

SWAZILAND



AGROMETEOROLOGICAL UPDATE



REPORTING PERIOD:
11 – 20 JANUARY 2009

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SEASON: 2008/09

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HIGHLIGHTS

- Average rainfall recorded in most parts...
- Mostly below average temperatures recorded....
- Vegetation continues positive development....
- Maize crop tasseling and cobbing...
- More significant rains expected
- Below Average temperatures expected.....
- Above average soil moisture level expected....
- Livestock continues in a good state.....

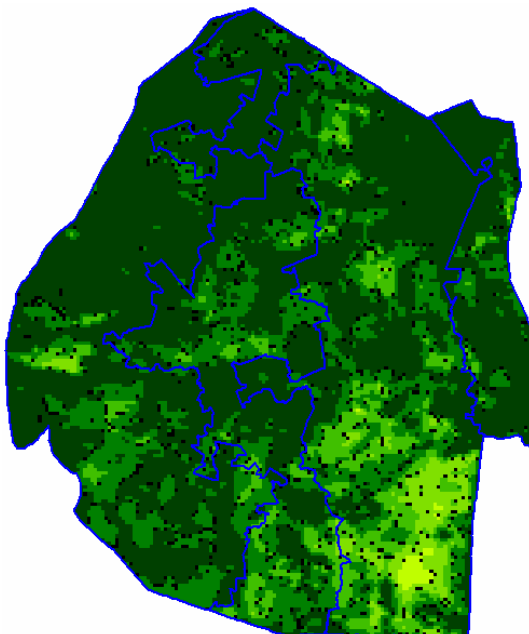


Image 1: Vegetation status as of 1st dekad January 2009

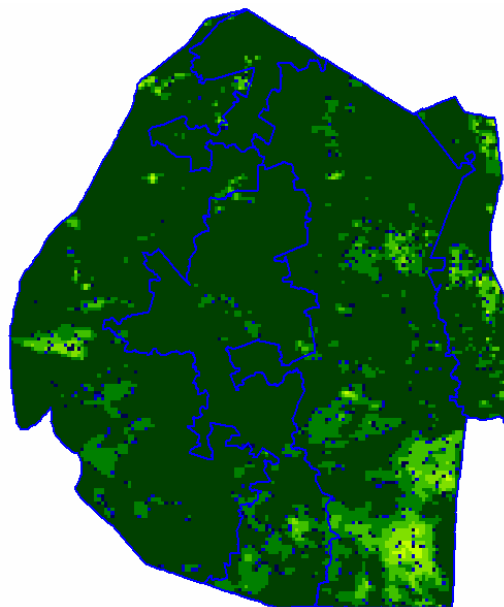


Image 2: Vegetation status as of 2nd dekad January 2009

Legend

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

MOISTURE AND HEAT STATUS

Rainfall

Most of the regions received about normal rainfall with the Highveld and Middleveld receiving slightly below average rains and the Lowveld and Lubombo Plateau receiving slightly above average rains (Table 1 & Figure 1 below).

Table 1: Regional Rainfall averages (mm) for 11 - 20 January 2009

	HV	MV	LV	LP
2007/08	37	31	16	13
Average	52	32	29	29
2008/09	49	23	36	33
Anomaly	-3	-9	7	4

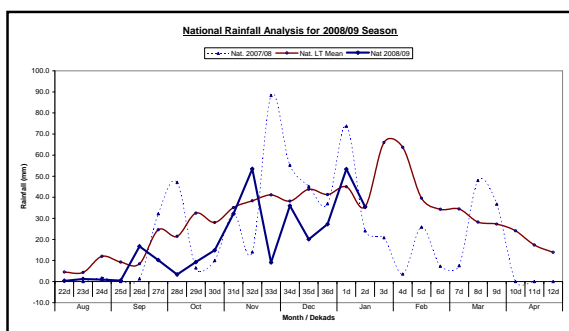


Figure 1: Rainfall (mm) distribution as of 2nd Dekad January 2009

Temperatures

Most stations in the country recorder much below average temperature except for the Lowveld where warmer than average temperatures were recorded (Table 2).

Table 2: Temperatures (°C) for 2nd Dekad January 2009

Station	Temp	2 nd dek Jan	Average	Anomaly
Mbabane	Max	23.4	28.47	-5.1
	Min	17.2	18.00	-0.8
Nhlangano	Max	24.4	28.63	-4.3
	Min	17.3	17.80	-0.5

Ngwempisi	Max	-	28.53	-
	Min	18.9	17.63	1.3
Matsapha	Max	28.7	29.63	-1.0
	Min	20.0	18.80	1.2
Bigbend	Max	30.3	30.30	0.0
	Min	21.7	19.93	1.8

CROP STATUS

Maize Crop Stage and Condition

The maize crop is now mostly flowering (tasseling) with a significant percentage of the crop cobbing (Picture 1) in the Lowveld and most parts of the other regions; Highveld, Middleveld and Lubombo Plateau. The condition of the crop is good save for a few crops in the Lowveld that are stressing due to the poor rains that were received in the past months of the season.

Other Crops

Very few other crops were being planted during the reporting period amongst which were beans.

Current Farming Activity

Cotton maintenance continued to be a major activity for most cotton farmers during the reporting period. Only a few farmers were found busy with land preparation (Picture 2) during the reporting period.

VEGETATION AND LIVESTOCK

Vegetation continues to show positive development as depicted by vegetation satellite images captured during the reporting period. There are now only a few areas in them lower Lowveld with patches of poor vegetation growth (Images 1 & 2)

Livestock continue to be a good state in

most parts of the country owing to the good vegetation conditions and bulk water availability (**Picture 3**)

Outlook for 26 January – 04 February 2009

Rainfall

There is an increased chance of significant rainfall over most parts of the country.

Temperature

Below average temperatures expected over most parts especially in the western part of the country.

Soil Moisture

Much improved soil moisture levels are expected to improve significantly in most parts of the country.

WATER SITUATION

With the continuous rains, bulk water levels in rivers and dams have improved significantly, though the situation has not yet normalized to satisfy water needs throughout the forthcoming dry winter season. A major concern with the flood waters (**Picture 3**) is their sanitation levels as they are dirty and unknown what type effluents they might contain thus unusable for domestic purposes.



Picture 1: Tasseling maize at Mpolonjeni in the Lowveld



Picture 2: A tractor returning from land preparation



Picture 3: Flooded great usuthu river water

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).