

Maize thresher is faster, efficient

A sheller will help you save time and high costs that come with using hands. The machines go for between Shs4.5m and Shs100m depending on the speed and capacity, writes **Fred Muzaale**.

Most people use conventional methods of shelling or threshing maize such as hitting it with sticks. However, this results in grain damage and contamination with foreign stuff, which reduces the economic value of the grain and sometimes its shelf life.

Thresher increases production

The use of a maize thresher is a solution to these challenges.

By using a thresher, the grain is not damaged and it does not get contaminated with other foreign matter such as stones, grass and whiffs of timber. Festo Mugabi, a resident of Kalagi Trading Centre in Mukono District, a farmer, who at the same time offers maize threshing services, says the machine does the work faster than the rudimentary method of hitting maize with sticks and logs.

Thresher

Mugabi bought the thresher last year from

Kampala at Shs4.5m. "As a farmer I got problems when it came to threshing the maize, so I decided to buy the machine to make the work easier," he says.

The machine is powered by a 13 HP engine and uses diesel.



Sh75

NUMBER OF BAGS THE SMALLEST THRESHER SHELLS PER DAY

Installing

Mugabi says he uses five litres of diesel to thresh 75 bags of maize of 100 kilogrammes. "I thresh 75 bags of maize grain in just three hours while threshing the same amount of grain using sticks can take at least

two days," he says

In a day, the machine has capacity to thresh between 110 to 120 bags of maize. Pius Bagamba, a dealer of agricultural inputs in Industrial area in Kampala says farmers today have an avalanche of choice.

He says the bigger threshing machines have capacity to thresh more than 2,000 bags of maize daily. The bigger machines cost Shs100m. Bagamba cautions one to ensure the maize is moisture-free to use the grinder.

Renting

Mugabi makes more money from the machines. He offers services to farmers at a fee.

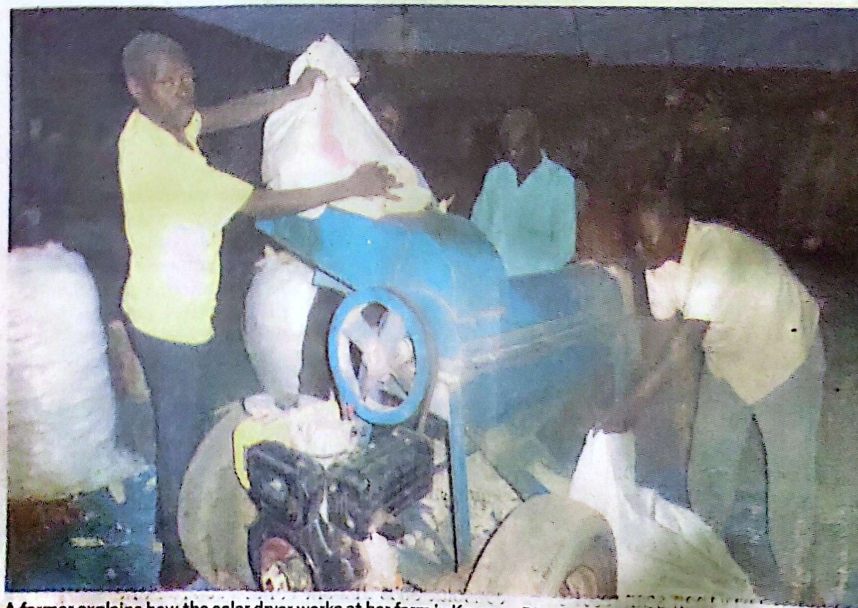
He charges them Shs3,000 per bag of grain and on season, he can earn about Shs300,000 a day. He pays his three workers Shs800 for every bag they thresh. Mugabi says his customers contact him on phone and he wheels the thresher to the garden or store.

Disadvantages of a thresher

He says because of the effects of wear and tear, the machine breaks down from time to time and he has to incur costs to repair it. In a month he services it twice which costs him about Shs70,000. Propelling it to the various places is still a big challenge to him as he just pulls it using a motorcycle.

Maize thresher

The maize thresher mainly consists of the shelling cylinder, sieve concave, vibrating screen and blower. The shelling cylinder has a tooth form and the spike tooth has a short and thick cylinder or square column shape.



A farmer explains how the solar dryer works at her farm in Kayunga District. PHOTO BY FRED MUZAALÉ