A game for 2–4 players  
Ages 14 and up  
50–100 Minutes

On the wave-battered coast of the North Sea, hard-working folk make a living by the sweat of their brow. Under constant threat of storm and flood, communities rally together to build dikes that keep the rising tide at bay. But every citizen constructing a dike is one fewer citizen tending flocks and maintaining the family farm. The residents are torn between selflessness and self-interest, and only those who can strike this delicate balance can thrive in the harsh landscape.
**Components**

**Shared Components**
- **1 Main Board**
- **2 Sheep Market Boards** 1 doublesided
- **12 Flood Cards** (2x 1, 2, 3, 5, 3x 4, 1x 6)
- **13 Dike Segments** (3x 4 spaces long, 4 x 3 spaces long, 6 x 2 spaces long)
- **53 Coins** (27x 1, 14x 5, 12x 10)
- **36 Flood Pieces**
- **3 Resource Markers** (1x wood, clay, stone)
- **64 Fences**
- **66 Resource Cards** (22x wood, clay, stone)
- **1 Value Marker**
- **4 Farmer +2 Tokens**
- **5 Progress Tokens**
- **53 Coins** (27x 1, 14x 5, 12x 10)
- **1 Sticker Sheet**
- **1 Scorepad**
- **1 Appendix** (4 pages with detailed explanations of the farm expansion tiles and progress tokens)
- **1 First Player Marker**
- **12 Dike Breach Tokens**
- **3 Farmer Components**
- **4 Building Markers**
- **85 Sheep**
- **6 3-sheep Tokens**

**Player Components (1 set per player; 4 total)**
- **1 Farmyard Board** Sunny and rainy sides
- **1 Income Board**
- **1 Reference Sheet**
- **2 Sheep Market Boards** 1 doublesided
- **3 Resource Markers** (1x wood, clay, stone)
- **64 Fences**
- **66 Resource Cards** (22x wood, clay, stone)
- **1 First Player Marker**
- **85 Sheep**
- **6 3-sheep Tokens**
- **3 Resource Markers** (1x wood, clay, stone)
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**Before Your First Game**

Take the sticker sheet and attach one sticker with a 2, one with a 3, and one with a 4 to different farmers of each color.

Assemble the first player marker.

**Goal of the Game**

The winner in *Lowlands* will be the player who scores the most victory points (VP). Housing sheep and building the dike will both provide VP, though their values will change over the course of the game. The changing values are shown on the value track on the main board. You will also get VP for coins (1 VP per coin), remaining resource cards (1 VP per two cards), and the farm expansions you build over the course of the game (VP shown on tile).
1. Place the main board in the middle of the table.

2. Shuffle all the flood cards together and place them facedown on the shown space of the main board to create the flood deck. **Note:** For your first game, return the flood card showing “6” to the box before creating the deck.

3. Each player chooses a color. Stack the dike point markers of the chosen colors in a random order on the first space of the dike track (0 dike points). Return any unused dike point markers to the box.

4. Randomly place one progress token faceup on each of the the first five large spaces of the dike track.

5. Place the value marker on the middle space of the value track.

6. Place the phase marker on the first space of the phase track (“Turn of the Tide”).

7. Shuffle the resource cards and place them facedown on the shown space of the main board to create the resource deck. Draw four cards and place them faceup on different spaces of the resource display.

8. Place the sheep market board that matches the number of players (shown by a number of dots in the top-right) next to the game board.

9. Place the three resource markers on the shown spaces on the sheep market board.

10. Place one sheep on each space of the sheep market board showing a sheep icon. Return the other sheep market board to the box.

11. Sort the farm expansion tiles (buildings and features) into four stacks according to their backs. Shuffle each stack separately and place the stacks next to the main board. Draw three tiles each from the feature, sheep building, and action building stacks and place them faceup in columns below their respective stacks. Draw storm surge tiles equal to the number of players plus one and place them faceup in a column next to the other columns. Return the remaining storm surge tiles to the box; they will not be used this game.

12. Place all coins, sheep, 3-sheep tokens, flood pieces, dike segments, dike breach tokens, and farmer +2 tokens near the board as a supply. Set the scorepad aside; you will not need it until the storm surge phase.

The sheep market board setup for four players. The number of player matches the number of dots in the top-right corner of the board.
Each player gathers the following components:

- 1 random farmyard board
- 1 income board
- 1 reference sheet
- 3 farmers of your chosen color (values 2, 3, and 4)
- 4 building markers of your chosen color
- 2 sheep
- 16 fences
- 2 laborers
- 4 coins
- 4 resource cards comprising your hand (hidden from other players)

Place your farmyard board in front of you with the side of your choice faceup (both sides have the same layout). Then place your income board and reference sheet faceup next to your farmyard board, and keep your coins and farmers near your farmyard board. Return all unused farmyard boards, income boards, reference sheets, farmers, building markers, fences, and laborers to the box.

Place your gathered components on your farmyard and income boards as shown:

Some spaces show one or more terrain types: bushes, trees, or lakes.

The player whose dike point marker is on top of the stack is the first player and takes the first player marker.

Each other player gains one coin from the supply.

The game is divided into phases that are grouped into three stages. Each of the three stages consists of six phases resolved in the following order:

- Turn of the Tide, I Work, II Upkeep, I Work, II Upkeep, III High Tide

The position of the phase marker indicates the current phase. At the end of each phase, move the phase marker up one space to the next phase.

After playing through all three stages, you will resolve one final phase: the storm surge phase.

You begin the game with the first Turn of the Tide phase.
PHASES

**TURN OF THE TIDE**

1. **Check hand size:** Each player with more than eight resource cards in hand chooses and discards cards until he has eight cards.

2. **Place 3 new flood cards:** Draw three flood cards from the flood deck and place one facedown on each of the three sea spaces on the main board.

3. **Reveal new flood card:** Flip over the leftmost facedown flood card on a sea space. Take the number of flood pieces shown on the front of the card and place them from left to right on top of the previous level as a new level. Over the course of the game, the flood will rise three levels high.

The flipped flood card shows a value of three, so three flood pieces are placed on flood spaces on the main board.

The back of each flood card shows the range of possible values for that card:

- The front of this card will show a value between 1 and 3.
- The front of this card will show a value between 4 and 6.

**WORK PHASE**

**1 Work** phase, you place your farmers on spaces to take actions. When you place a farmer on a space, you gain action points equal to the farmer's action value (2, 3, or 4) which you spend to resolve the actions.

Starting with the first player and proceeding clockwise, players take turns placing one of their unplaced farmers on an action space on their own farmyard board and resolving the corresponding action. Players continue taking turns in this order until all farmers have been placed.

You can place a farmer on one of your action spaces that already contains one or more farmers; to do so, pay one coin to the supply if there is one farmer already on the space or two coins if there are already two farmers. If you cannot pay the cost, you cannot place the farmer on that space and take that action.

The following rules apply to all actions:

- **Resource Substitution:** You can always pay two resources of one type instead of paying one resource of another type. The Carpenter's Workshop, Bricklayer's Workshop, and Stonemason's Workshop buildings do not affect this payment. To pay resources, discard them from your hand and place them faceup in the resource discard pile.

- **Laborers:** While assigned to an action, laborers improve that action for you. The different effects of laborers on each action are explained below each action's description in this rulebook. Whenever you uncover a laborer icon on your income board or reach the progress token showing a laborer icon on the dike track, you may either assign a laborer on your income board to an action on your farmyard board or move one of your assigned laborers from one action to another on your farmyard board. Up to two laborers can be assigned to each action except the “buy or sell sheep” action, which can have only one.

- **Unused Action Points:** After taking an action, if you did not spend all your available action points (including any additional action points from laborers), you may spend unused points to draw resource cards at a cost of one action point per card and add them to your hand. Draw these cards following the same rules as the “draw resource cards” action. You cannot skip an action to save the action points for drawing cards.

- **Component Limitations:** If you would draw a card from the resource deck and the deck is empty, shuffle the resource discard pile and place it facedown on the main board to create a new resource deck. Sheep, coins, and dike breach tokens are unlimited; if you run out of any of these components, use a substitute. You can use 3-sheep tokens in place of three individual sheep.
ACTION SPACES:

A) BUILD A FARM EXPANSION

This action allows you to build exactly one of the farm expansion tiles faceup that are next to the board: either a building (shown by a brown border) or a feature (shown by a green border).

To build a farm expansion, spend action points equal to the farm expansion's level and pay the resources shown on the top-right of the tile.

Take the faceup farm expansion tile from the display and place it on an empty space (without sheep or another farm expansion) on your farmyard. Some farm expansions can be placed only on spaces with specific terrain (bushes, a tree, or a lake), which is shown on the left of the resource cost. Farm expansions without a terrain requirement can be placed on a space with or without specific terrain. Farm expansion can be placed inside or outside of a pasture (one or more spaces on your farmyard enclosed by fences and/or buildings). However, the effects of some farm expansions are active only if the tile is located inside or outside of a pasture.

Once built, farm expansions remain on their spaces until the end of the game. They cannot be moved, removed, or built over. When you build a farm expansion, draw a tile from the stack of the same type and place it faceup in the previous tile's place.

Note: Each player can build only one storm surge building during the game. No new storm surge building tiles are drawn!

The icons on the lower half of each tile show the farm expansion's effects. Some farm expansions have multiple effects, the colors of the banner behind the tile's name show when the effects are active. The back side of the reference sheet explains common icons. A detailed explanation of each farm expansion can be found in the appendix.

The shield in the top-right corner of a farm expansion tile shows the VP value of the tile at the end of the game. If the shield contains an exclamation mark “!”, the VP value is 0, but the farm expansion has an effect which triggers at the beginning of the storm surge phase (the last phase of the game).
The following rules apply for buildings (not features):

- When you place a building tile on your farmyard, take the leftmost building marker from your income board and place it on the top-left corner of that tile. You have only four building markers, so you can build only four buildings during the game.

- The brown edges of buildings can be used to enclose pastures (see “Housing Sheep” on page 10).

- When you take a building marker and place it, it may uncover an icon on your income board. If you uncover an income icon, you will receive additional income starting in the next **II Upkeep** phase. If you uncover a laborer icon, you may either assign a laborer on your income board to an action on your farmyard board or move one of your assigned laborers from one action to another on your farmyard board.

  ![](image)

  Sue builds a second building, uncovering a new income icon. During **II Upkeep**, she will draw two resource cards instead of one.

  Laborers: For each laborer you have assigned to this action, you pay one fewer resource of your choice to build a farmyard expansion.

  ![](image)

  B) CONTRIBUTE TO THE DIKE

  This action allows you to pay resources to construct dike segments and advance on the dike track.

  To construct a dike segment, spend **1 or more action points** and pay an equal number of a **single type of resource** (you may save some action points for drawing resource cards afterward). For each resource you pay, advance the matching resource marker one space on the construction yard track. **Note**: After construction of a dike segment has begun with a certain resource, players must finish the construction of that segment using the same type of resource before starting construction of a new segment.

  When a resource marker reaches the last space of the construction yard track (** Constructed dike segment **), the construction of the dike segment is complete; take an appropriate dike segment (see note below) and place it on the leftmost empty dike space on the main board as a first level. After you finish a level of dike segments, stack further dike segments from left to right on top of the previous level as a new level.

  **Note**: The higher the dike gets, the more dike segments are needed to finish a level. The first level needs only three brown dike segments, which are as wide as four flood tokens. The second level needs four dark-green dike segments, which are as wide as three flood tokens. The third level needs six light-green dike segments, which are as wide as two flood tokens. Since the cost to finish each dike segment remains constant throughout the game, it becomes increasingly costly to finish dike levels.

  For each resource you spend, advance your dike point marker one space on the dike track. If your dike point marker ends on the same space as another marker, place your marker on top. If your dike point marker would advance past the end of the track, instead move it to the third space of the track (1 dike point) and continue from there, adding 20 to your total dike points; count these points when determining which player is ahead on the dike track.

  ![](image)

  Sue places her value-4 farmer onto her “contribute to the dike” action space. She spends three action points and pays three stone, advancing the stone marker three spaces and completing the dike segment.

  The completed dike segment is placed on the dike space on the main board. Long brown segments are placed on the first level, medium dark green segments on the second level, and light green short segments on the third level.

  ![](image)

  Sue has one action point left, so she pays one clay to begin constructing the next dike segment. The clay marker is placed on the first space of the construction yard track, and the stone marker is placed back on its corresponding starting space.

  Since Sue paid four resources, she advances her dike point marker four spaces on the dike track. The marker reaches a space with a progress token, so she chooses one of its effects to resolve: either gaining three coins or assigning or moving a laborer.
After a dike segment is completed, the resource marker stays on the last space of the construction yard track until any player begins constructing another dike segment with a different resource. The next dike segment cannot be constructed from the same type of resource as the previous dike segment. After any player begins construction with a new resource, place the previous resource marker on its corresponding starting space.

You can construct more than one dike segment in the same turn: if you complete a dike segment and have action points remaining, you may begin constructing the next dike segment (with a different type of resource).

**Laborers:** For each laborer you have assigned to this action, increase by 1 the action value of any farmer placed on this action space. If you spend the additional action points to construct a dike segment, you must still pay the resources as well. This effect applies only when you take this action, not while helping (see below).

**Asking for Help**
After you have completed your action (including drawing any resource cards), you **must** ask an opponent of your choice for help. That opponent may construct dike segments (without spending action points) and also advances his dike point marker one space on the dike track for each resource paid. If he chooses to contribute, he may pay up to as many resources as you paid to construct dike segments. Laborers have no effect when helping. It is possible for a chosen opponent not to pay any resources. If your opponent pays one or more resources, you advance exactly one additional space on the dike track regardless of how many resources your opponent paid. In this case, you advance your dike point marker before your opponent does.

Players cannot negotiate or discuss when asking for help (e.g. you cannot ask who has useable resource cards in his or her hand, though the number of cards in each player’s hand should always be visible).

In a 2-player game, some additional rules apply when asking for help (see “Rule Changes For 2 Players” on page 11).

**Sue** asks **John** for help. Since **Sue** paid four resources, **John** may pay up to four resources as well. **He decides to pay two clay.**

Since **John** paid resources when asked for help, **Sue** advances her dike point marker one additional space on the dike track before **John**. Then **John** advances his marker two spaces for the two resources he paid.

**Progress Tokens**
Each time your dike point marker reaches a space on the dike track with a progress token (whether you are taking an action or helping), you immediately resolve the effect shown on that token. If a token shows two different effects, you choose which to resolve. The progress token stays on the board, and other players can resolve the effects when their markers reach the space. A detailed description of the progress tokens can be found on page A1 of the appendix.

**C) BUILD AND/OR MOVE FENCES**
This action allows you to build and/or move fences on the gaps between spaces on your farmyard board to enclose or reorganize your pastures (see “Housing Sheep” on page 10). A pasture consists of one or more spaces on your farmyard board which are completely enclosed by fences and/or buildings.

**Move fences:** Spend one action point to move one fence on your farmyard board to another gap on your farmyard board (this does not cost any resources). You can resolve this effect as many times as you can afford.

**Build fences:** Spend one action point and pay one resource of your choice to take the leftmost fence from your income board and place it on a gap on your farmyard board. You can resolve this effect as many times as you can afford, but you must pay the same type of resource for each fence.

**Example:** John places a farmer with action value 3. He spends one action point to move one fence, and spends two action points and pays two resources of the same type to build two fences.

If you uncover an income icon, you will receive additional income starting in the next **II Upkeep** phase. If you uncover a laborer icon, you may either assign a laborer on your income board to an action on your farmyard board or move one of your assigned laborers from one action to another on your farmyard board.

**Joe** has uncovered two sections on income board by building five fences. During each **II Upkeep** phase, he will draw one additional card for the uncovered resource card icon. When **Joe** uncovered the laborer icon, he could immediately assign or move a laborer.

Since **Joe** has built all four of his buildings, he also gains one coin and draws one additional resource card during each **II Upkeep** phase for those uncovered income icons. In total, **Joe** draws three resource cards and gains one coin during each **II Upkeep** phase.

**Laborers:** For each laborer you have assigned to this action, increase by one the action value of any farmer placed on this action space. If you spend the additional action points to build a fence, you must still pay the resources as well.
Note: After you have completed your action, all pastures on your farmyard board that house sheep must be enclosed by fences and/or buildings (you may open pastures while taking this action, but all sheep must be in enclosed pastures when you finish your action).

You can build a fence on any gap, even if building it in that gap does not currently contribute to enclosing a pasture.

**D) BUY OR SELL SHEEP**

This action allows you to buy or sell sheep at the sheep market. The value of sheep is shown on the bottom row of the value track on the main board. You cannot buy and sell during the same action.

**Buy sheep:** Pay one action point and coins equal to the current value of sheep to take one sheep from a space on the sheep market and house it on your farmyard board. You can resolve this effect as many times as you can afford, but you can buy sheep from only one row of the sheep market during each action. You can buy only as many sheep as are available in that row, and you cannot buy more sheep than you can house on your farmyard board (see "Housing Sheep" on page 10).

**Sell sheep:** Spend one action point and place one of your sheep on an empty space of the sheep market to gain coins equal to the value of sheep. You can resolve this effect as many times as you can afford, however you can sell sheep to only one row of the sheep market. You cannot sell more sheep than there are empty spaces in that row.

**Laborer:** If one of your laborers is assigned to this action, the cost for you to buy sheep is decreased by one coin, and you gain one additional coin for each sheep you sell. This applies only when you take this action, not if you buy or sell sheep in any other way. Only one laborer can be assigned to this action.

The value of sheep is shown on the bottom row of the value track. In this case, the value is 3 coins. This value applies for both buying sheep from the sheep market and selling sheep to the market.

**Buying sheep:** You can buy up to two sheep from row 1. You can buy one sheep from rows 2 or 3.

**Selling sheep:** You can sell up to two sheep to rows 1 or 3. You can sell up to three sheep to row 2.

**E) DRAW RESOURCE CARDS**

This action allows you to draw resource cards and add them to your hand.

Spend any number of action points to draw an equal number of cards from the resource display and/or the resource deck and add them to your hand. If you want to draw cards from both the display and the deck, draw the cards from the display first, then draw the remaining cards from the deck. After drawing cards all your cards, for each empty spaces of the resource display, draw a card from the resource deck and place it faceup on that space.

**Laborer:** For each laborer you have assigned to this action, increase by one the action value of any farmer placed on this action space.
**III. UPKEEP**
During the **III Upkeep** phase, resolve the following steps:

1. **Breeding:** For every two sheep housed on your farmyard board, take one sheep from the supply and house it on your board if able (see “Housing Sheep” below).

2. **Income:** Starting with the first player and proceeding clockwise, each player gains any income visible on his or her income board. Each player will draw at least one resource card as income (shown by the income icon on the top-right of the income board); additional income can be uncovered by building fences and buildings.

3. **Retrieve farmers:** Remove all your farmers from action spaces and keep them near your farmyard board.

4. **Reset sheep market:** Return all sheep on the sheep market to the supply, then place one sheep from the supply on each space of the sheep market showing a sheep icon.

5. **Change first player:** The player who is furthest along the dike track becomes the first player and takes the first player marker. If multiple players are tied for furthest, the tied player whose dike point marker is on top becomes the first player.

6. **Reveal new flood card:** Flip over the leftmost facedown flood card on a sea space. Take the number of flood pieces shown on the front of the card and place them from left to right on empty flood spaces on the main board as a first level. After you finish a level (12 flood pieces), stack further flood pieces from left to right on top of the previous level as a new level. Over the course of the game the flood will rise three levels high.

During the last **III Upkeep** phase of the game, resolve steps 1, 2, and 6, skipping 3, 4, and 5.

**Housing Sheep**

Each space on your farmyard board that is within a pasture (enclosed by fences and/or buildings) can house one sheep.

Some farm expansions change this rule, and others allow you to house sheep on the tile itself. Unless indicated otherwise, you cannot house sheep on farm expansion tiles.

At any time, you can move your sheep between spaces within pastures and farm expansions that can house sheep (for example, if you want to build a farm expansion on a space housing a sheep, you will have to move that sheep). You cannot return a sheep from a space to the supply unless an action or effect allows you to do so. If you would gain a sheep and could not house it, you do not gain that sheep.

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**II. HIGH TIDE**
During this phase, you will check whether the dike breaks or holds.

1. **Check the dike:** Compare the level of the flood pieces with the level of the dike segments:
   - If the dike level is higher than the flood level, the dike holds.
   - If the flood level is higher than the dike level, the dike breaks.

If the levels are equal, compare the row of flood pieces on the highest level with the row of dike segments on the highest level:

- If the row of dike segments is longer than the row of flood pieces, or if the lengths are equal, the dike holds.
- If the row of flood pieces is longer than the row of dike segments, the dike breaks.

Resolve the corresponding effect, then return the three flood cards on flood spaces to the box.

**Dike holds:** Each player gains one coin for each dike point he has more than the player with the fewest dike points; dike points are shown under each pair of spaces on the dike track (the player with the fewest dike points does not gain any coins). Then move the value marker one space to the right on the value track.

The lengths of the rows of flood pieces and dike segments are equal, so the dike holds. Sue and Joe both have two dike points, which is one more than John; Sue and Joe each gain one coin. John has contributed the least to the dike and gains no coins.
**Dike breaks**: Each player gains one dike breach token for each dike point he has fewer than the player with the most dike points (the player with the most dike points does not gain any dike breach tokens). Then move the value marker one space to the left on the value track. *(Pastures begin flooding and farmers cannot house all of their sheep, so they begin selling them off. Due to the large supply, the value of sheep decreases.)*

**STORM SURGE**

1. **Score buildings and features with !**: Resolve the effects of each farm expansion showing a “!” icon. Note any VP gained this way in the “! farm expansions” section of the scorepad.
2. **Check the dike**: Check the dike as before, but resolve the following effects instead of the normal result:

   - **Dike holds**: All players discard all dike breach tokens to the supply without effect.
   - **Dike breaks**: Each player discards one sheep to the supply for each of his or her dike breach tokens. If any player does not have enough sheep, he pays coins equal to the current value of sheep for each sheep he is short. If he does not have enough coins, he loses one VP for each coin he is short. Note these negative VP in the “Coins” section of the scorepad.

3. **Final scoring**: Score VP as follows and note them on the scorepad:

   - **Dike points**: For each of your dike points, gain VP equal to the current value of dike points; the value of dike points is shown on the top row of the value track (if you advanced past the last space on the dike track, add 20 to your dike points).
   - **Sheep**: For each of your sheep, gain VP equal to the current value of sheep.

   **Buildings and features**: Gain the VP shown on the shield icons on your farm expansions ( ).
   - **Coins**: Gain 1 VP for each of your coins.
   - **Resource cards**: Gain 1 VP for every two resource cards in your hand.

**WINNING THE GAME**

The game ends at the end of the storm surge phase. The player with the most VP wins the game! In the case of a tie, the tied player who is furthest on the dike track wins the game. If there is still a tie, the tied player whose dike point marker is on top wins the game.

**RULE CHANGES FOR 2 PLAYERS**

The game plays the same with two players as it does with three or four players, with one exception:

After completing the “contribute to the dike” action, you may pay one coin to ask the market for help instead of asking an opponent for help. If you cannot pay the coin, you must ask your opponent for help.

If you ask the market for help, one at a time, reveal as many resource cards from the top of the resource deck as you paid to construct dike segments during your action. For each resource card you reveal that could be used to construct a dike segment, advance the matching resource marker one space on the construction yard track. If a dike segment is completed before you have finished revealing cards, continue revealing cards and begin constructing the next dike segment with the next different resource card you reveal. Then discard all cards revealed this way.

**Note**: You do not advance an additional space on the dike track when asking the market for help.
“For those who come from the sea, East Frisia is not at the end of the world, but rather at its very beginning.” – Ewald Christophers

In the quaint village of Arle, fortune can be had if you’re willing to put in a little work. The best flax of all North Germany grows in Arle. Demand for this versatile resource can quickly make a farmer rich. In Fields of Arle, step into the shoes of a citizen in this great village. Manage numerous tasks and prosper. Grow crops, breed animals, and build dikes. Improve your craftsmanship and construct prestigious buildings. Trade resources with other villages to upgrade your goods.

Let Fields of Arle transport you to another time and a beautiful land with designer Uwe Rosenberg (Agricola and A Feast for Odin) sharing his family’s connection to Arle.

1–2 Players ages 14 and up
60 minutes per player