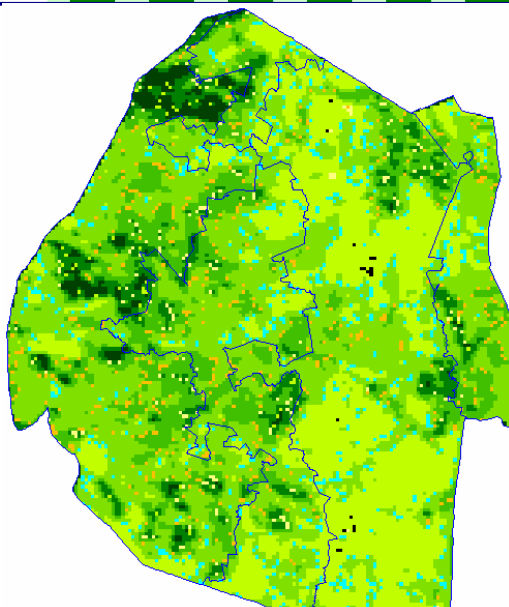


Image 1: Vegetation status as of 2nd dekad October 2008

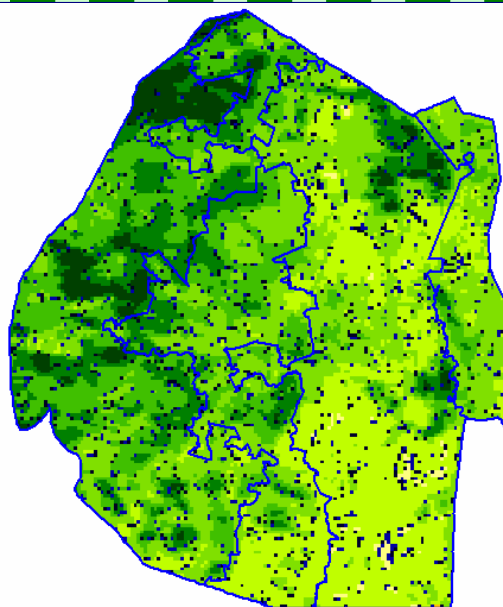


Image 2: Vegetation status as of 3rd dekad October 2008

Legend

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

MOISTURE AND HEAT STATUS

Rainfall

Slightly improved rains were received in the Highveld, otherwise the other regions continued to experience drier conditions.

These rains are still below the longterm average but similar to those of last season (see figure 1 below).

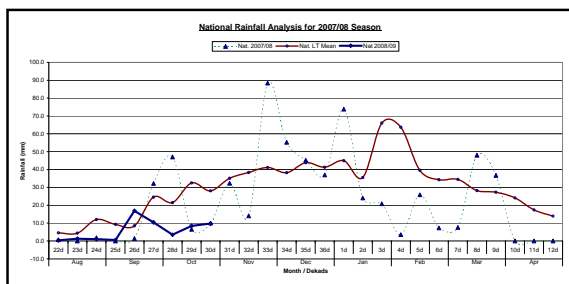


Figure 1: Seasonal rainfall distribution as of 3rd Dekad October 2008

Temperatures

Mild temperatures were observed over most parts of the country except for the Lowveld and the Middleveld where warmer temperatures were recorded (**Table 2 below**).

Table 1: Temperatures (°C) for 3rd Dekad October 2008

Station	Temp	3 rd dek October	Average	Depart
Mbabane	Max	23.3	25.9	-2.6
	Min	13.7	14.7	-1.0
Nhlangano	Max	24.6	26.0	-1.4
	Min	13.6	14.7	-1.1
Matsapha	Max		26.9	
	Min	16.1	15.7	0.4
Siteki	Max	28.0	26.5	1.5
	Min	15.5	16.4	-0.9
Bigbend	Max	31.0	27.1	3.9
	Min	18.3	16.5	1.8

CROP STATUS

Maize Crop Stage and Condition

A few of the early dry planted crops have germinated and are in a good state in some parts of the Highveld. Still a lot of farmers have not prepared their fields (**Picture 1**) in readiness for planting due to the poor rains so far.

Other Crops

It is believed that pumpkins were planted together with the already planted maize crops.

Current Farming Activity

Land preparation and planting is still not satisfactory as more farmers have not starting land preparation let alone planting.

VEGETATION AND LIVESTOCK

Vegetation is improving steadily, even though the rains received so far have not been significant, save for grass like vegetation types only. Pastures show a significant improvement though the southern Lowveld is still close to bare soil status.

Livestock is slightly improving, but in some parts of the southern Lowveld some cattle deaths have been reported due to lack of fodder and drinking water.

Outlook for 05 – 15 November 2008

Rainfall

More rains are expected to fall during the forecast period, especially in west southern parts of the country.

Temperature

Mild temperatures are expected over

most parts of the country during the forecast period.

Soil Moisture

A significant improvement in soil moisture is also expected.



Picture 1: un-ploughed fields at Siphocosini in the Highveld

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).

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