Region 9 Report

Director: Bess Bruton, TX

2026 Adequan®/USDF Annual Convention, December 2-5, Lexington, KY.

Summer in Region 9 was brutal. Many days of over 100 degrees. Despite the record heat… over 25 shows and clinics were held, from May 1st to Sept 30th, and in the last year over 50 region wide recognized shows, clinics, & seminars. Shows offering sport horse & breed classes increased, to over 12 shows this last year.

The **2026 GAIG/ USDF Region 9 Dressage Championships, Houston Dressage Society Autumn Classic, & Southwest Dressage Championships** were a great success, despite the recent outbreak of the New World Screw Worm, which affected our show with a few added protocols.

319 exhibitors, with 1025 rides down centerline, 6 rings, 9 judges, 3 TDs. Same # of Freestyles as last year.

This year's theme was "Masquerade Ball". The weather was rather warm & humid, but manageable, and the facility along with their staff was outstanding. Thanks HDS, Angel Gunn, Jody DeStefanis, Gillian Gourlay, Kathy Grisolia, Susan & Julia Peacock, Alecia Daniel, Jeanette Snow, Gabrielle DeRossi, & many others, plus the volunteers, & the officials…all did an awesome job putting on a top-rated show.

We have the best volunteers ever. Many return year after year to help. To name a few: Colleen Akin, Jennifer Cotton, Nancy Prochaska, Julie Robers, Virginia Swanson, Sandy Venneman, Jena Tavromina, Candy Brake, Leslie Cummings, Emily Conn, Kathy Jones, and Leslie Rohrer. A special shout out to you all !!!

Thank you, Stephan Hienzsch, the USDF Executive Director, for attending our show, presenting the awards, and meeting members.

Activities included two happy hours with the TD; 3 competitor's breakfast; best barn/stall decorating contest (won by Twinwood from Simonton, Tx.); cocktail hour with the vendor village, Battle of the Barn Baskets – benefiting the R9 Jr/YR's; the Region 9 Championships Banquet; and a horse show hunt, & scavenger hunt. All had a good time.

Region 9 sets up a table every year to greet members, & sell the newly published Region 9 Omnibus, and new Region 9 T-Shirts. We sold over 50 omnibus (with the new national test), and 49 R9 t-shirts. Appreciate Betty Beebe for helping. Thanks for all who support our regional grants to help our members.

This year we added a table for the R9 GMOs, for flyers, literature, etc., promoting their GMOs.

And for the 3rd year, the R9 Youth had a stall/ gathering place for all youth and parents to enjoy food, drink and get information on upcoming programs.

For the first time… D4K sponsored a U-13 Regional Merit Award at Training & First Level Jr/YR Championship classes. Congrats to the R9 winners: Addison Spinelli riding Don Huerico, & Sophia Bandurski riding NETC Draco Mulfoy.
Congrats to those who received invitations to the USDF Finals. Go get them & have fun!!

Super congratulations to the **2026 Region 9 Horse Person of the Year**- Angel Gunn. Angel has been on the board of Houston Dressage Society for 6 years. She organizers the CDIs, the Region 9 Championships, and all the HDS shows. Her hard work, long hours and unwavering tenacity assures the shows are successful & fun… for the competitors, volunteers, and all who attend. She runs a well-oiled machine…and is appreciative of all who help. P.S. She also has a full time non-equestrian career, & has horses, too…where does she find the time!?! Thank you, Angel, you are awesome for HDS & the region!!!

Two **Region 9 Teaching Excellence Awards** were given this year. Congrats to Allison Stai, and Christine Colao. They both receive a check for $5000, and plan on using the funds to help educate their students, working students, and other dedicated riders with financial barriers. Giving back to others is the central theme of both recipients.
Go to The Dressage Foundation for more information about this grant. www.dressagefoundation.org

The **2026 Evie Tumlin Memorial Fund** is for amateur riders to help them pursue education for themselves and their horses. Congratulations to this year's recipient- Kathleen VanBeber, from Louisiana. To find out more information about this fund go to the Region 9 website or The Dressage Foundation.

The FEI World Cup Finals was held in Fort Worth, Tx., in April. Though the attendance was not what was expected, the rides, horses & athletes did not disappoint. Both in the dressage and show jumping the arena came alive with excitement.

Educational Events:
Region 9 has grants available for GMOs to assist in offering educational opportunities.

So far this year we have awarded a grant to:
Oklahoma Dressage Society – Kristi Wysocki Symposium – held in June.

Has been approved for a grant:
Central Texas Dressage – USDF GEI Symposium with JJ Tate @ Pine Meadow Farm on The Classical Kind Way – to be held in Nov.

To find out about Region 9 Grants for GMO's, go to: www.usdfregion9.org

Other educational events:
Symposium with Cesar Torrente – in May hosted by Alamo Dressage; & one by Corral Ranch, in Boerne, TX., in Sept.
Pine Meadow Farm with Suzzane Galdun on Rider Biomechanics.
BACH- Equine Health & Dentistry Seminar
Central Plains Dressage – David McMillian Dressage Clinic
Arkansas Dressage - CE Judges/ L Grads
Houston Dressage- Lilo Fore Symposium & meet and greet
Houston Dressage- Felicitas von Neumann-Cosel Clinic

Check out the educational articles, in the monthly R9 e-news, written by Betty Beebe, our R9 Adult Education chair. And the "Test Your Dressage IQ" questions submitted by Leslie Rohrer, our R9 Membership chair.
Our monthly e-newsletter also sports a calendar of shows & clinics, along with up-to-date news. Subscribe on the R9 website home page: www.usdfregion9.org

Region 9 Jr/YR's are preparing for the:
USDF FEI Youth Clinic coming up in November, at Paragon Farms, with Lilo Fore. Thanks again to Paragon Farms for donating their facility, for this very important clinic.

And the *USDF Youth Outreach Clinic* will be held in Jan 2027 at Texover Farm in Conroe, with John Mason. Two D4K Team clinics are happening in Oct & Nov.

2026 NAYC- six riders represented Region 9:
USDF Region 9 Juniors: Kassidy Edwards (Ivender), and Mallory Macomber (Atterupgaards Belafonte).
USDF Region 9 Young Riders: Adeline Batcheller (Luminosity JP), MK Connatser (Schnell's Highlight), Sloane Macomber (Elburg T), and Catherine Schmidt (Fontainebleau JCD).
Congrats to our YR team for winning a Silver medal with chef Marsha Lewis.

Other placings: Sloane receive 4th in team YR test. Addy receive 6th in the YR team test. Addy also received 6th in YR individual test. Addy also received 8th in freestyle. Addy, Sloane and MK all qualified for the freestyle and rode well.
Congratulations to all the riders!!!

Thanks to Marsha Lewis, the Region 9 Jr/ Yr Coordinator, and Chef d'équipes Ben Winger & Marsha Lewis for all their hard work, & long hours. We also want to thank everyone who helped raise funds this summer, through an online auction, for the Jr/YR program. The Region 9 Youth also benefit from the proceeds of the Battle of the Barn Baskets silent auction, held at the R9 Championships.

The **2026 Region 9 (in person) Summer Meeting** was held in San Antonio, Tx, hosted by Alamo Dressage Association. And organized by Leah Stephen with help from Gaye Slomka. Hotel Contessa, the host hotel, located on the River Walk, was perfect location for exploring.

The extended weekend started off with a Thursday night walking (spooky) Ghost Tour of old town San Antonio.

Friday most of us took the hop on hop off Old Town Trolley, which had 19 stops, from the Alamo, the Artisan Village, the San Fernando Cathedral, to the Japanese Tea Garden, and all interesting places in-between.

On Saturday, an all-day R9 meeting / networking session was held, with a group lunch. The GMO & R9 board members/ representatives gave reports, and exchanged ideas.There was good lively discussion…all helpful to everyone who attended. (See the 2027 Omnibus summer meeting pages for more information.)
Several of us went to dinner together on Saturday night, at The Lone Star Café.

A silent auction was also held, and we voted on the 2026 R9 T-shirt design contest. Thanks to Nicole Miller from Louisiana for submitting the winning design. It was beautifully printed on a Marine color T-Shirt.

Houston Dressage Society is hosting next summer's **July 2027 Region 9 meeting** weekend. And they will also be celebrating their 50th year as a GMO. Check the R9 e-news/website for details.

Our **Region 9 zoom meeting** is Nov 12th, 2026, followed by the Dec. in-person meeting during the 2026 Convention, in Lexington, Ky.

We are excited to be traveling to Lexington for the **USDF Annual Convention**.
PM Delegates elected to represent our Participating Members at the Board of Governors: Betty Beebe; Arlene Gaitan; Sarah Jane Martin; Barbara Lewis; Elizabeth Clifton, & Janelle Williams.
GMO Delegates, still to be assigned, are either the GMO President or a proxy is assigned.

R9 has a new **USDF Certified Instructor**. Congrats to Mimi Benton from Arkansas, for obtaining certification at 2nd level.
Arlene Gaitan, one of our **USEF Technical Delegates**, just received her FEI Level 1 Dressage Steward rating.

Our 19 **Region 9 Board** positions consist of 14 separate members/volunteers. Most are active on the national committees, working groups, tasks force, & programs, representing Region 9 & our members, and working to keep them informed. Our R9 omnibus, and R9 website list the current board members with contact information, and their yearly reports are on the R9 website. Please let them know of questions or suggestions.

The **2027 Region 9 Omnibus**, celebrating its 31st year, was published in October, (and is available in electronic version on the Region 9 website), full of information for all our members – (as is the Region 9 Website, E-News, & Facebook page). Check them out!!!! www.usdfregion9.org

100 books are printed each year, for sale at the R9 Championship Show – a historical document we treasure…included this year the new national dressage test, and an expanded Region 9 History Section. We will continue with more history each year.

New for the second year… an incentive is offered for advertisers who submit their ad with payment by the deadline. Their name is placed in a hat, with the lucky winner being given a free full-page ad in the next omnibus.

Also included in the yearly published Omnibus are GMO contacts & benefits; Region 9 board members; regional award winners; Southwest Dressage Championships info; shows; clinics; Judges, TD's & L Grads; instructors/trainers; list of USDF Certified Instructors, the current dressage test; Region 9 Jr/YR/Youth pages, a continuing educational page, a Sport Horse page, a Summer meeting section, a Convention section, and information on Region 9 Recipients of The Dressage Foundation grants.

Thank you to Nicole Miller, Arlene Gaitan, the omnibus committee, & many others, all who design, format, contribute pages, edit, proofread, collect money, handle the ads, printing & mailing!!!
We are also forever grateful of those sponsors/ advertisers helping support our region and its members. Some have been helping us for over 31 years. Thank you !!!!

We appreciate **The Dressage Foundation**. Several new grants have been added this year…to help all facets of the sport, as members work toward their dressage goals/

dreams. Several R9 riders joined the Century Club this year, as well as other members being awarded grants. All the recipients are showcased in our yearly omnibus on the TDF pages. Please check out the TDF many grants: www.dressagefoundation.org

Sadly, we loss Sally Chionsini this year. She was a past USEF Technical Delegate, served on the Region 9 board for many years, and served on USDF National committees, including chair of the Technical Delegate Committee. She also proudly completed a Dressage Foundation Century Club Ride.

Our **GMOs** are busy… besides the educational events listed earlier, they find ways to obtain & keep members…through giving scholarships, holding award banquets, offering breed shows, holding ride-a-test, & virtual shows. All include western dressage in their schooling shows, along with tests for eventers. Several have reached out to their local Pony Club. And they encourage the local barns to open the high-profile clinics to all auditors. Central Texas Dressage Society has a great Facebook page with over 3500 followers. Central Plains Dressage Society has training tips on their Facebook page.

The GMOs yearly reports are posted on the R9 website, detailing their accomplishments through the year.

Several **GMOs** celebrating **50 years**: Dallas Dressage Club, and Southern Eventing & Dressage Association. In 2027 Houston Dressage Society will proudly be joining the "Nifty Fifty Club". And in 2028 – Oklahoma Dressage Society will also celebrate the big 50. Congrats to all !!

Our GMOs are proud of their **2026 USDF GMO Awards**:

Congratulations:
to the ***Ruth Arvanette Memorial Fund Grant*** recipient: Kathryn Hanford – Terrell, Tx (Dallas Dressage Club & Nebraska Dressage Association).

to the ***2026 USDF Region 9 GMO Volunteer of the Year***: Danielle Aymond, from Geismar, LA (Southern Eventing & Dressage Association).

And to the GMOs:

2 GMO Newsletter Awards (General Interest Article):
(Less than 75 members) 1st Place: Brazos Association of Classical Horsemanship; and (75-174 members) 1st Place: Southern Eventing & Dressage Association.

2 GMO Website Awards:
(Less than 75 members) 1st Place: Brazos Association of Classical Horsemanship; and (75-174 members) Honorable Mention: Southern Eventing & Dressage Association.

Our Region currently has about 1900 members. Thank you all for your dedication…to continue a passion & love of horses !!

Respectively submitted,
Bess Bruton, Region 9 Director