

# Analysis of Mechanics

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**Title:** Stardew Valley

**Released:** 26th of February 2016

**Author:** Eric Barone / ConcernedApe

**Primary Genre:** Farm life simulator

**Secondary Genre:** RPG

**Style:** Pixel-Art

## Analysis

Stardew Valley is a farm life simulator. The player, originally an employee at a soulless corporation, decides to abandon their old life full of stress and finally opens an envelope that their grandfather left them on their deathbed. This letter informs the player that they are inheriting their grandfather's old farm. The player journeys into Stardew Valley, a small community of roughly 30 citizens, where they start a new, simple life on a farm. Here, the player is given complete autonomy. They start off by clearing off the farm that has now become overgrown before eventually planting their first batch of parsnips and beginning their new life.

### Primary genre

As mentioned earlier, Stardew Valley is a farm life simulator. The game fully revolves around this aspect. Over 40 different crops are available in the game. These crops differ in profit margin, length of the growing process, and the season during which they can grow. The player is truly "living off the land", as they plant, water, and harvest different crops, before further processing them, or selling them for profit right away. Similar to real life, later in the game, the player can purchase (or craft using obtained materials) items such as sprinklers, which automatically water the plants, and scarecrows, which scare away crop-eating birds.

Another farming aspect of the game is husbandry. The player can have barns and coops built by Robin (the town's carpenter), and then house farm animals such as cows, goats, chickens, ducks, and many more in them. These animals are purchased from Marlene, another villager in the town. These animals can be milked, sheared, and petted to improve their happiness and production. Similarly to plants, there are machines (such as the "Auto-Grabber" or the "Auto-Petter") that perform some tasks automatically available in mid/late-game.

### Secondary genre

The player is part of the community in the game. It is possible to interact with townspeople, to discover their backstories, and to grow closer with them. By talking with villagers, giving them gifts, or assisting them, the player can earn "friendship points". Upon reaching milestones, special, one-time cut-scenes play, often containing decisions to be made by the player. These decisions can further affect the friendship with the specific NPC. There are twelve NPCs that the player can marry. Six of them are male, six of them are female.

### Style

The game has a pixel-art style, with all aspects of the game being pixel-art at different levels of detail and pixel density. This choice, together with an amazing soundtrack, works well in creating a cosy, welcoming atmosphere and fully immerses the player into the game. Both the art and the soundtrack for the game are masterfully crafted by ConcernedApe himself.