

# Affordable Meals Campaign

## Sponsor: Manitoba Oat Growers Association - Report

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Campaign Dates: January 27<sup>th</sup> 2026 - February 13<sup>th</sup> 2026

## Executive Summary

University students continue to face barriers to preparing nutritious meals, including limited budgets, busy schedules, and often limited cooking skills. Survey responses collected during this campaign reinforced these challenges, with the most reported barriers being lack of affordable options, busy student life, and limited cooking skills.

**The Affordable Meals Campaign** aims to address these challenges by providing students with practical, hands-on learning experiences and accessible nutrition resources centered around versatile, budget-friendly ingredients.

**Manitoba Oat Growers Association (MOGA)** participated as a commodity sponsor in this initiative which boosted student's confidence in preparing balanced, high-fibre, budget-friendly meals and snacks. Oats are an affordable, nutrient-dense, and highly versatile staple, making them an ideal ingredient for students learning to prepare balanced meals on a budget.

Through this collaboration, Manitoba Oat Growers Association had the opportunity to:

- Increase student awareness of oats as a versatile ingredient beyond breakfast.
- Build confidence in preparing affordable, high-fibre meals and snacks.
- Provide practical, budget-friendly meal prep ideas for busy students.
- Engage directly with students through hands-on cooking classes and workshops.
- Supported campus food security efforts through registration fee donations to the campus food bank.
- Generated strong engagement across in-person workshops and digital resources.

Following are some highlights of this initiative.

## Key Engagement Metrics

The campaign demonstrated **strong student engagement** across in-person programming and digital resource utilization. Registration data reflected meaningful interest in hands-on food skills education, with particularly strong participation in the free meal prep workshop. Participation metrics and post-event feedback indicate adoption of budget-conscious cooking practices and continued intention to apply these skills at home.

### Hands-On Cooking Class:

- 4:00 pm class: 94 page views, 9 tickets sold

Eventbrite metrics showed strong interest overall, particularly for the free meal prep workshop.

### Meal Prep Workshop:

- 4:00 pm class: 171 page views, 27 tickets sold

The cooking class was supported by two student volunteers, and the workshop with one student volunteer, contributing to a welcoming and collaborative learning environment.

### Budget Friendly Meals Recipe Booklet:

- 47 Downloads / Emails collected
- 100% of survey respondents reported downloading the recipe booklet

These metrics reflect strong engagement with take-home resources that extend learning and encourage practical application after the workshop.

## Instagram Engagement

POST	ENGAGEMENT	VIEWS	LIKES	COMMENTS	SHARES	SAVES	AUDIENCE
Pop-Up Event and Workshop Promotion	46	3206	25	0	13	8	31.3% men, 68.7% women
Breakfast Ideas	21	980	16	4	1	2	39.4% men, 60.6% women
4 Oats Facts to Make Groceries Last	12	715	11	0	0	1	12.5% men, 87.5% women
10 Meal ideas With Oats	8	546	6	2	0	0	18.9% men, 81.1% women

Note: Metrics gathered on February 21st, 2026 – subject to change

## Virtual Reach

UManitoba – 76.2K followers

UMSU – 11.5K followers

U of M Agriculture & Food Science - 2623 followers

NECO – 1281 followers

Real Life Nutrition – 1583 followers

Real Life Nutrition – 725 email subscribers

## Anecdotal Feedback

Participant feedback reflected a highly positive experience, with recurring themes related to practical skill development, affordability, and the value of a supportive learning environment. Key themes included:

### Practical Skill Development & Ingredient Versatility

- Students reported gaining new ways to incorporate oats into everyday meals, particularly in savoury applications such as meatballs and meal prep recipes.
- Several participants noted that they had not previously considered oats beyond breakfast, and appreciated learning affordable substitutions and freezer-friendly options.

### Supportive & Engaging Learning Environment

- Participants described the workshops as welcoming, enjoyable, and interactive. Cooking in a group setting allowed students to ask questions, build confidence, and feel supported while learning new skills.

“I had a lot of fun and found everyone nice to speak to and ask questions.”

### Positive overall experience and future interest

- Students expressed appreciation for the initiative and its focus on affordability and health. Feedback highlighted gratitude for accessible programming that supports nutritious eating on a student budget.

“I am grateful that this initiative exists and that you want to help students cook healthy meals for little money.”

These qualitative insights support the engagement metrics, demonstrating the value of hands-on cooking education on campus, and a broadened understanding of oats as a versatile, budget-friendly ingredient beyond traditional breakfast use.

## Workshop Highlights

