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Kathmandu founder Jan Cameron's \$5m bounty to wipe out farm cruelty

- Kelly Ryan
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Money pledge: Jan Cameron will offer financial rewards to rub out animal cruelty. Picture: Chris Crerar

Source: Herald Sun

ONE of Australia's wealthiest women has posted \$5 million to play bounty hunter.

Enigmatic Kathmandu founder Jan Cameron hopes "rewards" of up to \$30,000 will entice insiders to do in some intensive animal farmers to expose any cruelty at some battery hen and pig operations.

Estimated to be worth about \$300 million, Ms Cameron hopes the \$5 million will change the way Australians accept animal husbandry to force farmers to adopt kinder care practices for caged animals.

In an interview with the *Herald Sun*, Ms Cameron said the \$5 million to be paid over five years was one of her biggest single donations.

And that is after more than a decade of generous philanthropy in which she gives away everything she earns each year, sometimes tens of millions of dollars.

"You cannot defend the indefensible," she said of some animal practices.

"Animals are not getting fair justice and this in part is a publicity campaign to make people think of how meat makes its way to the table after being tortured on the way."

She hopes her money will help flush out cases of cruelty that may occur behind closed doors in some intensive farming operations that are partly protected by industry exemptions from normal animal cruelty laws.

Five hundred million animals - hens and pigs - are kept captive in intensive farming operations each year.

The money will be used to establish the Animals Justice Fund, to be launched this week. It will be administered by national welfare organisation Animals Australia with former policewoman Lyn White charged with investigating any allegations of cruelty, with legal advice supplied by the Barrister's Animal Welfare Panel.

Ms Cameron said she did not want to pit industry workers against their employers but wanted any who feared losing their jobs to step up with complaints of cruelty.

"I don't think any would be driven by money but it may be a bonus," she said.

The fund was not about sending farmers to the wall but about enlightening the public. "Unfortunately, no one really has access to see what's going on. Farmers are not willing to put caged hens and pigs on display because people would be horrified."

But rather than send them to the wall, she hopes her personal pledge encourages operators to see the economic benefits of adopting free-range animal practices.

"That's where the publicity campaign can encourage consumers to put their money where their mouths are through purchase power," she said.

Just a few years ago, Ms Cameron paid \$2 each for her 100 rescued hens that share her home in Tasmania.

Seems like chicken feed now that she has upped the ante by many millions more.

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