

AGROMETEOROLOGICAL BULLETIN

Doc No: TEA 3/3/7/2 F-004

Revision No: 1

Effective Date: 01.07.2017

Page No: 1 of 4

Approved by:

**REPORTING PERIOD:
21 – 28 MARCH 2018**



ISSUE No.: 15

SEASON: 2017/18

RELEASED: 05/03/2018

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HIGHLIGHTS

- **Much reduced rainfall received...**
- **Improvement in vegetation...**
- **Less farming activity observed....**
- **Below average rainfall forecasted...**
- **Warm to hot temperatures anticipated...**
- **Decrease in soil moisture expected.....**

RAINFALL SYNOPSIS AND PROGNOSIS

➤ SYNOPSIS - PAST TEN DAYS

Much below average rainfall received and below previous season (2016/17) in the third dekad of February in most parts of the country with temperatures varying from colder to hotter than normal in most parts of the country.

➤ PROGNOSIS - NEXT TEN DAYS

The passage of a frontal system coupled with upper level trough will result in light rain mainly on high grounds. Then an upper high will draw moisture from the tropics (Tropical air) into the country, resulting with rains especially on high grounds. This will be followed by a dominance of an upper high resulting with subsidence that will result in drier conditions.

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RAINFALL AND TEMPERATURES

RAINFALL

Much reduced rainfall was received during the reporting period (Figure 1). Only Piggs Peak observed a considerable amount, while the rest of the reporting stations observed less than 40mm with the South-Eastern part mostly dry (Map 1).

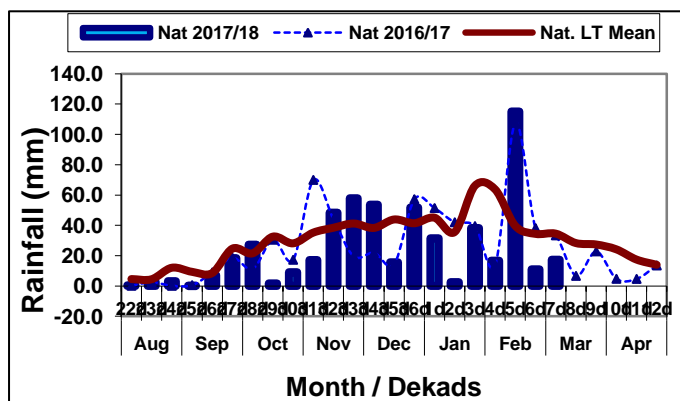
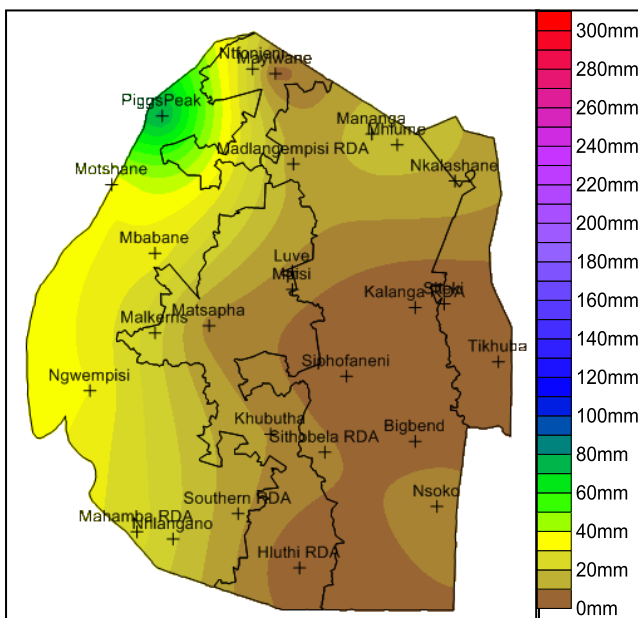


Figure 1: Rainfall distribution as 3rd dekad of February 2018



Map 1: Spatial rainfall distribution for 3rd dekad February 2018

All the Agro-ecological zones received much below long term average rainfall and that of previous season 2016/17 (Table 1).

Table 1: Rainfall (mm) for 3rd dekad February 2018

| | HV | MV | LV | LP |
|---------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 2016/17 | 53 | 31 | 27 | 42 |
| Average | 49 | 36 | 20 | 32 |
| 2017/18 | 33 | 3 | 7 | 0 |
| Anomaly | -16 | -33 | -13 | -32 |

TEMPERATURES

Temperatures were mostly warm, but hot in the Lowveld. Most reporting stations observed below average maximum temperatures while minimum temperatures ranged between average and slightly above average (Figure 2) and (Figure 3).

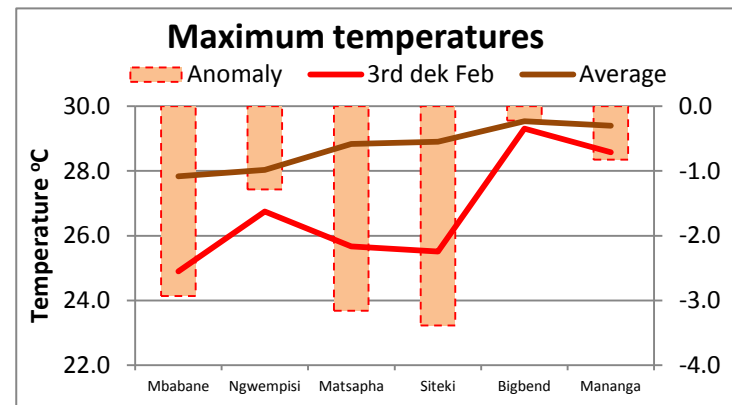


Figure 2: Maximum temperature as 3rd dekad of February 2018

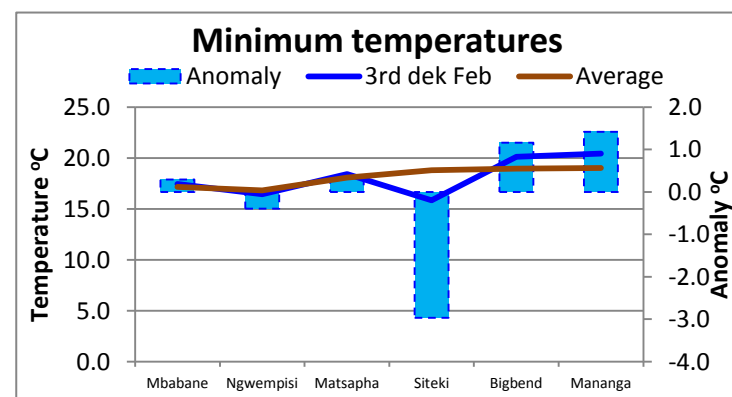


Figure 3: Minimum temperature as 3rd dekad of February 2018

MAIZE AND OTHER CROPS

MAIZE CROP STAGE AND CONDITION

Maize is mostly at vegetative and reproductive stages (**Picture 1**). The condition is good in most places, especially after the recent rains which not only revived the crops, but also aided in reducing the Fall Army Worm (FAW) attack.



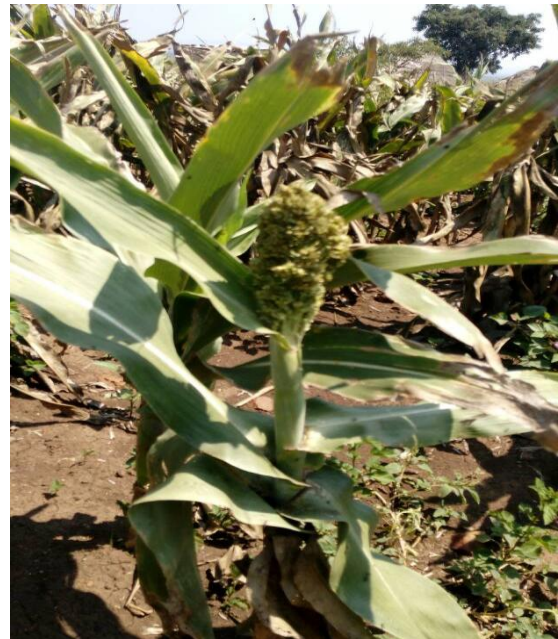
Picture 1: Maize growing at Mahlalini

OTHER CROPS

Other crops reported to be planted include; beans, sweet potato and groundnuts as well as cow peas and jugo beans in very small scales. Few farmers planted sorghum in the Lowveld (**Picture 2**).



Picture 2: Cowpeas growing at Matsanjeni



Picture 3: Sorghum growing at Ndzangu

CURRENT FARMING ACTIVITY

Most farmers are busy with pest control activities while some are planting legume crops.

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES

Livestock is reported to be in good condition as vegetation has improved in most parts (**Image 1**) and (**Image 2**).

WATER SITUATION

Most water sources were improved by the recent rains, including major reservoirs and rivers in the country.

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MEDIUM-TERM OUTLOOK

RAINFALL

Below average rainfall forecasted in the outlook period.

TEMPERATURE

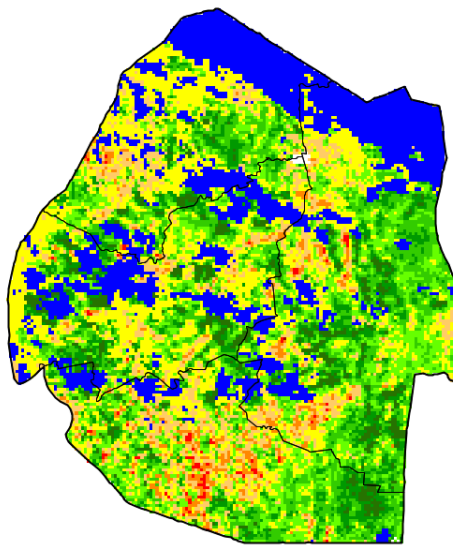
Warm to hot temperatures expected in the outlook period.

SOIL MOISTURE

Insignificant improvement in soil moisture is expected in the outlook period.

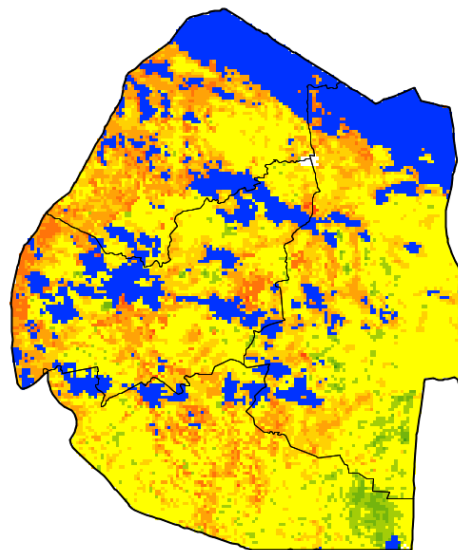
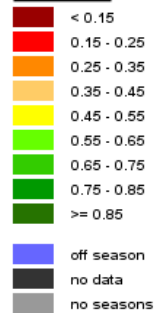
WIND SPEED

Wind will be mostly light breeze speed.



Legend

Mean VHI



Legend

Difference to LTA

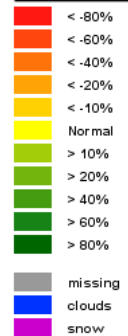


Image 1: Mean Vegetation Health Index image (3rd Dekad February 2018) *Source: FAO-GIEWS*

Image 2: Vegetation Anomaly image (3rd Dekad February 2018) *Source: FAO-GIEWS*