

“THE SPIRIT OF CEARÁ: STORIES FROM PEC NORDESTE 2025”



August Edition, Vol.15, 2025



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by **nupex**



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EDITORIAL



Editorial - August 2025

Ceará Global: from local to international, with identity and innovation

August arrives with the energy of renewal and, at the same time, with the pride of revisiting milestones that have placed Ceará on the national and international stage. This edition of Ceará Global highlights the most remarkable moments of PEC Nordeste 2025, an event that reinforced the region's leadership in agribusiness, innovation, and sustainability, reaffirming that our potential knows no boundaries.

One of the highlights we bring in this issue is the exclusive interview with Caio Carvalho, CEO of Aviador Cachaça, who shares the story of a brand born in the heart of Ceará and now gaining global recognition. His journey combines tradition, entrepreneurship, and the courage to transform local culture into a product of worldwide impact, exactly the spirit we seek to capture in our pages.

Ceará Global remains steadfast in its mission: to show that Ceará has much more to offer than breathtaking landscapes. We have innovation, impact-driven companies, forward-looking leaders, and sustainable initiatives that connect with today's global challenges.

May this edition inspire our readers to see Ceará for what it truly is: a state that dreams big, innovates without losing its roots, and is increasingly ready to take its rightful place in the world.

Enjoy your reading!

Ceará Global Team



PEC NORDESTE 2025: CEARÁ SHOWCASES THE STRENGTH OF ITS AGRIBUSINESS TO THE WORLD

PEC Nordeste 2025 opened on June 5, highlighting Ceará as a key player in both Brazilian and international agribusiness. With over 600 companies and 1,400 booths, the event is expected to generate R\$150 million in business and attract 100,000 visitors by Saturday (7).

Several high-quality products already on the path to internationalization—such as fruits, seafood, honey, and cashew—stand out at the fair as symbols of Ceará’s potential to reach global markets.

The strong presence of cooperatives and producers reinforces the State’s commitment to innovation, sustainability, and value creation in foreign trade. Ceará is proving that its agribusiness is strong, diverse, and ready for the world.



PEC Nordeste 2025: Ceará Showcases the Strength of Its Agribusiness to the World



WITH DISTINCTIVE VARIETIES, CEARÁ'S HONEY SETS SIGHTS ON NEW MARKETS

Ceará Global Interviews: With Distinctive Varieties, Ceará's Honey Sets Its Sights on New Markets

During PEC Nordeste 2025, we interviewed Amanda de Almeida Lopes, a consultant at CNA (The Brazilian National Confederation of Agriculture and Livestock), right after her talk "Internationalization of Beekeeping Products from Family Farming."

Amanda highlighted that although Ceará already exports honey, there is still room for growth in international markets. The state's honey stands out for its distinctive varieties, such as aroeira blossom honey, which show strong potential in countries like Canada, the United Arab Emirates, and China. However, seizing these opportunities requires investment in certified facilities, international certifications, and a well-structured export strategy.

She also introduced AgroBR, a project led by CNA in partnership with ApexBrasil and Sebrae. The initiative supports small and medium-sized rural producers through every stage of the export process — from initial training to business matchmaking, participation in international trade fairs, and missions that connect them directly with global buyers.

Ceará's beekeeping sector demonstrates not only the quality and uniqueness of its products but also the increasing readiness of local producers to engage in structured and sustainable internationalization efforts.



CEARÁ GLOBAL INTERVIEWS: CEARÁ'S ORGANIC SECTOR GROWS WITH INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS AND AUDITS



During PEC Nordeste 2025, Ceará Global interviewed Jefferson Fortes, Operations Director at Cert Quality, a Ceará-based consulting firm specializing in organic certification.

Operating across 17 Brazilian states, the company prepares rural properties, cooperatives, and agribusinesses to meet the requirements of organic certification, a key step toward accessing both domestic and international markets.

According to Fortes, Ceará has emerged as one of the leading hubs for organic farming in the Northeast region. Key certified products include acerola (fresh, powdered, and concentrated), vegetables, honey, cashew and its derivatives, as well as fruits such as watermelon, guava, papaya, and passion fruit. "Most of the state's fresh production is shipped to São Paulo, while processed goods are primarily exported to the United States and Europe," he noted.



Organic certification goes beyond sustainable farming techniques — it also encompasses rigorous social and environmental standards. “Certified operations must avoid petroleum-based inputs, ensure fair labor practices, and protect the environment. Audits, including unannounced inspections, are conducted regularly,” Fortes explained.

With global demand rising for sustainable and traceable products, Cert Quality supports producers who are committed to responsible agricultural practices. The steady growth of Ceará’s organic sector highlights the state’s potential to become a national leader in quality, social and environmental responsibility, and international market access.



CEARÁ GLOBAL INTERVIEWS: CEARÁ HOSTS BRAZIL'S LARGEST ROSE PRODUCER IN SERRA DA IBIAPABA

At the 2025 edition of PEC Nordeste, Ceará Global interviewed Dimas Nary, Sales Manager, and Sávio Lima, Financial Manager at Reijers Ceará — one of Brazil's leading flower producers. With over 200 varieties of cut flowers and ornamental plants, the company supplies supermarkets, distributors, and garden centers across the North and Northeast regions, reaching as far as Salvador.

Production takes place in the Ibiapaba mountain range, in the municipality of São Benedito, located 320 km from Fortaleza. Reijers operates across three farms, two of which are fully active, with more than 45 hectares of greenhouses cultivating a wide array of tropical flowers, orchids, and roses.

Originally from Holambra (SP) — a city with strong Dutch roots in floriculture — Reijers established itself in Ceará in 2001. Today, Brazil's largest rose production site is located in São Benedito, positioning the state as a national benchmark in the flower industry.

The company's success story underscores the strength and scalability of Ceará's floriculture sector, reinforcing the Ibiapaba region's role as a high-value agricultural hub.



BRAZILIAN ARTISANAL CHEESES FROM CEARÁ SET TO CHARM GLOBAL PALATES

Brazilian Artisanal Cheeses from Ceará Set to Charm Global Palates

From the heart of Ceará, Brazil, the aged artisanal cheeses of Fazenda Santa Mônica, in Quixeramobim, are gaining international attention. Produced under the Nossa Santa brand, these cheeses reflect the richness of the land and the care taken in every step — from pasture to packaging — delivering a truly sensory experience.



Texto do seu paragrafo

But Nossa Santa goes beyond cheese. The farm is a hub of handcrafted delights: jellies, cheese crackers, pure honey, and honeycomb — all made in-house, forming a rich ecosystem of flavors rooted in authenticity. This commitment to quality and origin gives the products a premium appeal, drawing the interest of gourmet consumers and fueling export ambitions.

With growing global demand for controlled origin, artisanal techniques, and sustainable food, Fazenda Santa Mônica stands out. Its exclusive terroir and production excellence place it at the forefront of Ceará's high-end gastronomy — ready to elevate the region's name and captivate palates worldwide.



CEARÁ: A HUB FOR SUSTAINABLE INVESTMENT



Ceará is rapidly emerging as a premier destination for international investors, driven by strategic initiatives that align economic development with sustainability. A flagship example is the Santa Quitéria Agro-Industrial Project, located in the state's interior. This ambitious venture aims to sustainably produce fertilizers from colofanite ore, essential for food production, and generate nuclear energy for Brazil using uranium extracted from the region. With a strong emphasis on quality and environmental responsibility, the project is poised to transform Brazil's agriculture and energy sectors by ensuring a stable and secure supply for national demand.

More than a production initiative, the Santa Quitéria Project is a strategic lever for food security and national development. By promoting self-sufficiency in fertilizer and energy production, while generating thousands of jobs and boosting regional income, it strengthens the local economy and contributes directly to Brazil's energy independence.



A key differentiator that attracts investors is the project's sustainable model: no tailings dams, low water consumption, and a strong commitment to minimizing environmental impact.

With its innovative, high-impact, and environmentally conscious business model, the Santa Quitéria Agro-Industrial Project offers a unique opportunity for international investors seeking both financial returns and positive social and environmental outcomes. Through this initiative, Ceará reinforces its potential to attract foreign capital, consolidating its role as a hub of innovation, sustainability, and economic growth—paving the way for a more prosperous future for the state and for Brazil.



CEARÁ GLOBAL INTERVIEWS: FROM THE FIELD TO EXPORT – AGROPAR’S PLAN TO TAKE CEARÁ’S AÇAÍ TO THE WORLD

During PEC Nordeste 2025, Ceará Global spoke with Alberto Félix, founder of Agropar, a company that is reshaping the culture of açaí in the state, overcoming technical and cultural challenges to strengthen local production.

Agropar has developed three cultivars adapted to Ceará’s soil and climate, breaking the paradigm that açaí can only be cultivated in Brazil’s Northern region. The results have exceeded expectations: fruits with high Brix levels, naturally sweeter, favored by the state’s more than 3,200 hours of annual sunlight.

Highlights of the initiative:

- Cultivars locally developed and adapted from productive parent plants;
- Expansion into strategic regions such as Cariri, Viçosa, Russas, and Apodi, focusing on irrigated areas with high cultivation potential;
- Plans to scale up the production base as an essential step toward reaching international markets;
- Participation in international trade fairs, where freeze-dried açaí was well received in markets such as Andorra—indicating real international demand;
- Initial negotiations with supermarket chains to introduce açaí into the national market as production advances.



Agropar exemplifies how innovation and technological adaptation in agriculture can drive Ceará's agribusiness toward the global market. The company's vision turns local potential into global opportunity, forging new paths for export and sustainable growth.

At Ceará Global, we continue to spotlight initiatives that bridge Ceará and the world—one bold idea at a time.





CAIO CARVALHO

CAIO CARVALHO - CAREER PILOT AND OWNER OF AVIADOR CACHAÇA

**CACHAÇA AVIADOR SHINED AT PEC NORDESTE
— CEARÁ GLOBAL INTERVIEWED CAIO
CARVALHO. FROM CEARÁ TO THE WORLD.**

Interviewer: I'd like to start by asking how Aviador cachaça was created. Could you tell us a little about the origin of the brand and how this story connects family tradition with an entrepreneurial spirit?

Caio Carvalho: Since my great-grandfather's time, our family has been planting sugarcane in the Serra da Ibiapaba, in Viçosa. With my father, we started making cachaça, and with me came the creation of the brand. Aviador was born during the pandemic, on October 23, 2020. Our first bottle was bottled exactly on the 23rd, which is Brazil's National Aviator Day, as an homage to the brand's name.

In our region, growing sugarcane is a deep-rooted tradition. We have always produced rapadura and sugarcane syrup. With my father, we began producing cachaça, and with me, the brand was born because I am a pilot. Flying, visiting other places, and seeing the differences in products gave me the vision that we had something very strong in our hands, it just needed to be presented. That's what we've been doing ever since with our brand.

Interviewer: When did the sugarcane planting start?

Caio Carvalho: My grandfather lived to be 97, and today my father is 66. The tradition goes back to my great-grandfather. That means at least two centuries working with sugarcane in Viçosa. Being a mountainous city with a favorable climate, it's perfect for growing sugarcane.

Interviewer: So, the idea for the cachaça came in 2020?

Caio Carvalho: In 2020, we were already working on creating the brand, but with the pandemic, I was flying much less. So, we took advantage of the opportunity and accelerated the certification process for the facility. We obtained certification from the Ministry of Agriculture and began working on brand positioning, which is what we continue to do today.



Interviewer: Today, Aviator already boasts important awards, including international recognition. How has the brand been received in the domestic market? And are you already exporting or have concrete plans to do so?

Caio Carvalho: Aviator grows organically. Our customer loyalty is very strong. Once someone gets to know and taste the brand, the retention rate is huge. Here in Ceará, our positioning is strong because people have embraced a sense of pride in buying a local, award-winning product, leaving behind the idea that only imported products are good. Aviator represents our region.

When we go to other states, we can compete on the same level of quality, presentation, and price as major brands, often even surpassing them in quality. As you know, Aviator's awards validate this. We know we have quality, but nothing is better than a national or international award confirming it.

Acceptance in the domestic market has been easy. Aviator is about to turn five years old and is already present in Brazil's three largest retail chains: Assaí, Atacadão, and Mix Mateus. Here in Ceará, we are strongly represented in all networks, and we are expanding into major commercial hubs such as Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. I just returned from Rio today, where I was prospecting.

At the stage we've reached, being in national chains, the next step is the international market. Our evolution has been step by step: we started in Viçosa, expanded throughout Ceará, then into major markets and national chains. Now we're preparing for the next milestone: exporting, which is very significant for our region, sending an artisanal, family-produced product abroad.

Interviewer: Do you already have an idea of which countries you want to reach? Is there any demand or negotiation underway?

Caio Carvalho: Since the end of last year, we've been in talks with a group that is the largest distributor in France and also the biggest exporter in Brazil. They work with brands like 51, Velho Barreiro, and Pitú. This group was looking for a higher-quality product, like Aviator, and that's when the conversation started. Our local distributor introduced us. I've been to Portugal to meet them, we met again here in Brazil, and we exchanged product samples. We're even considering a collaboration since they also own wineries.



Last year, Aviador didn't focus on awards, we focused on certifying our facility to meet requirements, such as obtaining the organic seal. Today, we're celebrating organic certification. We also achieved Geographical Indication (GI), which is highly valued in Europe. These differentiators, organic certification and GI, carry great weight in foreign markets, especially in Europe, which is very demanding. They value traceability, controlled use of inputs, and quality. They also consider social aspects such as formal employment and the absence of conditions akin to slavery.

Interviewer: So, would it be an indirect export? You'd sell to the company here, and they would handle the export?

Caio Carvalho: Actually, this foreign company would buy from us and handle the export process. They already have a strong presence in Brazil, in several states, so they'd ship our product along with others they already distribute. For that, we understand there are still adjustments to make to meet local regulations, but the process is underway.

Interviewer: Viçosa do Ceará played a prominent role at PEC Nordeste 2025, being recognized as the largest cachaça producer at the event. In your view, what makes the Serra da Ibiapaba a strategic region for artisanal cachaça production?

Caio Carvalho: There's something rarely discussed when it comes to cachaça: terroir. Our land provides high-quality sugarcane, rich in sugar. And sugar is what makes cachaça and rapadura. The more sugar, the more cachaça. Additionally, the water is very sweet, and the climate conditions are 100% favorable.

The production season in Viçosa usually runs from July to December, when temperatures range from 28°C to 32°C, the ideal point for fermentation. When we put the sugarcane juice in the fermenter, it heats up, but at night, the temperature stabilizes. Viçosa makes cachaça naturally, unlike Rio Grande do Sul, where heaters are needed, or the Paraíba hinterland, where cooling is necessary.

Producing cachaça in Viçosa is cultural, dating back to its foundation. In the past, the beverage was even used as a currency. There were strong projects, like Impulsiona about 25 years ago, which eventually stopped, but in 2021, after Aviador was created, we founded an association with Sebrae's support, of which I am president.



Since then, much has happened. Aviador was the first awarded cachaça, but later, several others gained national and international recognition. We made Viçosa the capital of cachaça, a title decreed by the governor. We were recognized as intangible heritage and obtained Brazil's fourth Geographical Indication (GI), after Salinas (MG), Paraty (RJ), and Abaíra (BA).

We now have an annual festival, reaching its 14th edition, and recently recorded the highest concentration of alembics in Brazil, surpassing Salinas. This figure only accounts for formalized units, but informality remains high, as there are century-old family productions. Estimates range from 100 to 130 alembics in Viçosa. If you divide that by the population, it's almost one alembic for every 500 people. Such density doesn't exist anywhere else in the world.

All this validates what's happening in Viçosa. The sector has grown significantly over the last four years, with strong support from the association, the city government, and Sebrae.

Interviewer: Does that number include informal producers?

Caio Carvalho: Yes. We tripled formalization last year with government and Sebrae support, but it's unrealistic to expect 100% formalization.

Interviewer: Aviador has been growing year after year. What have been the most important milestones in this journey, and how do you see the brand's expansion potential, especially toward the international market?

Caio Carvalho: In this short time, we've had many achievements. We were the first awarded cachaça in the municipality and, in 2022, were named the world's best in London. We were also pioneers in implementing blend technology, which harmonizes different cachaças. Additionally, Aviador was the first brand to enter major state chains and later national chains. Another milestone was becoming Ceará's first organic cachaça and one of the few in the Northeast, as well as the first to receive the Geographical Indication seal.

The GI is a designation for regions with unique quality, like Canastra cheese in Minas Gerais or Champagne in France. It took three years of work with Sebrae and consultants to create the statute, guidelines, and technical standards.



We were also the first cachaça from Viçosa to receive an international award. The London competition is for spirits worldwide, not just cachaça. In 2022, we stood out; last year, for example, the top spot went to a Chinese gin.

Interviewer: Can you share some production numbers?

Caio Carvalho: We are an artisanal family production. Given the brand's strength, people assume huge volumes, but we work with value-added products. We produce about 250,000 bottles per annual harvest. Around 60% is sold, and the rest is stored for aging.

Interviewer: For those looking at the premium cachaça sector and thinking of investing in Ceará, what opportunities would you highlight? Is there room for new businesses, partnerships, or innovation?

Caio Carvalho: There's a lot of room. The North and Northeast markets were always dominated by industrial aguardentes. There was no real showcase for quality products like ours. Today, consumers seek unique experiences and high-quality products.

Even with many alembics, the average production is 30,000 to 50,000 liters per producer. If you divide that by Ceará's population, it's not even one shot per person. And we're only talking about the local market. Brazil exports just 2% of its cachaça production. There's a long way to go.

Interviewer: Is there room for foreign investors?

Caio Carvalho: I believe so. We see interest from European groups that invest in wineries and tourism while also distributing worldwide. Having foreign capital here would be a game changer to boost the entire production chain, just like it happened with whiskey, tequila, and vodka in their respective countries.



Interviewer: Aviator's participation in PEC Nordeste brought significant visibility. How do you assess its impact, and what are the next steps?

Caio Carvalho: PEC grows every year and may soon become PEC Brasil. The first time I participated, I was impressed by its quality. It's a showcase for those of us in agribusiness. We gained visibility and achieved strong sales during the event, both to final consumers and points of sale.

Our next goal is to participate in national and international trade shows, such as the APAS Show, one of Brazil's largest supermarket industry events. I've attended twice as a visitor, but we aim to exhibit soon.

Interviewer: What is the role of Ceará's cachaça and Aviator in promoting Brazilian culture, economy, and image abroad?

Caio Carvalho: Nothing represents Brazil better than cachaça. Just as tequila represents Mexico and whiskey represents Scotland, cachaça is genuinely Brazilian. Authorities must embrace this cause.

Our role with Aviator is to validate the quality of Brazilian products. Today, Viçosa is no longer just a small town; it's globally recognized, with awards in the U.S., Australia, and Europe. This is a source of pride not only for us but for the entire region.

When we win awards, the headlines don't say "Aviator"; they say "Cachaça from Viçosa do Ceará." We're carrying the name of our region, state, and Brazil to the world. Our goal is to keep showcasing Brazil's best to our people and to the world.

INTERVIEW BY LUAN CAVALCANTI
CEARA GLOBAL TIME
JUNE, 2025



AUGUST EDITION, 2025



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