



Houston Dressage Society 2026 GMO Region 9 Annual Report

Prepared July 2026

By Jody Lynn DeStefanis, President HDS

Mission Statement and Organization

The Houston Dressage Society (HDS) was formed in 1977 for the purpose of furthering the art of dressage through education for its members and to conduct shows in order for its members to achieve their goals.

The HDS Board consists of the following Officers and Committee Chairs. Each Board member holds one vote in all matters related to HDS business. The Board meets monthly to discuss HDS matters and plan activities throughout the year. Ad hoc meetings are scheduled to address concerns needing immediate attention.

Officers

- President: Jody Lynn DeStefanis
- Vice President: Simone van der Schalk
- Treasurer: Nathalie Masin
- Secretary: Jessica Jemison

Committee Chairs

- Membership, Diane Dougherty (Chair)
- Recognized Shows, Angelyn Gunn (Chair); Noel Lewandos (Vice Chair)
- Schooling Shows, Dawn Morris (Chair)
- Youth, Cate Schmidt (Chair).
- Sponsorship and Advertising, Open (Chair)
- Awards, Carrie Leach (Chair)
- Clinics, Education, and Scholarship, Sarah Denham (Chair)
- Volunteer Coordinator, Jody Lynn DeStefanis (Chair)
- Publications and Social Media, Open (Chair)
- Special Events, Ashley Shaw (Chair)
- Historian, Noel Anne Lewandos (Chair)

It is noted that at the end of 2025, Jane Holman resigned as Sponsorship and Advertising Chair. Simone van der Schalk graciously agreed to take over as acting Chair while HDS worked to identify a replacement. In addition, also at the end of 2025, Fran Kehr stepped down as Publications and Social Media Chair. Carrie Leach agreed to step in as acting Chair.

In the fall of 2026, the following positions will be open for vote:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------|
| • President | • Awards Chair |
| • Schooling Show Chair | • Special Events Chair |
| • Youth Chair | • Volunteer Chair |
| • Sponsor and Advertising Chair | |

Noel Lewandos has agreed to chair the election nominations committee and is currently soliciting nominations.

In the meantime, Cate Schmidt, who will be heading to college in the fall, has announced that she will not re-nominate as the Youth Chair. As her replacement, the Board has nominated Aubrey Welch as the interim Youth Chair. In addition, the Board has nominated Lisa Susich as interim Sponsorship and Advertising Chair.

2026 Highlights

Membership. Year to date, HDS has 199 members of which 124 are adult amateurs, 43 are professionals and 32 are youth. This compares to 282 members this time last year of which 175 were adult amateurs, 61 were professionals and 46 were Youth. Many of the members join HDS to be eligible to qualify for and compete in HDS's annual Schooling Show Championships held in December as well as to be eligible for year-end awards. However, as discussed below, the 2025 Schooling Show Championships had to be postponed to 2026 due to the EHV-1 outbreak in the region in the fall of 2025. Therefore, riders who would have normally joined in November/December to participate in the Schooling Show Championships deferred their renewal resulting in lower year to date membership as compared to 2025.



Recognized Shows. In 2026 HDS had planned to host six recognized shows: Winter Classic I&II, Pollen & Piaffe Classic I&II (which includes a breed show), Spring Classic I&II (which includes a level 2 CDI), Summer I&II, Laborious Day I&II, and the Harvest Classic I&II (which includes the Region 9 Championships). However, the HDS Board took the difficult decision to cancel the Winter Classic I&II due to the EHV-1 outbreak which began in the fall of 2025. The HDS Board is currently evaluating how to address USEF's new health and inspection requirements related to the New World Screwworm in the event that these requirements are still in effect in October 2026.

The entries history for the past six years are provided below:

Show	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Winter Classic I&II	122	123	109	104	89	Canceled
Pollen and Piaffe I&II	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	137
CDI/Spring Classic I&II	168	179	170	183	151	143
Summer Classic I&II	135	120	136	118	86	123
Laborious Day I&II	121	110	78	70	89	--
Region 9 Championships and Harvest Classic I&II	366	340	372	321	326	--
Schooling Show Champs	117	97	130	123	Postponed	--
Total Entrants	1029	969	886	796	741	--

Below is a deeper dive into the entrants for the CDI over the past six years.

Entrant	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Open Large Tour	5	2	2	3	1	2
Open Medium Tour	2	0	0	0	0	0
Open Small Tour	12	8	5	3	5	7
Adult Amateur	2	2	3	2	3	2
Under 25	0	0	0	0	0	0
Young Rider	3	2	1	4	2	4
Junior Rider	3	2	4	0	6	1
Pony	1	0	3	0	0	1
Children	1	1	0	0	1	0
Young Horse	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total CDI Entrants	29	17	18	12	18	17

Schooling Shows. HDS continues to see strong participation in schooling shows despite a loss of some host facilities; this is due in part to the strength of HDS's annual Schooling Show Championships. However, the HDS Board took the difficult decision to postpone the 2025 Schooling Show Championships due to the EHV-1 outbreak. The 2025 and 2026 Schooling Show Championships will be co-hosted in December 2026. The HDS Board is currently working on the logistics of the show as the class list may need to be adjusted to account for the additional championship classes. (See the table above for the history of entrants in the Schooling Show Championships over the past six years.

Youth. HDS's Youth Chair and Interim Chair, Cate and Aubrey, are very active members of the organization and are actively promoting social events at horse shows targeted for the Youth members. The Region 9 FEI Youth Clinic is



scheduled for November 14-15, 2026 at Paragon Farm with Lilo Fore instructing. HDS will host a Region 9 Youth Outreach Program January 9-10, 2027 at Tex-Over Farm with John Mason instructing.

Sponsorship and Advertising. In general, HDS saw an overall decrease in sponsorship in 2025 and in the first half of 2026. The acting Sponsorship and Advertising Chair, Simone, has been actively working to understand the decrease and develop a sponsorship program that meets the needs of HDS's sponsors.

Clinics, Education, and Scholarship. Education continues to be a strong focus for HDS in 2026. In February 2026, the American Hanoverian Society hosted its annual meeting at Haras Hacienda in Magnolia, Texas. In connection with the AHS event, HDS and AHS co-hosted a meet and greet with Lilo Fore at Laura's Saddlery on Friday February 20. HDS held a symposium at WV Dressage on February 22-23. The meet and greet and the symposium were well attended by members and auditors and featured a mixture of different horse breeds, ages, and levels as well as open/adult amateur/youth riders. In addition, HDS encourages its barn owners to open its doors to auditors as they host high profile trainers. To this end, HDS hosted a clinic with Felicitas von Neumann-Cosel in March 2026. The clinic was open to HDS members for free auditing and was well attended. Additional educational events are being considered for later in 2026.

Publications and Social Media. HDS's monthly newsletter continues to receive positive feedback from its members.

Special Events. Annually, HDS hosts special events to honor its year-end award winners as well as to celebrate its riders and sponsors at the CDI/Spring Classic I&II and the Region 9 Championships Fall Harvest I&II. These events have had mixed success. Celebrating HDS membership, riders, and sponsors is very important; however, given the expense of these events and the time commitment needed to host them, HDS is actively reviewing the format of these events.