Beta Club! Robert Lee High School held their Beta Club new member induction service on Thursday, November 3, in the school cafetorium.

...Grandma Cooks

(Continued from previous page) 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.

Which brings us back to Dawn. Blasingame can see why she's successful.

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.

And she's typecast for her

"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."

Not much is known about the algorithm TikTok uses, but one thing that's obvious, Blasingame is that it's equal says, opportunity.

"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."

That's not lost on Dawn, who ponders the ridiculousness of becoming a TikTok influencer.

"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 homemade," Amy says.

Dawn has her go-to reply for those instances: "I just respond with a heart emoji."

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



find some of ingredients she grows in her spacious garden. And then there's the Corpus Christi artist who created an oil painting of Dawn in 80 minutes, recorded a time-lapse video of the process and sent the TikTok to her.

She's got a new fan, too. Blasingame, who became a vegetarian in May, still is intrigued by Dawn's videos. There are the biscuits and sweet potato casserole, of course, but there are also memories of his own mother, who passed away

"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 popped into my mind. My mom was a great cook.

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

Thanks to TikTok and Dawn Hodges, he kind of already does.

This article appeared in the November 2022 issue of Texas Coop Power magazine.

cotton crop across much of the state, but it's significance in the Panhandle is extreme.

"There's lots of infrastructure in and around Lubbock for ginning and cottonseed processing, bale warehousing and storage 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.

(Continued on page 6)

Short yields in Texas High Plains

By Julie Tomascik Editor, Texas Farm Bureau

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.

In the world's largest cotton patch, the 25 contiguous

counties around Lubbock, most fields are barren.

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

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

couldn't take the triple digit heat and lack of rain.

"This isn't the first drought we've been through," he said. "It's the most significant one we've been through since 2011."

West, along with his wife Amy, also grows irrigated cotton. But even that burned up.

It's a similar story for the P000000000000000000

Thank you to the RLHS Beta Club members and their sponsor, Mrs. Denise Roberts, for honoring veterans by putting out flags in the Robert Lee Cemetery. We appreciate your effort and your enthusiasm!

> Hayrick Lodge Cemetery Association

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