

AGROMETEOROLOGICAL UPDATE



REPORTING PERIOD:
01 – 10 NOVEMBER 2016

ISSUE No.: 04

SEASON: 2016/17

RELEASED: 17/11/2016

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HIGHLIGHTS

- **Much improved rains fell in most parts...**
- **An improvement in vegetation evident....**
- **An increase in ploughing observed....**
- **Continued improvement in rainfall anticipated.....**
- **Warmer than average temperatures expected.....**
- **Slight improvement in soil moisture expected.....**

RAINFALL SYNOPSIS AND PROGNOSIS

➤ SYNOPSIS - PAST TEN DAYS

Much above average rainfall was recorded in most stations across the country, these was attributed to the coordination of the surface frontal systems with upper trough coupled with positioning of the meridional arm from the inter-tropical convergence zone (ITCZ).

➤ PROGNOSIS - NEXT TEN DAYS

The current systems are expected to continue dominating over our region with rainfall expected on the 19th November 2016 in most parts of the country with the next significant rains falling on the weekend of 25th to 27th November 2016.

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RAINFALL AND TEMPERATURES

RAINFALL

Much above average rainfall was received during the reporting period as shown in the figure below. Most of these rains fell over the west-central parts of the country.

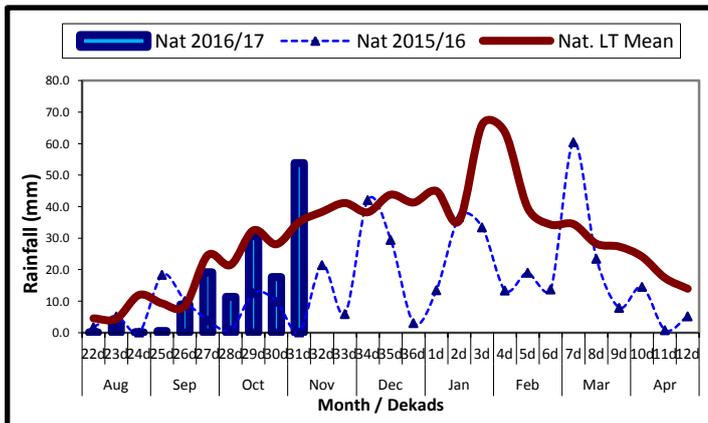
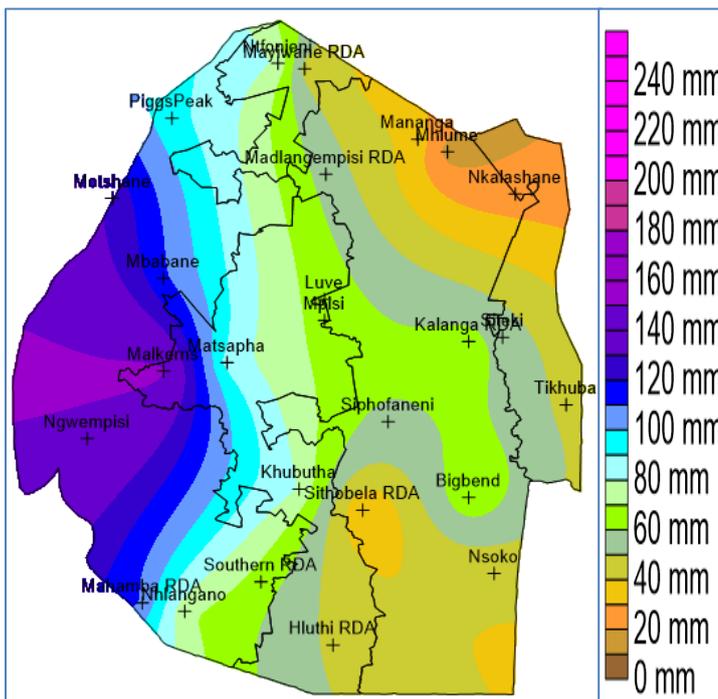


Figure 1: Rainfall distribution as first dekad of November 2016



Map 2: Spatial rainfall distribution for first dekad November 2016

The region distribution of the rainfall

shows (Table 1) that all the agro-ecological regions received much above the longterm average and that of last season (2015/16 season).

Table 1: Rainfall (mm) for 1st dekad November 2016

	HV	MV	LV	LP
2015/16	0	0	0	0
Average	49	35	24	32
2016/17	85	73	41	47
Anomaly	35	37	17	15

TEMPERATURES

Maximum temperatures were warmer than average in most stations except for Piggs Peak where below average temperatures were observed (figure 3).

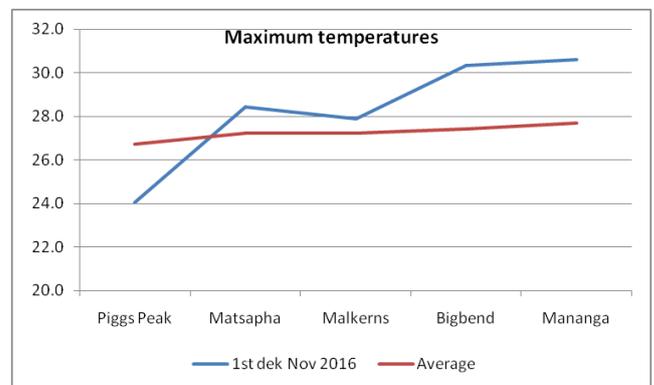


Figure 3: Maximum Temperatures (°C) for 1st Dekad November 2016

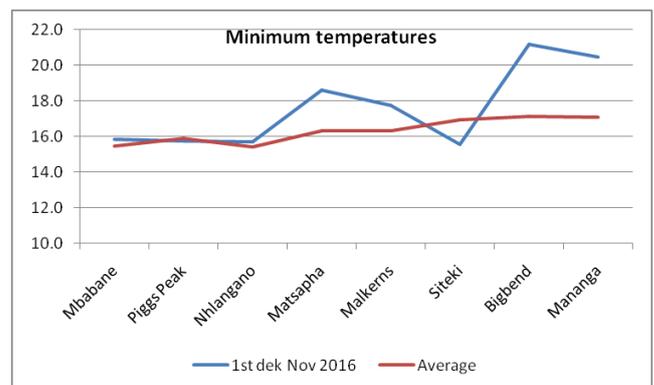


Figure 4: Minimum Temperatures (°C) for 1st Dekad November 2016

Slightly warmer than usual minimum temperatures were observed in most stations,

save for Siteki where below average temperatures were recorded.

MAIZE AND OTHER CROPS

MAIZE CROP STAGE AND CONDITION

Even most farmers are still busy with land preparation in order to commence with planting, some fields were found to have maize at emergence stage while others were at early vegetative stages especially in some parts of the Lowveld (Picture 1).

The condition of the crop is good in most parts.



Picture 1: Maize at early vegetative stage at Sithobela

OTHER CROPS

No other crops observed to have been planted

CURRENT FARMING ACTIVITY

Farmers are currently busy with land preparation and planting in most parts of the country (Picture 2).

Table 2: RDA tractor hours and service

	Ngwemp hisi RDA	Mahlang atsha RDA	Ludzelu dze RDA	Luve RDA
Total tractor hours registered	3209.5	2510	6593	2791
Tractor hours serviced	79.5	1126	1172.2	324.6
Number of Government serviceable tractors	13	10	17	12
Number of private tractors	7	4	19	6

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES

Most cattle show signs of recovery with most grazing areas recovering in response to the consistent rains that have fallen in the past few dekads. Vegetation (Image 1 and 2) has not yet fully recovered, but there a huge promise with the increased rainfall amounts as the season progresses.

WATER (BULK) AVAILABILITY

The water situation is steadily improving in most rivers (Picture 3) and major reservoirs, but not yet recovered from the magnitude of the drought effects. Hawane dam is reported to have increased to a capacity of 15%, thus bringing relief to the Mbabane Urban water needs as the rationing programme has since been suspended.

MEDIUM-TERM OUTLOOK

RAINFALL

The current trend in rainfall events is expected to continue with most weekends expected to receive significant amounts of rainfall, while the other days of the week will be relatively dry.

TEMPERATURE

Warmer than average temperatures are expected in the eastern parts of the country, with mild temperature over the western half.

SOIL MOISTURE

Improved moisture is expected over western parts of the country, the eastern parts with remain normal.

WIND SPEED

Wind speeds will be moderate to gentle breeze of 6 m/s during the outlook period.



Picture 2: Ploughed and planted fields at Luve



Picture 3: Improving water flow at mhlathuze river

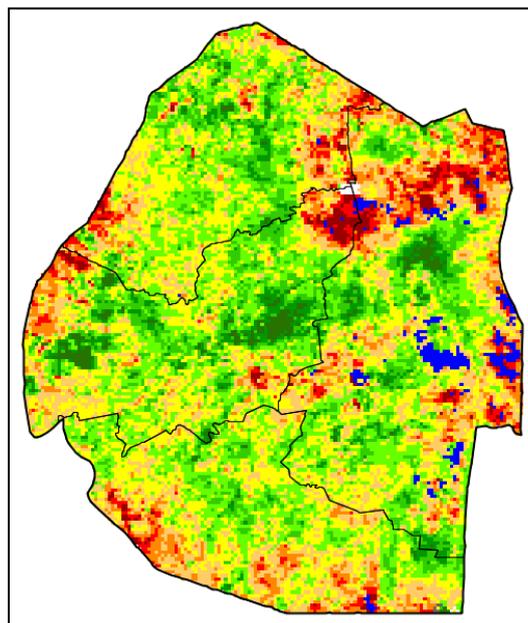


Image 1: Vegetation Condition Index image (1st Dekad November 2016) Source: FAO-GIEWS

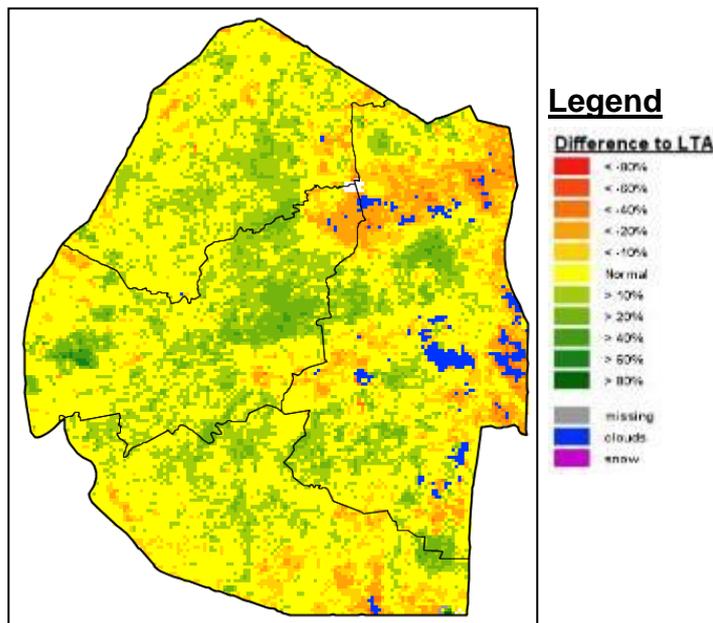


Image 2: Vegetation anomaly image (1st Dekad November 2016) Source: FAO-GIEWS

CONTRIBUTORS, PARTNERS AND SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Please Note: This bulletin is issued in support of the efforts by the National Early Warning Office (NEWU) for food Security in the Ministry of Agriculture to provide Swaziland's current agronomic and meteorological developments to users, stakeholders, government authorities and international organizations during the farming season.

The NEWS is currently made-up of a core team of the National Early Warning Unit (NEWU) of Ministry of Agriculture, the Agromet Unit of the National Meteorology Department and the Agricultural Statistics Unit of Central Statistics Office (CSO).