ABSTRACT
The government of Rwanda has given high priority to production of maize in the country’s marshlands, huge investments were done. In maize Cooperatives like UMUCYO, farmers respond by growing maize as a cash crop, consequently the production increased together with the needs in postharvest materials and skills to ensure proper postharvest management to meet market conditions of quality and quantity as determinant of prices. The government’s investments in this sub-sector aims to reduce the poverty by increasing the income of small farmers, the current situation is that most maize is dried, stored and processed using inappropriate materials and techniques which resulted by high maize losses and affects the quality (moisture content and impurity) which conditions the prices that are offered by the market. The vision of government of Rwanda (Vision 2020) of reducing poverty, food insecurity and increase the per capita income to 900 USD in year 2000 (MINECOFIN, 2000) is constrained by this situation. There are three important issues here; the first is whether there is a gain in prices resulting from using Cooperative as appropriate channel for selling maize. The second is whether there is a gain in prices resulting from improving the quality of maize through improving drying and storing practices by reducing the losses and complying with market conditions of maize moisture content. The third is if there are gains through improving quality of maize by improved primary postharvest practices (Threshing, drying, winnowing and sorting) bth aiming at increasing the small farmer’s income. The research findings revealed a high need of primary postharvest materials for winnowing and drying which incur high maize losses and deterioration of quality. By improving maize postharvest practices and availing necessary materials and infrastructures will certainly increase income of small farmers.