

Impact of plants, disease from the old world to the new

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When one thinks about the total impact of the transfer of animals plants and disease from the Old World to the New and vice versa, it could easily lead to a thesis link exploration of the spread of pathogens, the impact of agricultural exchange/trade, and the importance of exchange of various animals between Old World and New; however, for purposes of this brief analysis, the answer will be condensed in such a way as to give the highlights of each subsection.

Smallpox immunity was largely enjoyed by the Europeans due to a developed immunity that had existed in Europe for generations; however, with respect to the Native American population, no such natural immunity existed. As a result, it is estimated that as high as 90% of the population perished as a direct result of diseases acquired from European settlers. The effects of the European germs had a far more detrimental effect on the Native American population than did any series of wars or massacres of Indians for the lands they possessed. In fact, many scholars have argued that one of the prime reasons that the Native Americans were unable to defend themselves successfully from the subsequent invasion of the Europeans was due to the decreased, sickly, and severely damaged populations that they were left with.

Likewise, the horse revolutionized the way of life for the Native American. As the notes indicated, tribes had previously relied on human power and dogs to move goods from one point to another; however, with the introduction of the horse, a great deal of range was gained. Furthermore, with respect to the Europeans, the availability of New World bison and deer provided supplies of

wild meat that did not exist in Europe. In this way, settlers were able to supplement their oftentimes meager harvests by relying on the bountiful supplies of wild game that the New World had to offer.

Furthermore, with respect to the transfer of plants, one cannot minimize the important role that tobacco and sugarcane played as instruments of trade between the Old World and the New. Europe's increasing demand for tobacco and sugarcane led to further colonization and development/cultivation of the New World. Furthermore, the New World additionally offered Europe supplies of wheat, corn, and beans that it previously could not enjoy. As a result, the size and complexity of European civilization increased as it became dependent upon agricultural trade with the New World.