IVRS Consumers
Fields Dream grows from Coffee Beans

When Carl Fields set out on his quest for the perfect cup of coffee it marked the beginning of a business venture. Initially Fields started experimenting with coffee beans in his kitchen.

"My wife threw me out," Fields laughed. "So we built a little barn in the back and called it the Coffee Barn."

That is how the business was born and it has since outgrown the barn and has moved to a new larger location at 120 First Avenue North in Altoona.

What remains the same is the name and the high quality of coffee Fields originally sought.

Fields starts by purchasing beans from all over the world.

"We get the top 30 percent of the crop – the best quality of coffee," Fields said.

The next part of the process is roasting the beans and Fields has perfected that process.

"I know our coffee is fresher than anyone's because of the way we do it," he said.

Fresh quality beans, roasted to perfection, then freshly ground and shipped immediately make the recipe for a perfect cup of coffee.

It took a long time before Fields would even consider adding any type of flavoring to his coffee, but the market pushed him in a new direction.

"The biggest growing part of business is in the flavored coffee," he said. "Now we have 40 different flavors we offer," Fields said. "They're fun to do but it took awhile to learn to do that right."

One of the most appreciative audiences was a group of soldiers. Fields had coffee donated and provided roasting and shipping so families could send coffee and other treats to those serving in Iraq.

Fields said Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services has helped his business grow by providing a consultant to look at the profit margin and different ways to market the

business. They also helped with website development.

"We were able to assist him to more than double his net sales," said Debbie Grace at the IVRS Polk County Office.

Now the new Hy-Vee in Altoona plans to stock coffee from the Coffee Barn.

Part of the secret of Fields' success is his dedication to producing the highest quality of product.

"We're going to get it right," Fields said. "I don't like to do anything if we can't do it properly."

Fields has the highest standards for freshness and his coffee is shipped as soon as it comes out of the grinder.

But that's only one of the secrets of his success.

His advice to others is, "make sure the business you pick out is something you really love to do - you have to have a passion for it."