

SWAZILAND



AGROMETEOROLOGICAL UPDATE



REPORTING PERIOD:
01 – 10 FEBRUARY 2009

ISSUE No.: 13

SEASON: 2008/09

RELEASED: 15/02/2009

HIGHLIGHTS

- Above average rainfall recorded in most parts...
- More stations recorded below average temperatures....
- Vegetation images continue to show good vegetation in most parts....
- Maize crop mainly at flowering, grain filling and mature stages...
- Reduced rains expected
- Average-to-above-average temperatures expected.....
- **A slight decline in soil moisture levels....**
- Game and livestock is still doing well.....

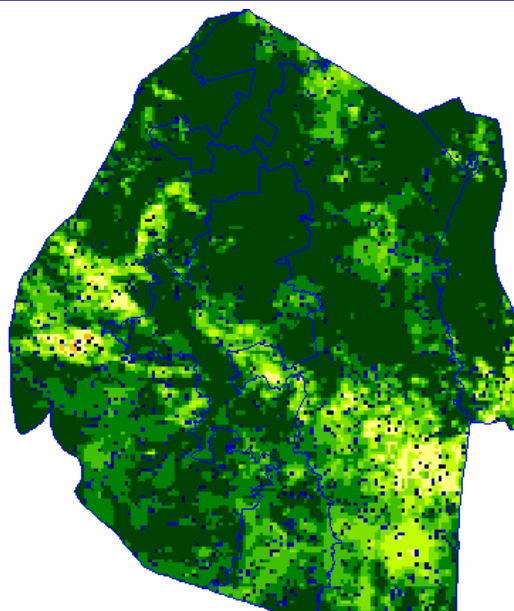


Image 1: Vegetation status as of 3rd dekad January 2009

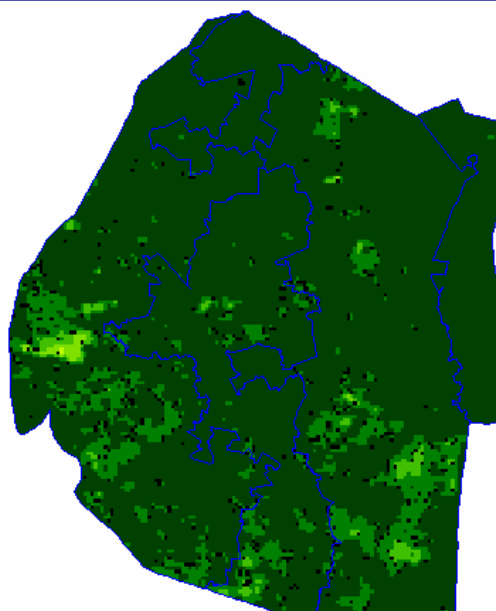


Image 2: Vegetation status as of 1st dekad February 2009

Legend

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

MOISTURE AND HEAT STATUS

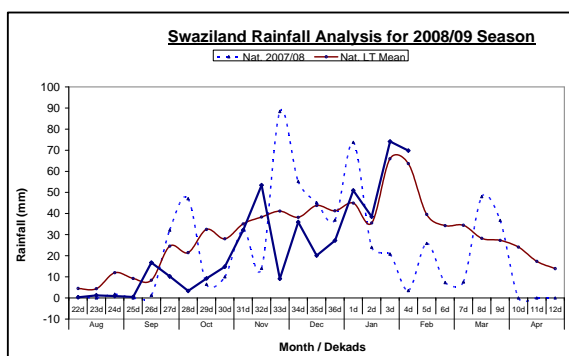
Rainfall

Rainfall received in the Highveld was slightly below average, whilst the other regions recorded above-average rainfall (**Table 1**). National rainfall distribution continues to be above average since the beginning of January 2009 (**Figure1**).

Table 1: Regional Rainfall averages (mm) for 01 - 10 February 2009

	HV	MV	LV	LP
2007/08	5	7	1	1
Average	84	60	48	63
2008/09	80	71	61	68
Anomaly	-4	11	12	5

Figure 1: Rainfall (mm) distribution as of 1st Dekad February 2009



Temperatures

Above average temperatures were recorded in the Lowveld areas while the Highveld, Middleveld and Lubombo plateau recorded below average temperatures (**Table 2**).

Table 2: Temperatures (°C) for 1st Dekad February 2009

Station	Temp	Observed	Mean	Anomaly
Mbabane	Max	24.2	27.7	-3.5
	Min	15.9	17.5	-1.6
Nhlangano	Max	25.2	28.3	-3.2

	Min	16.5	17.6	-1.1
Matsapha	Max	27.0	29.0	-2.0
	Min	19.0	18.4	0.7
Malkerns	Max	27.4	28.0	-0.6
	Min	18.3	17.3	1.1
Siteki	Max	26.8	29.4	-2.7
	Min	18.4	19.4	-1.0
Bigbend	Max	30.9	29.9	1.0
	Min	22.2	19.6	2.6
Mananga	Max	30.8	29.7	1.0
	Min	19.9	19.5	0.4

– stands for No Record due to lack of a maximum thermometer

CROP STATUS

Maize Crop Stage and Condition

The maize crop ranges from flowering filling-to- maturity in most parts of the country, though it can be noted that some of the maize crop is on vegetative stage in some parts of the country (Lowveld)

The condition of the maize crop appears to be in fair to good condition in most parts of the country.

Other Crops

With the rains picking up, crops have benefited, beans and cotton have been planted in the Lowveld, while sugarcane is doing well in the Lubombo plateau and Citrus fruits are also planted in some parts of the Highveld.

Current Farming Activity

Weeding was observed to be more prominent in the Lubombo region and Lowveld while the maize crop planted in the Middleveld and Highveld was observed to be at maturity stage.

VEGETATION AND LIVESTOCK

During this dekad there has been improvement in vegetation, in most parts of the country, yielding a positive pasture

due to the rains experienced recently.

Livestock and game is still in good conditions over most parts of the Lowveld, despite the prevalent moderate water scarcity.

Outlook for 16 – 25 February 2009

Rainfall

Moderate chances of significant rainfall can be expected in the first half of the forecast period especially over the western half diminishing towards the end of the forecast period.

Temperature

Above average temperatures can be expected in most parts of the country especially over the eastern half.

Soil Moisture

There will be a slight decline in soil moisture in the western half with a significant decline over the eastern half.

WATER SITUATION

Bulk water conditions have improved over most parts of the country especially in the Highveld due to the current above average rains that have been received so

in the year. The conditions have not significantly improved in the Lowveld due to the length of the dry conditions that prevailed prior to these current rains.



Picture 1: Grain filling maize crop at Lobamba in the Middleveld



Picture 2: Vegetation at a pasture in Mahlanya

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).