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## Local Farm is Home to Sweet Tradition

BY DALE ROBBINS - Sept 1, 2004

SHERIDAN, IND.—During the months from late summer to early fall, the round-the-clock sounds of harvest equipment and farm machinery can often be heard echoing in the distance from the Pickett farm, just four miles east of Sheridan. The annual busy clatter, along with the distinctive aromas of cooking silage, is a part of a 91 year tradition familiar to the nearby residents of Baker's Corner, a small crossroads community on 236th Street at U.S. Hwy 31.



Pickett's harvest their sorghum crop near Baker's Corner.

- Photo courtesy of Noblesville Daily Times

Since 1913, the family farm, founded by Robert Warren Pickett, has been a major producer of sorghum, a cane-like crop, that when harvested and processed, becomes a sweet table syrup that can be substituted for honey or molasses. Each year, the farm and processing plant produces approximately 3500 gallons of the delicious substance, which is sold wholesale and retail throughout the U.S.

According to the Pickett's, sorghum not only has an especially pleasant, sweet taste, but is a much healthier alternative to many other sweeteners or table syrups. Sorghum has minerals found in no other sweetener, except honey, and among other natural benefits, has high percentages of potassium, protein, calcium and magnesium.

"Many of the local groceries and farmer's markets carry our product," says Michael Pickett, great grandson of the founder. "But we also fill orders to many other places, as far away as Florida, California and even Alaska." Michael is co-partner of the farm with his father, Ronnie Pickett, who together with his late brother Joe, inherited the family business from their father, Hollis, son of founder, Warren Pickett.

Pickett's Sorghum has apparently developed a faithful following of customers over many years. "Some local folk won't even think of having a Thanksgiving dinner without a little sorghum to pour over their pumpkin pie," says Michael. However, despite the superior quality and health benefits of sorghum, the demand for the table syrup is down from years past, when they produced more than twice of their annual volume. "In the past, sorghum was so popular we didn't have to advertise... but the newer generation has never heard much about sorghum."

At a retail price of only \$2.50 for a one pound jar, and a meager \$1.25 if you bring your own jar, Pickett's Autumn Gold Sorghum table syrup seems to be a tasty bargain, certainly worth trying in the morning cup of coffee, on pancakes, or as a sweetener in pies and cakes. The Pickett's also publish their own sorghum recipe book, which can be purchased, along with various sized containers of sorghum, at their processing plant, located at 1061 East 236th Street (Baker's Corner), Sheridan, IN 46069. Their in-season hours are Monday through Saturday, 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. For more information, call Pickett's Sorghum at 317-758-4331, or visit their website at [www.pickettsorghum.com](http://www.pickettsorghum.com).

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