Journal Name:	Journal of Experimental Agriculture International
Manuscript Number:	**Ms_JEAI_46965**
Title of the Manuscript:	**Earthworm functional groups, residue quality and management impact on upland rice growth and yield – An experimental study in the Madagascar Highlands**
Type of the Article	**Original Research Article**

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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		
Minor REVISION comments	The study has been well planned and carried out with suitable experiments. However, the revisions are to be carried out for the final acceptance. 1] 'We, our' have been used in many places in the article which is required to be avoided by modifying the sentence. 2] The scientific names in several places including references are not in *Italics*. They should be changed to *Italics* font. 3] It is suggested to consult the following reference and add it appropriately in the article. Tunira Bhadauria and Krishan Gopal Saxena, "Role of Earthworms in Soil Fertility Maintenance through the Production of Biogenic Structures," Applied and Environmental Soil Science, vol. 2010, Article ID 816073, 7 pages, 2010. https://doi.org/10.1155/2010/816073. 4] There are several scientific reports by K.E. Lee, P. Lavelle, etc. Insist that the earthworms in soil improve the nutrients in the soil where they dwell. The present study reports contrasting reports to that of K.E. Lee, P. Lavelle, etc. It is well established that the earthworms make the nutrients available by utilizing the organic materials available. Give your input appropriately to these in the article. 5] Statement in the article "....the identity and location of the residues were the most important factors influencing soil nutrient content, plant growth and crop production, irrespective of earthworm presence" -- whether the present study implies no role is played by earthworms in soil? 6] Justify (in discussion) – how positive effect of earthworm species on the modification of plant biomass allocation resulted in non-significant interactive effect between earthworms and residues.	[1] Done everywhere [2] Done everywhere (underlined in yellow in the manuscript) [3] Cited (thank you for giving us this relevant reference) (lines 248) and added in the reference list with the number [34] (underlined in green) [4] We agree that our results do not match with classical observations made in different parts of the World (including our own research in other tropical sites). We already discuss this point in the results & discussion section (lines 247-251). In this present study the lack of clear effect of earthworms, as usually observed in many other studies, may be due to a rapid absorption of nitrogen by plants leading to a higher growth (measured) and by a higher microbial immobilization (lines 252-255) All this information is presented and discussed in the manuscript. [5] There is no interaction effect between residues and earthworms on the different soil and plant parameters we measured. This does not mean that there is no effect of earthworms. Our results clearly show that the identity and location of residues have the main impact on plant and soil parameters; they also clearly show a significant effect of earthworms on some plant parameters (Table 3) and especially on aerial and root biomass. But no interactions have been statistically measured. [6] Statistical analyses performed in our experiment (Table 3) clearly show an absence of interactions between earthworms and identity or location of residues on plant parameters. The absence of interactions is also explained by the fact that earthworms species have different roles on plant allocation (lines 357-364) with higher shoot-root ratio for Dichogaster saliens (lines 360-361) than for Pontoscolex corethrurus. This effect is independent of residue identity and location (Table 3).
Optional/General comments		

PART 2:

	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)*
Are there ethical issues in this manuscript?	*(If yes, Kindly please write down the ethical issues here in details)*	