



SDI Review Form 1.6

Journal Name:	American Journal of Experimental Agriculture
Manuscript Number:	2013_AJEA_8309
Title of the Manuscript:	Biomass Production in the Short Rains and Its Influence on Crops in the Long Rains: A Systems Approach in Organic Farming
Type of the Article	Original Research Article

General guideline for Peer Review process:

This journal's peer review policy states that **NO** manuscript should be rejected only on the basis of '**lack of Novelty**', provided the manuscript is scientifically robust and technically sound.

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PART 1: Review Comments

	Reviewer's comment	Author's comment (if agreed with reviewer, correct the manuscript and highlight that part in the manuscript. It is mandatory that authors should write his/her feedback here)
Compulsory REVISION comments	Line 9: Production of legumes for purposes of obtaining biomass is often restricted to seasons ~~than~~ that are ---- While the author gave rainfall range for short rains in the abstract section, the author was silent on long rains. This should be reflected. Line 47: Insert reference at the end of the statement Line 51: Insert reference after the statement that ends with 'brought from outside the farm' Generally, the author will need to give the reader better view of short and long rains as these terms used do not quite give clear picture to readers who are not familiar with the study environment. Are these common phenomena to attract the study of their effects? Why not consider using major or minor rain fall or some more clear terms? What make one short and the other long? Source of climatic data in methodology should be given. The section titled: Experimental design, treatments and agronomic practices, should follow the arrangement of the title, beginning with treatment, experimental design and agronomic practices. Treatment and experimental design should be clearly spelt out, they are currently vague. Methodology is not too clear, for example: Line 121: That Maize took 7-8 months while potatoes took 4-5 months to mature under Egerton conditions is not clear. What defines your maturity, physiological? How was lab lab in line 122 re-introduce, between maize stands or between two rows? Your procedures need to be clearly captured for	Corrected in yellow, the rainfall range during the period mentioned had outstanding observation hence was worth mention, however, seasonal rainfall data has been provided in the document Reference inserted and climatic data source updated Long rains (April to October), while short rains (November until March the following year),...more clear terms to most farmers are either long or short rains, long rains are normally main cropping season Section on METHODOLOGY i.e. experimental design, treatment and agronomic practices revised with corrections shown in yellow Maturity in this case referred to as attainment of physiological maturity, as for maize this was reached when there was the formation of a characteristic black layer at the base of the kernels,.....at Egerton,....it's rather cold hence maize normally take longer time (7-8) to reach physiological maturity as compared to potatoes (adapted to cooler conditions) hence the wide gap Lablab was re-introduced into maize (planted within the inter row of almost ready to harvest maize) what is called relay planting/cropping i.e. planting into unharvested crop which is at maturity.



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	anyone to follow. My worries include how you combined intercropping, fertilization and rain into an RCBD. You need to clearly bring this out. Maybe a pictorial presentation of your treatment and treatment combinations would have given a better understanding to the reader. Line 137: To meet your object 1, you did not say how long term data on rainfall was obtained or generated. If long term rainfall data were from secondary data, the use of the word 'collected' is inappropriate. Line 148: The use of the phrase 'crop properties' in objective 2 is vague, rather use phrases that keeps no one in doubt, such as growth parameters, yield components, grain yields, nutrient uptake etc. Line 180: The use of the phrase 'weather elements' is too broad as you later mentioned only two: average daily temperature and potential evaporation.	The treatment combination was as shown in table 5 (appendix). This was a split plot experiment in which maize and potatoes were the main plot factors where as two levels of manures (farm yard manure-goat and green manure-lablab) and four levels of cropping systems involving - 3 intercrops of garden pea, lima beans, soybean with either maize or potatoes and potatoes*maize intercrop, and 1 sole crop either of maize or potatoes-randomized in complete block designs (RCBD). Information corrected in text. The climatic data was obtained from Egerton Weather Station Crop properties statement and weather elements corrected and heightened in yellow. All reviewers comments and suggestions have been taken care of. All revisions are in yellow.
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<u>Minor</u> REVISION comments	Level of Significance is always at $P \leq 0.05$, $P \leq 0.01$ not $P = 0.05$ or $p=0.01$ etc. Line 305: Potatoes height followed a similar trend as higher figures were ~~higher~~ obtained in the farmyard manure than In your Result section you mentioned (Tables) without indicating which of the tables by their number. This is from line 303 down wards to 323. Table 7: Is it plant height at 100% flowering or tarsal ling? Table 7 came before Table 6 You have dual Table 7 You have no Tables 8 and 9 but you have Table 10	Plant height at 100% flowering for potatoes and tasseling for maize Tables corrected to reflect text information
<u>Optional/General</u> comments	If the short of long rain terms are changed, there may be the need to rework the article title to accommodate this. No observed ethical issues in the manuscript.	