Farmers Expectations of UWA

• Neil Young

• Farmer of Kojonup
• Chairman of Western Panel, GRDC
• Member of External Advisory Board, UWA
• We expect the University to provide sound information
• We expect the University to be at least up with the game
• We expect the university to understand the system consequences
• Farmers are constrained by:
  – Dollars (or lack of) to invest in change
  – The need to be profitable, at least in the medium term
  – The desire to maximise wealth
  – The constraints imposed by the physical environment
• Changing scale of operation is part of the Australian experience
• Production per on farm labour unit is still increasing
• Social effects are severe as communities drop below critical mass
• Current big ticket issues on the farm:
  – Water management
  – Fertiliser efficiency
  – Herbicide efficiency and efficacy
  – Suitable crop rotation options
• In the past, big productivity changes have come from:
  – Fallow
  – Phosphate
  – Mechanisation
  – Clover
  – Lupins
  – Trace elements
  – No-till
  – Stubble retention
• What’s the next one?
• Will UWA be part of it?
• The Challenge to UWA is to create the next step change
• Develop a close working relationship with the farmers, as equals
• UWA, like farmers, should understand its areas of competency, and maximise its impact within those fields
• Understand the game, get ahead of it and you will find you are helping to lead agriculture.