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AFRICA/KENYA - Two thousand farmers have lost their crops due to flooding and they risk serious diseases

Kisumu (Agenzia Fides) - Flash floods have washed away the rice harvest of about 2,000 farmers in western Kenya, flooding some of their houses and emptying latrines into watercourses. Officials at the Ministry of Agriculture said that most of the rice had been collected and was still on the farm to dry. The farmers who suffered the damage live in the 870 hectares of rice fields of Kano Plains, in the district of Kisumu. The rains have destroyed the only source of income of this population and threaten to be moved to other lands. In October, the meteorological department had issued a warning of possible flooding in some parts of the country, after the start of the rains in October-December period, which may be exacerbated by El Niño.
Rice is the third main food supply in Kenya, after corn and wheat. According to the Ministry of Agriculture, the national production of this food is 50 thousand tons per year, while the annual consumption is 350 thousand tons. Pakistan alone every year, exports 200 000 tonnes of rice in Kenya. The floods have not only washed away crops and farms, but have also flooded the latrines. Many farmers keep their crops in their homes and when flooding arrives they lose everything. The various attempts made in the past by the government for the construction of boats and canals to facilitate the population in the event of flooding have been abandoned after the locals had asked for compensation because the structures had to be built on their farm. During the months of April and May this year different areas of the western region and Nyanza suffered severe flooding that killed more than 15,000 displaced people. The evacuation centers built this year with the help of the Japanese government in the area can only accommodate 12 000 people. (AP) (Agenzia Fides 15/11/2012)

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