

SWAZILAND



AGROMETEOROLOGICAL UPDATE



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HIGHLIGHTS

- Improved rains fall in some parts of the country...
- **Vegetation continues to improve....**
- Maize crop germination witnessed in a few parts...
- Slightly improved rains expected.....
- Warm temperatures anticipated.....
- **An improvement in soil moisture is expected....**
- Some parts of the country have commenced with land preparation.....

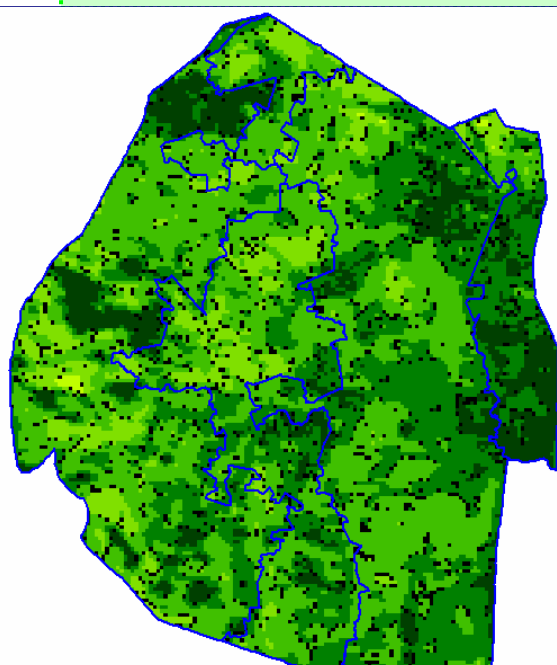


Image 1: Vegetation status as of 1st dekad October 2009

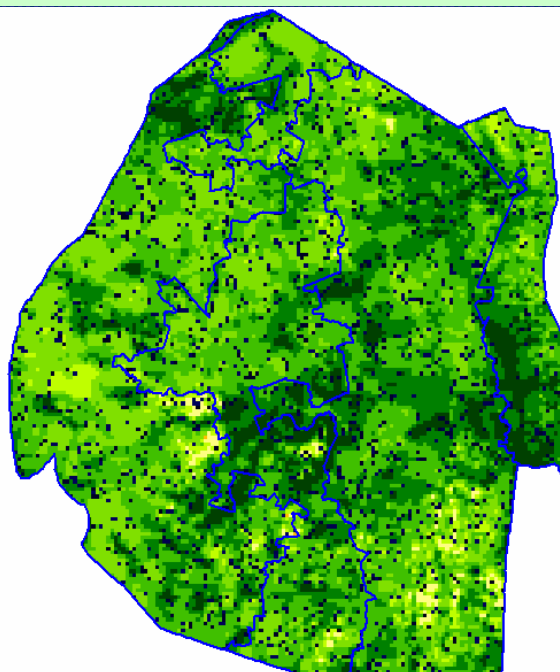


Image 2: Vegetation status as of 2nd dekad October 2009

Legend

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

MOISTURE AND HEAT STATUS

Rainfall

Above average rainfall continued to fall as predicted in the previous dekad's outlook for this dekad.

The Lowveld and the Lubombo Plateau were the only regions that recorded below average rainfall during the dekad (Table 1).

Table 1: Rainfall (mm) for 2nd Dekad October 2009

	HV	MV	LV	LP
2008/09	18	9	6	4
Average	42	36	24	28
2009/10	50	42	14	7
Anomaly	8	7	-10	-21

Temperatures

Milder temperatures continued to be recorded even during this dekad in most parts of the country except in the Lowveld where warmer temperatures were recorded (**Table 2 below**).

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

Station	Element	2 nd dek October	Mean	Depart
Mbabane	Max	22.1	25.4	-3.3
	Min	13.8	14.0	-0.3
Piggs Peak	Max	22.9	25.7	-2.8
	Min	14.7	14.6	0.1
Nhlangano	Max	22.2	25.5	-3.3
	Min	13.0	14.0	-1.0
Malkerns	Max	23.2	25.6	-2.4
	Min	15.4	13.8	1.7
Siteki	Max	24.0	26.3	-2.3
	Min	15.3	15.7	-0.5
Bigbend	Max	27.5	26.8	0.7
	Min	18.4	15.8	2.6

CROP STATUS

Maize Crop Stage and Condition

Not many farmers have planted maize especially in the Highveld and Middleveld; while the Lubombo Plateau and Lowveld have seen a few farmers take advantage of the recent rains received so far.

Most of those that planted in the previous dekad have most of their crop at germination stage.

Other Crops

Cassava was found in some areas especially in the Lowveld.

Current Farming Activity

A small number of farmers are busy with land preparation and planting (Picture 1), especially maize.

VEGETATION AND LIVESTOCK

Vegetation satellite images continue to show a significant vegetation development due to the winter rains received earlier prior to the rainfall season.

Due to the healthy vegetation status in most parts of the country, livestock is also in a good state, save for a few in the Lowveld.

Outlook for 24 October – 05 November 2009

Rainfall

Slightly above average rainfall is expected to be received in most parts of the country.

Temperature

Warm to hot temperatures can be expected over the forecast period.

Soil Moisture

A slight improvement in soil moisture is also expected.



Picture 1: A tractor ploughing a farmer's fields at Luve in the Middleveld

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).