

Dale Blasingame hates the expression. “I think marketers use it too much,” says the assistant professor of practice in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication at Texas State University, where he specializes in social media. “They promise everything will go viral. If you’re producing consistently good content, you have a much greater chance of something finally hitting than if you’re doing nothing but trying to go viral all the time.”

She looks different from many TikTok performers, he says. She's genuine, displaying a rare comfort level with the platform, unlike many her age. Her videos have solid production value ("Just me and my fancy Samsung phone," Amy says), aren't overproduced and are clear, simple and easy to understand.

“When you stop to think about who you trust with cooking tips, she kind of fits the exact bill, right?” Blasingame says. “Especially when you think about the typical TikTok user, who’s probably between 15 and 30. She’s Grandmother’s age.”

“The greatest aspect of TikTok’s algorithm is that you don’t already need to be a celebrity, a superstar or a big name or have a big following to become a shining star on TikTok,” he says. “Unlike Facebook, Twitter or Instagram, it’s the one platform where anyone, literally anyone, can produce one piece of content that can catapult them to tens of thousands, even a million, followers.”

“This blows my mind,” she says, shaking her head. “I thought TikTok was just a bunch of kids jumping around and acting crazy.”

She has also become aware of the flip side of TikTok fame - the trolls. Commenters will rag on her for using Velveeta instead of traditional cheese, for mentioning God a lot or any one of a dozen or more things.

"I had to almost ban a troll last night for just being tacky because Mom used a packet of gravy on her hamburger steak instead of making it homemade," Amy says.

The rest of her followers bring her joy. She hears from fans in Finland, Mexico, Canada, Germany and France, to name a few, and some ask for recipe substitutes when they



She's got a new fan, too. Blasingame, who became a vegetarian in May, still is

“She kind of even looks like my mom a bit; they have a very similar hairdo,” he says sweetly. “When I watched her videos, that was the first thing that

"I wish I had videos like this preserved in time, you know, to try to remember all of her amazing recipes."

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“There’s lots of infrastructure in and around Lubbock for ginning and cottonseed processing, bale storage and warehousing equipment dealers,” West said. “So, Lubbock is kind of the hub of the cotton industry here in Texas.”

The region produces over 60% of the state's total yield and more than a third of the nation's total crop.

The International Center for Agricultural Competitiveness at Texas Tech University estimates this year's cotton production in the High Plains will be down by about \$2 billion.

“The cotton patch has just been devastated by the drought,” West said.

Fields of white cotton are few and far between this year. Hopes for a good crop dried up for many farmers as the drought took its toll.

The historic drought caused Texas farmers to abandon cotton fields at an alarming rate.

Dryland fields, like some of those farmed by Alan West in southwest Lubbock County,

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