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# 1 Experimental validation of a 2D overland flow model 2 using high resolution water depth and velocity data

3 L. Cea<sup>\*1</sup>, C. Legout<sup>2</sup>, F. Darboux<sup>3</sup>, M. Esteves<sup>4</sup>, G. Nord<sup>2</sup>

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## 4 Abstract

This paper presents a validation of a two-dimensional overland flow model using empirical laboratory data. Unlike previous publications in which model performance is evaluated as the ability to predict an outlet hydrograph, we use high resolution 2D water depth and velocity data to analyze to what degree the model is able to reproduce the spatial distribution of these variables. Several overland flow conditions over two impervious surfaces of the order of one square meter with different micro and macro-roughness characteristics are studied. The first surface is a simplified representation of a sinusoidal terrain with three crests and furrows, while the second one is a mould of a real agricultural seedbed terrain. We analyze four different bed friction parameterizations and we show that the performance of formulations which consider the transition between laminar, smooth turbulent and rough turbulent flow do not improve the results obtained with Manning or Keulegan formulas for rough turbulent flow. The simulations performed show that using Keulegan formula with a physically-based definition of the bed roughness coefficient, a two-dimensional shallow water model is able to reproduce satisfactorily the flow hydrodynamics. It is shown that, even if the resolution of the topography data and numerical mesh are high enough to include all the small scale features of the bed surface, the roughness coefficient must account for the macro-roughness

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<sup>\*</sup>E.T.S. Ingenieros de Caminos Canales y Puertos, Universidad de A Coruña, 15071, A Coruña, Spain. [luis.cea@udc.es](mailto:luis.cea@udc.es) / [+34981167000](tel:+34981167000) Ext.1492 March 4, 2014

<sup>1</sup>Environmental and Water Engineering Group (GEAMA), Civil Engineering School, University of A Coruña, Spain

<sup>2</sup>UJF-Grenoble 1 / CNRS / G-INP / IRD, LTHE UMR 5564, Grenoble, F-38041, France

<sup>3</sup>INRA, UR0272, UR Science du sol, Centre de recherche Val de Loire, CS 40001, F-45075

Orléans Cedex 2, France

characteristics of the terrain in order to correctly reproduce the flow hydrodynamics.

5 *Key words:* overland flow, 2D shallow water equations, bed roughness, Large  
6 Scale Particle Image Velocimetry, laser scanner

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## 7 **1. INTRODUCTION**

8 Several studies on the experimental validation of overland flow models based  
9 on the two-dimensional shallow water equations have shown that, with a proper  
10 bed friction calibration and a well defined Digital Terrain Model (DTM), these  
11 kind of models are able to produce accurate predictions of the outlet hydrograph  
12 in a basin (Cea et al., 2010a,b; Howes et al., 2006; Kivva and Zheleznyak, 2005;  
13 Morgali and Linsley, 1965; Yan and Kahawita, 1989; Zhang and Cundy, 1989).  
14 The evaluation of model performance in all these studies is based on the correct  
15 prediction of the outlet hydrograph generated by a rainfall event, which is of most  
16 importance for flood forecasting applications. However, a distributed model gives  
17 much more information regarding the spatial distribution of water depth and ve-  
18 locity, which might be used in contaminant transport and erosion models. In fact,  
19 there has been a trend in the last years to develop physically-based water ero-  
20 sion and solute transport models including the representation of processes at their  
21 lowest scales (Hairsine and Rose, 1992b,a; Jomaa et al., 2010; Nord and Esteves,  
22 2007, 2010; Shaw et al., 2006, 2009). These models use formulations that require  
23 a very detailed spatial characterization of the flow field (water depth, velocity and  
24 bed friction) in order to take advantage of their full potential. The problem of  
25 predicting flow transport capacity demands not only a proper sediment transport  
26 equation, but a reliable means of modelling overland flow hydraulics on rough

27 surfaces (Abrahams et al., 1998). In this vein, several studies have been devoted  
28 to the physical characterization of bed roughness in order to improve the predic-  
29 tion capability of overland flow models (Jarvela, 2002; Shaw et al., 2009), and it  
30 has been recognized in previous laboratory studies involving overland flow condi-  
31 tions that the effective bed roughness coefficient varies substantially with the flow  
32 properties due to additional head losses generated by small scale flow features  
33 which are not resolved in the numerical models (Fraga et al., 2013; Howes et al.,  
34 2006; Lawrence, 2000; Shaw et al., 2006; Tatard et al., 2008).

35 However, an accurate prediction of the outlet hydrograph does not guarantee  
36 that the hydraulics within the plot is properly computed, and so such an approach  
37 is not a thorough model validation. One of the main conclusions of the work of  
38 Tatard et al. (2008) was that the Froude number was not predicted by any of the  
39 three models tested on a 40 m<sup>2</sup> plot and even the general pattern was missed.  
40 This highlights the need to evaluate the performance of two-dimensional overland  
41 flow models in terms of their capability to reproduce the spatial distribution of  
42 water depth and velocity at the same time. Until now, very few studies have made  
43 such evaluation. Tatard et al. (2008) compared measured and modelled depths  
44 and velocities at selected points without performing a comparison on the whole  
45 plot. More recently, Mügler et al. (2011) intended to make an evaluation of what  
46 occurs within the plot by comparing measured and modelled tracer breakthrough  
47 curves of point-source injection of tracer under rainfall conditions. Such an ap-  
48 proach aims at assessing if the actual travel time of a tracer is well reproduced by  
49 the model. However, it is a spatially integrated approach that does not allow the  
50 direct comparison of observed and modelled depth-velocity maps at the mesh size  
51 scale. To the best of our knowledge, the work presented in this paper provides

52 for the first time a direct comparison of modelled and measured water depth and  
 53 velocity fields under surface runoff conditions. We present the experimental vali-  
 54 dation of a distributed overland flow model based on the two-dimensional shallow  
 55 water equations using Large Scale Particle Image Velocimetry (LSPIV) data for  
 56 the surface velocity and laser scanner data for the water depth. Six test cases over  
 57 two impervious surfaces with different micro and macro-roughness characteristics  
 58 are used to validate the model, and to analyze the sensitivity of model performance  
 59 to the bed friction parameterization and to the spatial resolution of the DTM and  
 60 numerical mesh. In all the test cases the water depth was always less than 10 mm.

## 61 2. NUMERICAL MODEL AND SOLVER

62 Overland flow models based on the two-dimensional shallow water equations  
 63 solve the following depth-averaged mass and momentum conservation equations:

$$\frac{\partial h}{\partial t} + \frac{\partial q_x}{\partial x} + \frac{\partial q_y}{\partial y} = 0 \quad (1)$$

$$\frac{\partial q_x}{\partial t} + \frac{\partial}{\partial x} \left( \frac{q_x^2}{h} + \frac{gh^2}{2} \right) + \frac{\partial}{\partial y} \left( \frac{q_x q_y}{h} \right) = -gh \frac{\partial z_b}{\partial x} - \frac{\tau_{b,x}}{\rho} \quad (2)$$

$$\frac{\partial q_y}{\partial t} + \frac{\partial}{\partial x} \left( \frac{q_x q_y}{h} \right) + \frac{\partial}{\partial y} \left( \frac{q_y^2}{h} + \frac{gh^2}{2} \right) = -gh \frac{\partial z_b}{\partial y} - \frac{\tau_{b,y}}{\rho} \quad (3)$$

64 where  $z_b$  is the bed elevation,  $h$  is the water depth,  $(q_x, q_y)$  are the two components  
 65 of the unit discharge,  $(\tau_{b,x}, \tau_{b,y})$  are the two horizontal components of the bed fric-  
 66 tion stress,  $\rho$  is the water density and  $g$  is the gravity acceleration. Turbulent shear  
 67 stresses have been neglected in Equations (2-3) because under runoff conditions,  
 68 with water depths of a few millimetres, their influence in the momentum equations  
 69 is negligible compared to bed friction.

70 The bed friction stress in Equations (2-3) can be expressed as:

$$\frac{\tau_{b,x}}{\rho} = C_f |\mathbf{U}| U_x \quad \frac{\tau_{b,y}}{\rho} = C_f |\mathbf{U}| U_y \quad (4)$$

71 where  $|\mathbf{U}|$  is the modulus of the depth-averaged horizontal velocity,  $(U_x, U_y)$  are  
72 the two horizontal components of the depth-averaged velocity, and  $C_f$  is a friction  
73 coefficient. Several bed friction formulations have been considered in the simu-  
74 lations presented in this paper, including the formulas of Keulegan, Manning and  
75 Darcy for rough turbulent flow, the formula of Colebrook-White for smooth and  
76 rough turbulent flow, and the formula for laminar flow (Table 1).

77 The shallow water equations are solved with a finite volume solver. The nu-  
78 merical schemes used in the solver assure the conservation of mass, so that no wa-  
79 ter is lost or gained during the computation due to numerical errors. The convec-  
80 tive terms are discretized with an explicit high-order Godunov type scheme based  
81 on Roe's approximate Riemman solver (LeVeque, 2002). Godunov schemes are  
82 commonly used in shallow water codes because they can deal efficiently with the  
83 development of shock waves, providing accurate and stable results (Toro, 2001).  
84 This is especially interesting in rapidly varying flow applications, where regions  
85 of subcritical and supercritical flows coexist, as it is the case of overland flow over  
86 a complex topography. The bed elevation and bed friction terms in the momentum  
87 equations are discretized with the upwind scheme presented in Cea and Vázquez-  
88 Cendón (2012). A semi-implicit discretization scheme is used for the bed friction  
89 to enhance the numerical stability of the solver. In order to model the wetting and  
90 drying of certain regions of the spatial domain, the control volumes are allowed to  
91 wet and dry during the simulation. For that purpose a wet-dry tolerance parameter  
92 is defined, such that if the water depth in a cell is lower than this tolerance the cell  
93 is considered to be dry. The water depth is never forced to be zero, in order to

94 keep the mass conservation property of the scheme. In all the simulations pre-  
95 sented in this paper the wet-dry tolerance parameter was set to 0.01 mm. Model  
96 output was insensitive to further reductions of this value. A detailed description  
97 of the numerical schemes used in the solver can be found in Cea et al. (2010a) and  
98 in Cea and Vázquez-Cendón (2012).

### 99 **3. EXPERIMENTAL TEST CASES AND DATASETS**

#### 100 *3.1. Experimental test cases*

101 Two moulds of terrain with different complexity were used in the laboratory  
102 experiments, which will be referred to as sinusoidal mould (Figure 1) and agricul-  
103 tural mould (Figure 2a). The sinusoidal mould is a square of 1.20 m by 1.20 m  
104 which consists of three parallel crests and furrows with a sinusoidal shape, with  
105 a wave length of 0.20 m and an amplitude of 0.01 m. The DTM was measured  
106 with a spatial resolution of 0.5 mm. The surface of the sinusoidal mould is made  
107 of a thin layer of sand with a mean diameter of approximately 0.5-1.0 mm, which  
108 is glued to an impervious surface. Therefore, there is no infiltration in the experi-  
109 ments. We will refer by micro-roughness to the bed roughness linked to the sand  
110 texture. The water supply was located on the upper part of the surface. The inlet  
111 was 0.10 m wide and was set perpendicular to the direction of the largest slope  
112 on each test case. Four different combinations of flow rates and slopes on the si-  
113 nusoidal mould have been considered for model validation (Table 2). The slopes  
114 in the X- and Y-directions as well as the input flow rates were selected experi-  
115 mentally to obtain specific conditions that would help in assessing the quality of  
116 the modelling results. In the different test cases water flows in 1, 2 or 3 furrows,  
117 while always being at the limit of overflowing to the next one. For these experi-

118 mental conditions the water depth was less than 10 mm in the whole mould. The  
119 Reynolds number in the main furrows varies between 1000 and 12000, depending  
120 on the test case and on the furrow considered, while the Froude number varies  
121 between zero and 5, although in most of the mould it is larger than one.

122 The agricultural mould is a square of 0.60 m by 0.60 m representative of a  
123 seedbed. The mould is a perfect reproduction of a natural seedbed obtained with a  
124 methodology similar to the one presented in Kamphorst and Duval (2001). All the  
125 experiments were performed on that single reproduction. It exhibits two main par-  
126 allel furrows oriented along the X-direction. The width of these furrows is of the  
127 order of 0.10-0.15 m (Figure 2e). The surface of the agricultural mould is made of  
128 plaster and is therefore much smoother than that of the sinusoidal mould. On the  
129 other hand, in the agricultural mould there is a macro-roughness formed by small  
130 changes in surface topography, as a result of different sized soil aggregates present  
131 in the actual seedbed. In order to determine how the representation of these small  
132 topographic changes is affected by the DTM resolution, we have filtered the orig-  
133 inal DTM using average filters of different size, and we have defined the residual  
134 length at each point of the mould as the difference between the original and filtered  
135 DTM's. The spatial resolution of the original agricultural mould DTM is 2 mm.  
136 A filter of 4 mm produces almost no effect on the original DTM, which confirms  
137 that this resolution is high enough to capture all the topography features. A filter  
138 of 8 mm gives an average residual length of 0.35 mm and a maximum residual  
139 length of 6 mm, which is of the order of magnitude of the water depth. If the  
140 filter size is increased to 16 mm the maximum residual length increases to 12 mm.  
141 Larger filters introduce a smoothing effect in the macrotopography and distort the  
142 definition of the two main longitudinal furrows (Figure 2c and d). The water was



143 supplied on the whole width of the upper part of the surface. However, the water  
144 systematically enters the mould through the two main furrows, as indicated by the  
145 arrows in Figure 2a. Two combinations of flow rates and slopes in the X-direction  
146 on the agricultural mould have been used for model validation (Table 2). These  
147 were selected in such a way that water flows either in two separated furrows or  
148 in two connected furrows. In this case, only the velocity field was available for  
149 model validation.

### 150 3.2. Datasets

151 For evaluation and comparison purposes, all measurements were performed at  
152 steady state. The flow rates were measured separately at the outlet of each furrow  
153 by automatically weighing the volume of water for 20 s to 2 min depending on the  
154 flow rate for the sinusoidal mould. For the agricultural mould, the total flow rates  
155 were measured by manual sample collection at the outlet every 2 min.

156 The maps of flow depth in the sinusoidal mould were obtained after subtraction  
157 of two elevation maps acquired successively (i.e., subtraction of the water surface  
158 map from the DTM without water). Both elevation datasets were measured using  
159 the instantaneous profile laser scanner described in Darboux and Huang (2003)  
160 according to the protocol presented in Legout et al. (2012). The spatial resolution  
161 was 0.5 mm in X- and Y-directions. The uncertainty was experimentally assessed  
162 to 0.5 mm with maximum values of 1 mm. It should be remarked that the maps of  
163 flow depths were not measured on the agricultural mould.

164 The maps of surface velocity measurements were obtained by Large Scale Par-  
165 ticle Image Velocimetry. Based on the acquisition of successive images of tracers  
166 flowing on the surface, the LSPIV technique estimates the movement of tracer  
167 particles between image pairs using a cross-correlation analysis. More details on

168 the adaptation of this well-known technique to the case of very shallow flows such  
169 as overland flow are presented in Legout et al. (2012). The spatial resolution of  
170 the velocity map was 5 mm. The ratios between surface velocities obtained with  
171 LSPIV and the average velocity on the water column were estimated in Legout  
172 et al. (2012) as 0.8 and 0.9 respectively on the sinusoidal and agricultural mould.  
173 In the following section, the velocity measurements were corrected by those ratios  
174 for the comparison between the experimental surface velocity and the modelled  
175 depth-averaged velocity. The uncertainty of the surface velocities was experimen-  
176 tally assessed to 0.03 m/s with maximum values of roughly 0.10 m/s.

## 177 **4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

178 In this section we analyze the performance of the overland flow model pre-  
179 sented in section 2 against the experimental data described in section 3. Model  
180 performance is evaluated by comparing the spatial distribution of water depth  
181 and velocity. In order to quantify the numerical-experimental agreement, the root  
182 mean square error is computed for each simulation. As mentioned in section 3,  
183 in the agricultural mould there are no available water depth measurements and  
184 therefore, only the velocity field is used for comparison.

### 185 *4.1. Mesh convergence*

186 The mesh size is a critical parameter in any numerical model, as it has im-  
187 portant consequences on the accuracy of the results, as well as on the compu-  
188 tation time required to solve the model equations. Considering that the level of  
189 macro-roughness of the two terrains considered in this study is very different, an  
190 independent mesh convergence analysis was performed for each terrain, using for  
191 that purpose the flow conditions of the test cases S1 (sinusoidal mould) and A1

192 (agricultural mould). Table 3 shows the properties of the different grids used in  
193 the mesh convergence analysis.

194 The topography of the sinusoidal mould is quite smooth and regular and there-  
195 fore, its main features are well captured even with a rather coarse mesh. On the  
196 other hand the agricultural mould has a more irregular topography, including soil  
197 aggregates up to 10-20 mm in size. In this case the mesh size has an important  
198 impact on the accuracy of the bed elevation definition. The spatial resolution of  
199 meshes A1M2, A1M3 and A1M4 (Table 3) is lower than that of the original DTM  
200 and therefore, there is a loss of accuracy in the bed topography used in the numer-  
201 ical model.

202 In both the sinusoidal and the agricultural terrains, the results obtained with  
203 the two finest meshes (S1M1 and S1M2 in the sinusoidal mould and A1M1 and  
204 A1M2 in the agricultural mould) are almost identical, and show similar flow pat-  
205 terns to those obtained with meshes S1M3 and A1M3 respectively (Figures 3 and  
206 4). Nonetheless, the maximum water depths and velocities are slightly diffused  
207 with the latter meshes. The results obtained with the meshes S1M4 and A1M4  
208 are clearly very diffusive and are not able to capture the maximum values of the  
209 water depth and velocity, although the general flow pattern can still be identified.  
210 Therefore, we have decided to work with the mesh S1M2 in the sinusoidal mould  
211 and A1M2 in the agricultural mould, which have a spatial resolution of 5 mm  
212 and 4 mm respectively. These meshes show a good compromise between com-  
213 putation time and accuracy on model output (Table 3). Results obtained with the  
214 finest meshes (S1M1 and A1M1) do not show significant differences while the  
215 computation time increases considerably.

216 4.2. Keulegan formulation applied to the sinusoidal mould

217 The surface of the sinusoidal mould is made of sand grains with a diameter  
218 within 0.5 and 1.0 mm. In non-cohesive beds without bedforms, river hydraulics  
219 manuals recommend to use a roughness height within 1 and 3 times the diameter  
220 of the sediment (Garcia, 2006). Based on this approximation, we have used a  
221 roughness height of  $k_s = 1.5$  mm in the simulations of the sinusoidal mould test  
222 cases. It should be noticed that this approximation is recommended for river flows  
223 and not specifically for overland flows, where the water depth in some regions  
224 might be of the same order of magnitude as the roughness height. Nonetheless,  
225 as it will be shown in the following this bed roughness coefficient gives very  
226 satisfactory results in the four sinusoidal mould test cases.

227 Using Keulegan formulation with  $k_s = 1.5$  mm the overall experimental-  
228 numerical agreement is very satisfactory (Figures 5-11). The model predicts cor-  
229 rectly the number of furrows which contribute to drain the inlet discharge (3 fur-  
230 rows in test cases S1 and S2, two furrows in test case S3, and one single furrow  
231 in test case S4). The prediction of the water depth field is very good in the four  
232 test cases. The root mean square errors on the water depth are 0.6 mm, 0.7 mm,  
233 0.7 mm and 0.9 mm for the test cases S1 to S4 respectively (Table 4), which are  
234 of the same order of magnitude as the diameter of the sediment which covers the  
235 mould surface. In all test cases the error on the water depth is less than 1 mm in  
236 more than 90% of the measurement points, while it is greater than 2 mm in less  
237 than 1% of the points (Figure 9). The accuracy on the prediction of the hydraulic  
238 jump which appears in the test cases S1 and S4 at the location  $y = 0.78$  m in the  
239 profile  $x = 0.8$  m is remarkable (Figure 11).

240 The comparison of the measured and computed velocities has a larger un-

241 certainty for two reasons. Firstly, the LSPIV technique gives abnormally small  
242 velocities in regions where the water depth is very small, because the tracers oc-  
243 casionally rest attached to the rough bed surface. This occurs typically at the flow  
244 inlet and in the crests between furrows. In order to compare the velocities only  
245 the points in which the unit discharge is larger than  $0.5 \text{ cm}^2/\text{s}$  were considered.  
246 This value was adopted because it defines rather precisely the shape of the furrows  
247 (Figures 5-8), and it excludes the regions where the LSPIV velocity has large mea-  
248 surement errors. Another source of uncertainty in the comparison of velocity data  
249 is the fact that LSPIV measures the surface velocity, while the numerical model  
250 computes the depth-averaged velocity. In order to estimate the surface velocity  
251 from the model output, the ratios mentioned in Legout et al. (2012) and in sec-  
252 tion 3.2 were adopted. With these criteria, the root mean square errors on the  
253 velocity are 0.089 m/s, 0.058 m/s, 0.083 m/s and 0.065 m/s respectively for the  
254 test cases S1 to S4 (Figure 10).

255 It should be noted that in the test case S1 (Figure 5), there is a clear disagree-  
256 ment between numerical predictions and experimental data in the third furrow,  
257 which is the one with the smallest water depth. The experimental measurements  
258 of water depth and velocity reveal a region between  $x = 0.1 \text{ m}$  and  $x = 0.4 \text{ m}$   
259 where the flow is locally accelerated (higher velocity and lower water depth). The  
260 same effect appears in the test case S3 (Figure 7), but in this case in the second  
261 furrow (which is in this case the one which presents the smallest water depths).  
262 This local acceleration does not appear in the numerical model, as it can be ob-  
263 served in the velocity fields shown in Figures 5 and 8, and it is the reason why  
264 the root mean square error is larger in these test cases than in the cases S2 and  
265 S4. This discrepancy is represented in Figure 10 by the cloud of points in which

266 the LSPIV velocity is clearly higher than the numerical velocity. We have tried  
267 unsuccessfully to improve the velocity predictions in these regions using different  
268 bed friction formulations (see section 4.3). We have not found a clear physical  
269 explanation for this effect.

#### 270 *4.3. Other bed friction formulations applied to the sinusoidal mould*

271 The results shown in the previous section indicate that Keulegan formulation  
272 with a definition of the roughness height based on the physical properties of the  
273 mould surface (in our case the sediment diameter) performs satisfactorily in the  
274 sinusoidal mould. As roughness formulations are known to affect significantly the  
275 model performance (Mügler et al., 2011), we have explored the possibility of im-  
276 proving the predictions of the model by using other bed friction parameterizations.  
277 For that purpose we have considered the standard bed friction formulations shown  
278 in Table 1. Three of these formulations (Keulegan, Manning and Darcy with a con-  
279 stant friction factor) were developed for rough turbulent flow. The forth formu-  
280 lation is based on the formula of Colebrook-White, and considers the transitions  
281 between laminar flow, smooth turbulent flow and rough turbulent flow. In this  
282 latter formulation the laminar bed friction formula is used if the local Reynolds  
283 number is smaller than 2000 ( $4Uh/\nu < 2000$ ), otherwise the Colebrook-White  
284 equation is applied. In all cases the bed roughness parameter was calibrated for  
285 the test case S1 and then used in the test cases S2, S3 and S4.

286 After calibration of their respective friction parameters, all the parameteri-  
287 zations give a similar agreement with the experimental data (Tables 4 and 4).  
288 Their performance considering the water depth and velocity spatial distributions  
289 is rather satisfactory, specially regarding the water depth. The agreement in the  
290 velocity field is slightly better when using Keulegan or Manning formulations,

291 although the performance of Darcy and Colebrook-White formulations is still ac-  
292 ceptable. The main advantage of Keulegan parameterization is that the roughness  
293 height is more easily related to the roughness characteristics of the terrain than the  
294 Manning or Darcy coefficients.

#### 295 4.4. Agricultural mould

296 The most significant difference between the sinusoidal and the agricultural  
297 moulds is that the latter one includes soil aggregates which create a certain level  
298 of macro-roughness. As shown in Figure 2, the size and location of the soil ag-  
299 gregates is well captured by the numerical meshes with a spatial resolution of  
300 2 mm and 4 mm (A1M1 and A1M2), but they are reduced as the grid resolution is  
301 reduced. The macro-roughness generated by these soil aggregates induces small  
302 scale accelerations and decelerations in the flow field, causing additional head  
303 losses. One of the purposes of the agricultural terrain test cases is to analyze if a  
304 high resolution shallow water model with a micro-roughness coefficient defined  
305 from the bed material (in this case plaster) is able to reproduce the experimental  
306 velocity field.

307 Test case A1 has been used for model calibration and to analyze how the  
308 bed friction coefficient should be modified in order to account for the macro-  
309 roughness. Test case A2 has been used for model validation, using the same  
310 roughness parameterization as in case A1.

311 Figure 12 shows that the velocity field computed using a bed roughness coeffi-  
312 cient for plaster (either  $k_s = 1$  mm in Keulegan formulation or  $n = 0.013$  s m<sup>-1/3</sup>  
313 in Manning formulation) are far from the experimental ones, even if the com-  
314 putations were done with a high resolution mesh which includes all the small  
315 scale details of the topography. The computed velocities are too large compared

316 with the LSPIV measurements. The root mean square error obtained with Keule-  
317 gan and Manning formulas using these parameters are respectively 0.095 m/s and  
318 0.100 m/s (Table 5).

319 Model outputs is improved significantly if a larger bed friction coefficient  
320 is used. After calibration, the coefficients which produce the best numerical-  
321 experimental agreement were found to be  $k_s = 30$  mm and  $n = 0.050$  s m<sup>-1/3</sup>,  
322 the root mean square error for the velocity being 0.040 m/s for both cases. The  
323 velocity fields computed with these parameters show a good global agreement  
324 with the LSPIV data (Figure 12). Both, experimental and numerical results show  
325 a shallow and narrow arm which develops to the left of the upper furrow and joins  
326 the lower furrow further downstream.

327 It can be noticed in Figure 12 that the numerical model gives some locally  
328 high velocity values which do not appear in the experimental data. These local  
329 velocity peaks are due to the highly irregular topography created by the soil ag-  
330 gregates. The energy losses induced by these high frequency accelerations are  
331 not well represented by the shallow water equations with the standard bed friction  
332 formulations, even if a very detailed grid and DTM are used in the computations.  
333 This explains the high value of the bed friction coefficient found in the calibration  
334 ( $k_s = 30$  mm and  $n = 0.050$  s m<sup>-1/3</sup>).

335 The roughness coefficient in Keulegan formulation might be related to the  
336 macro-roughness of the bed surface. For this purpose, the roughness height in  
337 Keulegan formulation was defined on a physical basis as  $k_s = Al_\Delta$ , where  $l_\Delta$  is  
338 a local measure of the macro-roughness length scale, and  $A$  is a constant of order  
339 1. The level of macro-roughness in the agricultural mould is not homogeneous,  
340 the spatial density and size of the soil aggregates in the upper furrow being lower



341 than in the lower furrow. Therefore, a spatially variable macro-roughness length  
342 scale  $l_{\Delta}$  was defined from the residuals ( $\Delta z$ ) obtained after filtering the original  
343 DTM with an average filter of size  $\Delta$ . After trying several definitions of  $l_{\Delta}$  and  
344 filter sizes, a suitable definition for the roughness height was obtained with  $A = 1$ ,  
345 and  $l_{\Delta} = \max(\Delta z)$ , where the residuals  $\Delta z$  are computed using an average filter  
346 of size  $\Delta = 10$  mm. The velocity results obtained using this *macro-roughness*  
347 *based* definition for the roughness height ( $k_s = \max(\Delta z)$ ) are shown in Fig-  
348 ure 12. There is not a significant improvement relative to the results obtained with  
349 a constant roughness coefficient ( $k_s = 30$  mm), but in this case the values of  $k_s$   
350 vary locally according to the physical characteristics of the macro-roughness, as  
351 shown in Figure 13.

352 The same roughness parameterizations applied to the test case A2 gives sat-  
353 isfactory results (Figure 13). Although the quantitative agreement between nu-  
354 merical and experimental data is not as good as in test case A1 (Table 5), the  
355 differences are of the same order as the uncertainty on the experimental surface  
356 velocity (section 3.2). This increase in the root mean square error is to some extent  
357 explained by the gaps in the experimental velocity data which can be observed in  
358 Figure 13. Due to the extremely low water depths and the high surface roughness  
359 of the agricultural mould, there are some isolated spots in which tracers could not  
360 move and thus velocity was not correctly measured. This introduces spurious dis-  
361 agreements with the numerical model which are reflected in the root mean square  
362 error. Nonetheless, visual comparison of the velocity fields in Figure 13 shows a  
363 similar global agreement to that of test case A1.

## 364 5. CONCLUSIONS

365 The performance of an overland flow model based on the two-dimensional  
366 shallow water equations has been analyzed using high-resolution distributed mea-  
367 surements of water depth and velocity. Several flow conditions over two impervi-  
368 ous moulds with different micro and macro-roughness characteristics have been  
369 used for model validation.

370 The flow in the sinusoidal mould, which represents a terrain with a regular to-  
371 pography and no macro-roughness, is properly represented by the two-dimensional  
372 shallow water equations with a constant bed friction coefficient. This latter can  
373 be related to the micro-roughness characteristics of the bed surface. Manning and  
374 Keulegan formulations produce results with similar accuracy. More complex for-  
375 mulations which consider the transitions between laminar, smooth turbulent and  
376 rough turbulent flow conditions, do not improve model performance.

377 In terrains with a certain level of macro-roughness, as it is the case of the agri-  
378 cultural mould with soil aggregates, the two-dimensional shallow water equations  
379 with a bed friction coefficient defined from the micro-roughness of the bed sur-  
380 face are not able to accurately reproduce the flow field. This is because the soil  
381 aggregates which define the macro-roughness produce small scale accelerations  
382 and decelerations in the flow field, which generate additional head losses. Even  
383 if the mesh size is smaller than the soil aggregates, these head losses cannot be  
384 captured by the model equations. In order to correctly reproduce the flow hydro-  
385 dynamic, the bed roughness coefficient must account for the macro-roughness of  
386 the terrain generated by the presence of soil aggregates.

387 In the agricultural mould the bed roughness height used in Keulegan formu-  
388 lation ( $k_s$ ) could be related to the local macro-roughness length scale of the bed

389 surface ( $l_{\Delta}$ ) by the simple relation ( $k_s = l_{\Delta}$ ). In the test cases analyzed in this  
390 work a proper definition of  $l_{\Delta}$  is the maximum residual obtained after filtering the  
391 original DTM with a filter size of 10 mm, and it is related to the size of the soil  
392 aggregates. The problem with this approach when applied to larger scales is that  
393 a very fine spatial resolution is required in order to apply a 10 mm filter to the  
394 DTM, which limits the applicability of a *macro-roughness based* definition of  $k_s$ .

395 These results show that using a physically-based definition of the bed rough-  
396 ness coefficient, a two-dimensional shallow water model is able to reproduce the  
397 velocity and water depth patterns under runoff conditions. In the test cases ana-  
398 lyzed in this paper the average errors on the water depth and velocity were 0.7 mm  
399 and 0.07 m/s respectively. This justifies the use of the shallow water equations in  
400 physically-based erosion and solute transport models that require a very detailed  
401 spatial characterization of the flow field in order to take advantage of their full  
402 potential. Regarding the applicability of the model to larger scales, and thus more  
403 relevant for hillslope hydrology understanding, the limiting factor is the DEM and  
404 mesh resolution required for the computations. A spatial resolution of the order of  
405 10 mm is required to capture the flow patterns and the range of depth and velocity  
406 values. Applying such a high resolution shallow water model to plot scales of a  
407 few hundreds of square meters would lead to reasonable computation times (of  
408 the order of 5 h in a standard laptop for a 100 m<sup>2</sup> plot). Such resolution is also  
409 consistent with what can be obtained from stereophotogrammetry or laser scanner  
410 techniques in field conditions.

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Table 1: Bed friction formulations considered in the numerical simulations.  $f$ : Darcy's friction factor;  $k_s$ : roughness height;  $n$ : Manning coefficient;  $\nu$ : kinematic viscosity of water ( $10^{-6}$  m<sup>2</sup>/s).

Formulation	Friction factor parameterization
Darcy ( $f$ )	$C_f = \frac{f}{8}$
Keulegan ( $k_s$ )	$C_f = 0.16 (\ln 11h/k_s)^{-2}$
Manning ( $n$ )	$C_f = g \frac{n^2}{h^{1/3}}$
Colebrook-White ( $k_s$ )	$C_f = 0.16 \left( -\ln \left( \frac{k_s}{11h} + \frac{2.5\nu}{11.9Uh\sqrt{C_f}} \right) \right)^{-2}$
Laminar	$C_f = \frac{3\nu}{ \mathbf{U} h}$

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Table 2: Summary of experimental test cases used for model validation.

Test case	Mould	Surface	Flow rate (cm <sup>3</sup> /s)	Slope Y-dir (%)	Slope X-dir (%)
S1	sinusoidal	Sand	110	20.4	3.2
S2	sinusoidal	Sand	131	18.1	0.0
S3	sinusoidal	Sand	79	18.0	3.1
S4	sinusoidal	Sand	93	14.4	11.4
A1	agricultural	Plaster	182	0.0	4.0
A2	agricultural	Plaster	177	0.0	7.7

Table 3: Mesh convergence analysis for the sinusoidal and agricultural moulds. The results obtained with meshes S1M1 and A1M1 are used as a reference to compute the root mean square error in water depth ( $\sigma_h$ ) and velocity ( $\sigma_v$ ) on the coarser meshes.  $\Delta x$  is the mesh size,  $N_{nod}$  is the number of elements in the mesh, and  $T_c$  is the computation time with an Intel Core i7 - 1.60 GHz.

Test case	Mesh	$\Delta x$	$N_{nod}$	$T_c$	$\sigma_h$	$\sigma_v$
S1	S1M1	2 mm	170817	5400 s	-	-
S1	S1M2	5 mm	38971	340 s	0.17 mm	0.018 m/s
S1	S1M3	10 mm	9748	35 s	0.28 mm	0.034 m/s
S1	S1M4	20 mm	2467	4 s	0.67 mm	0.065 m/s
A1	A1M1	2 mm	115840	4200 s	-	-
A1	A1M2	4 mm	28960	600 s	-	0.013 m/s
A1	A1M3	8 mm	6400	60 s	-	0.031 m/s
A1	A1M4	16 mm	1600	8 s	-	0.265 m/s



Table 4: Performance of different bed friction parameterizations in the test cases S1, S2, S3 and S4, evaluated as the root mean square error of the water depth ( $\sigma_h$ ) and velocity ( $\sigma_v$ ).

Parameterization	$\sigma_h$ (mm)				$\sigma_v$ (m/s)			
	S1	S2	S3	S4	S1	S2	S3	S4
Keulegan ( $k_s = 1.5$ mm)	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.9	0.089	0.058	0.083	0.065
Manning ( $n = 0.015$ s m <sup>-1/3</sup> )	0.6	0.7	0.6	0.9	0.094	0.070	0.084	0.068
Darcy ( $f = 0.16$ )	0.6	0.8	0.8	1.1	0.099	0.063	0.088	0.100
Colebrook-White ( $k_s = 1.5$ mm)	0.8	0.7	0.6	1.0	0.098	0.067	0.090	0.110

Table 5: Performance of different bed friction parameterizations in the test cases A1 and A2 in the agricultural mould, evaluated as the root mean square error of the velocity.

Parameterization	Friction factor	A1	A2
Keulegan	$k_s = 1$ mm	0.095 m/s	0.140 m/s
Keulegan	$k_s = 30$ mm	0.040 m/s	0.062 m/s
Manning	$n = 0.013$ s m <sup>-1/3</sup>	0.100 m/s	0.150 m/s
Manning	$n = 0.050$ s m <sup>-1/3</sup>	0.040 m/s	0.071 m/s
Keulegan	$k_s = \max \Delta_z$	0.039 m/s	0.062 m/s

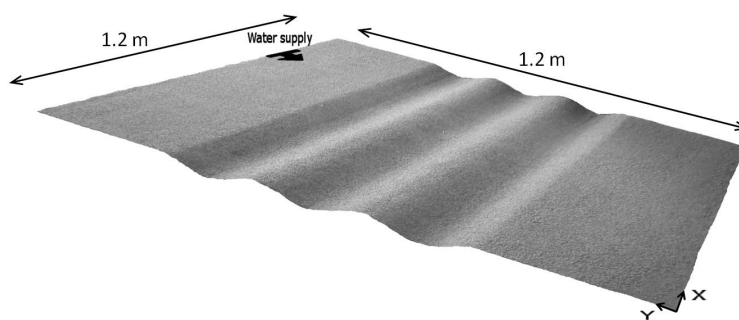


Figure 1: Representation of the sinusoidal mould.

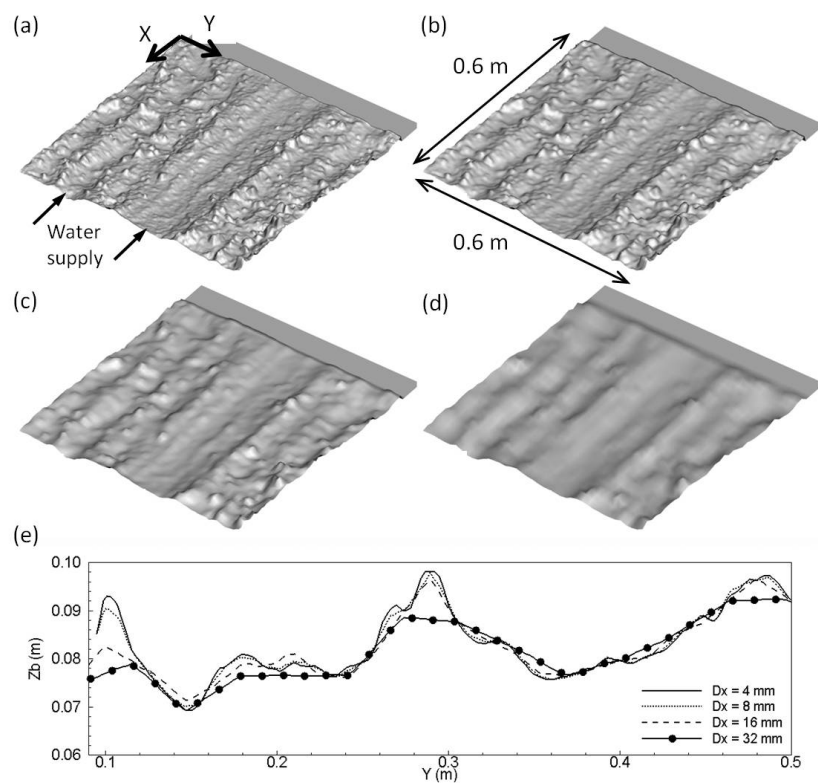


Figure 2: Representation of the agricultural seedbed mould after filtering the original DTM with several filter sizes ( $\Delta$ ). (a) Original DTM, (b)  $\Delta = 4$  mm, (c)  $\Delta = 8$  mm (d)  $\Delta = 16$  mm, and (e) cross section at  $x = 0.3$  m computed from the filtered DTM's.

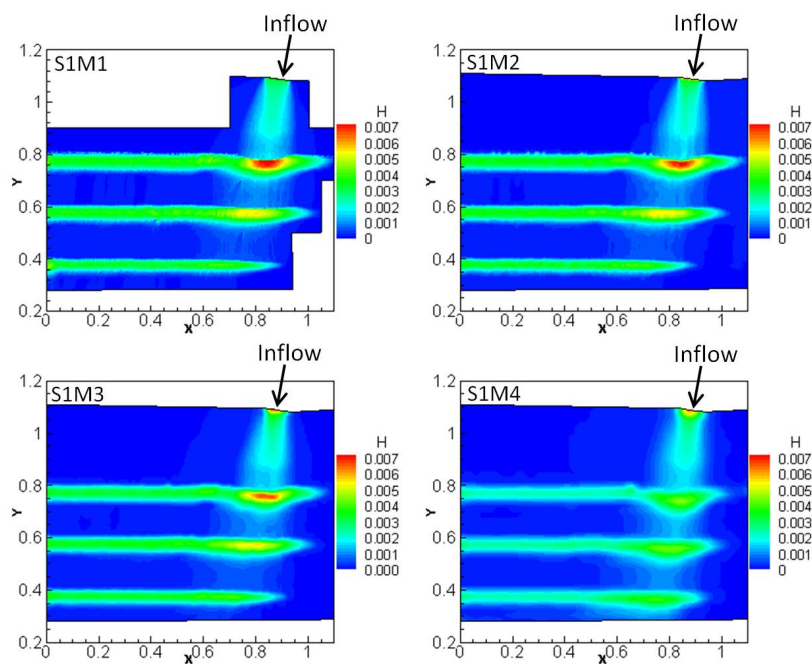


Figure 3: Mesh convergence in the sinusoidal mould. Water depth (m) computed with the meshes S1M1 (top-left), S1M2 (top-right), S1M3 (bottom-left) and S1M4 (bottom-right). Axes units in meters.

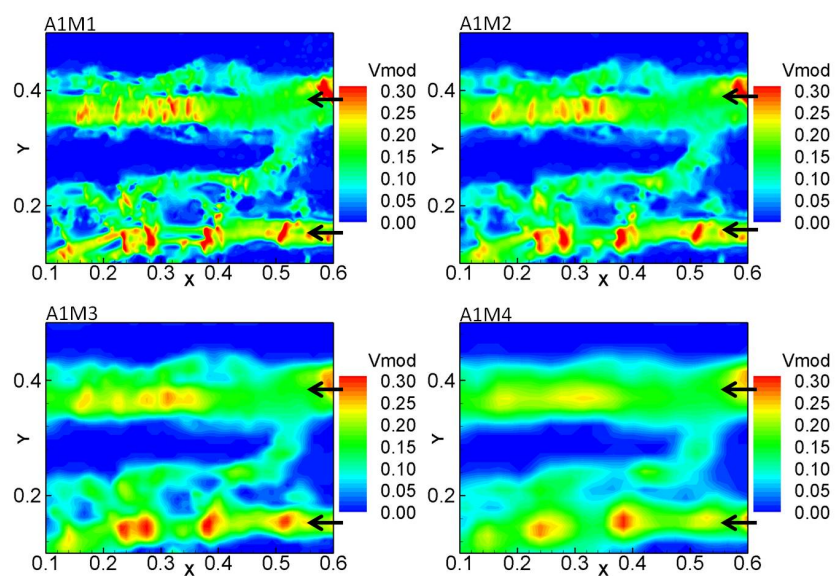


Figure 4: Mesh convergence in the agricultural mould. Black arrows indicate inflow locations. Velocity (m/s) computed with the meshes A1M1 (top-left), A1M2 (top-right), A1M3 (bottom-left) and A1M4 (bottom-right). Axes units in meters.

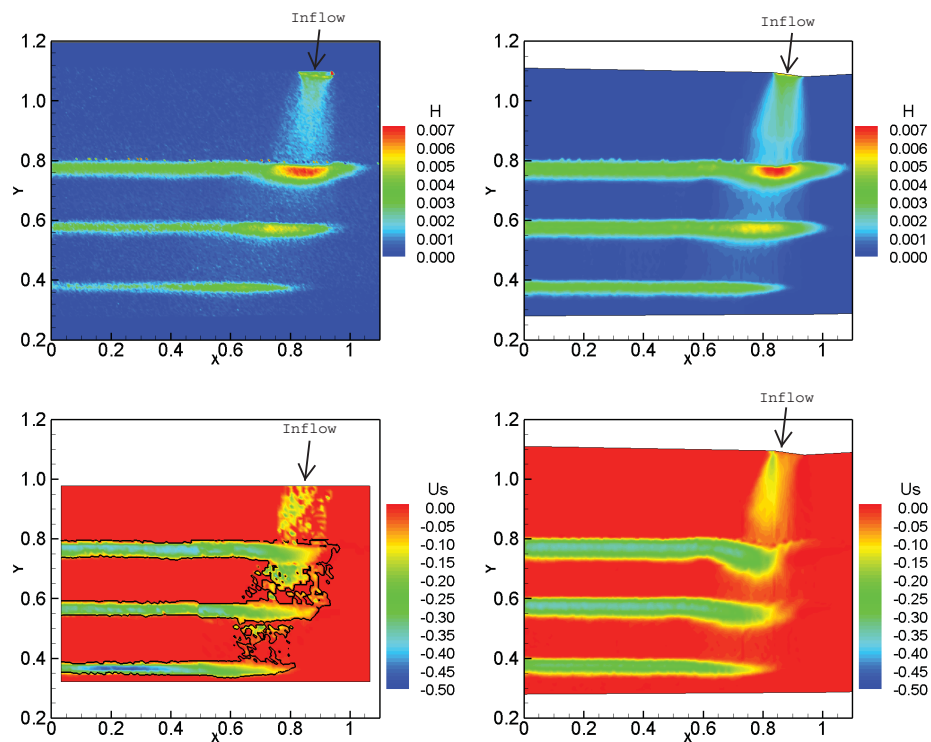


Figure 5: Experimental (left) and numerical (right) water depth (m) and surface velocity (m/s) fields for the test case S1. Numerical results were obtained with Keulegan formulation and  $k_s = 1.5$  mm. The black contour defines the region used to compute the root mean square error for the velocity (Table 4). Axes units in meters.

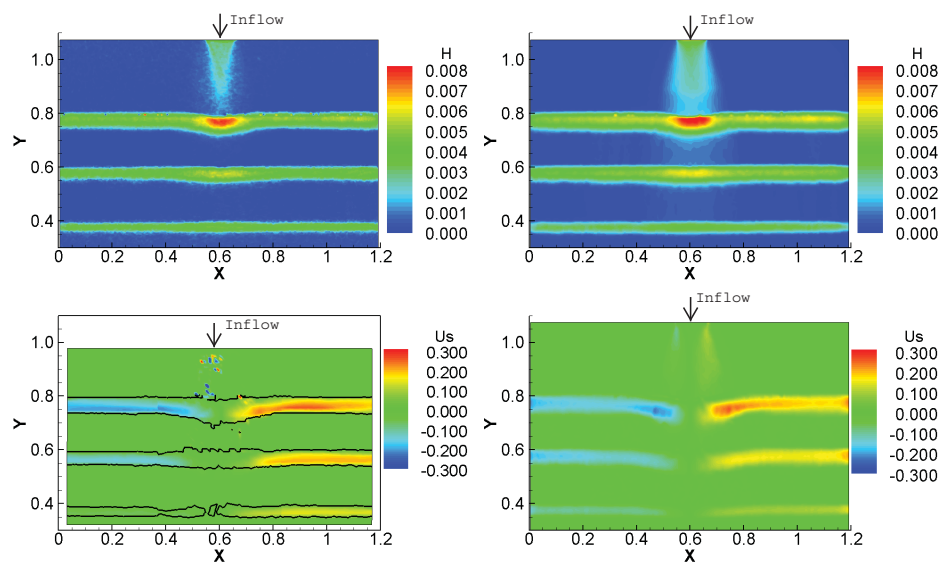


Figure 6: Experimental (left) and numerical (right) water depth (m) and surface velocity (m/s) fields for the test case S2. Numerical results were obtained with Keulegan formulation and  $k_s = 1.5$  mm. The black contour defines the region used to compute the root mean square error for the velocity (Table 4). Axes units in meters.

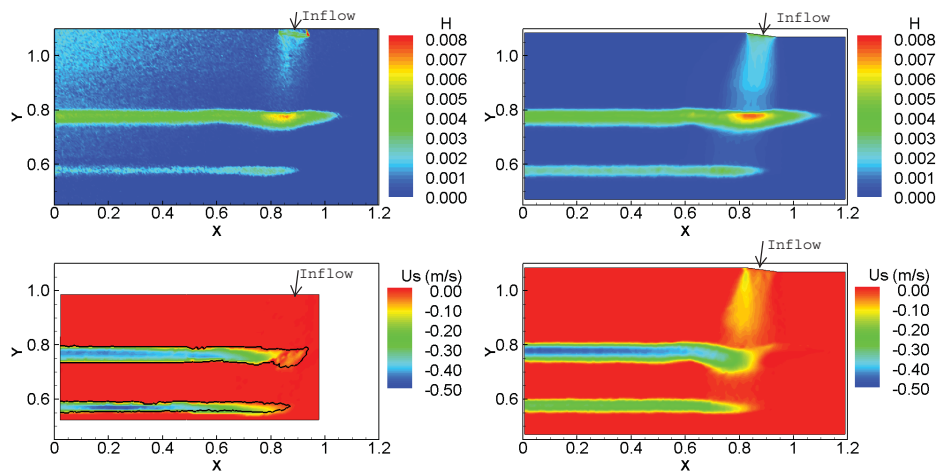


Figure 7: Experimental (left) and numerical (right) water depth (m) and surface velocity (m/s) fields for the test case S3. Numerical results were obtained with Keulegan formulation and  $k_s = 1.5$  mm. The black contour defines the region used to compute the root mean square error for the velocity (Table 4). Axes units in meters.

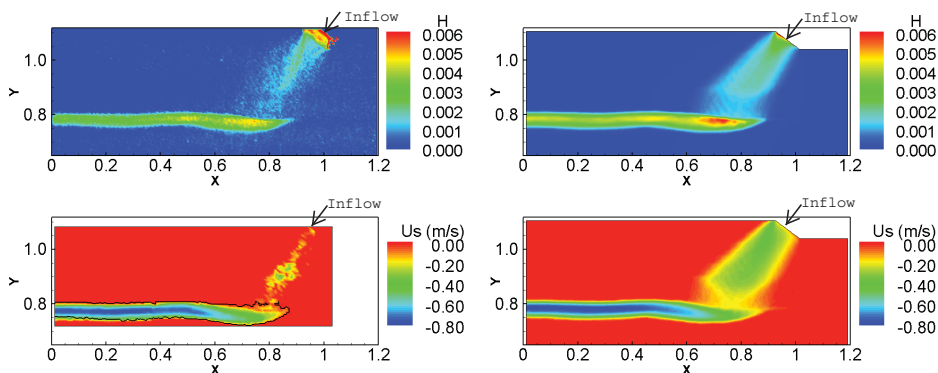


Figure 8: Experimental (left) and numerical (right) water depth (m) and surface velocity (m/s) fields for the test case S4. Numerical results were obtained with Keulegan formulation and  $k_s = 1.5$  mm. The black contour defines the region used to compute the root mean square error for the velocity (Table 4). Axes units in meters.



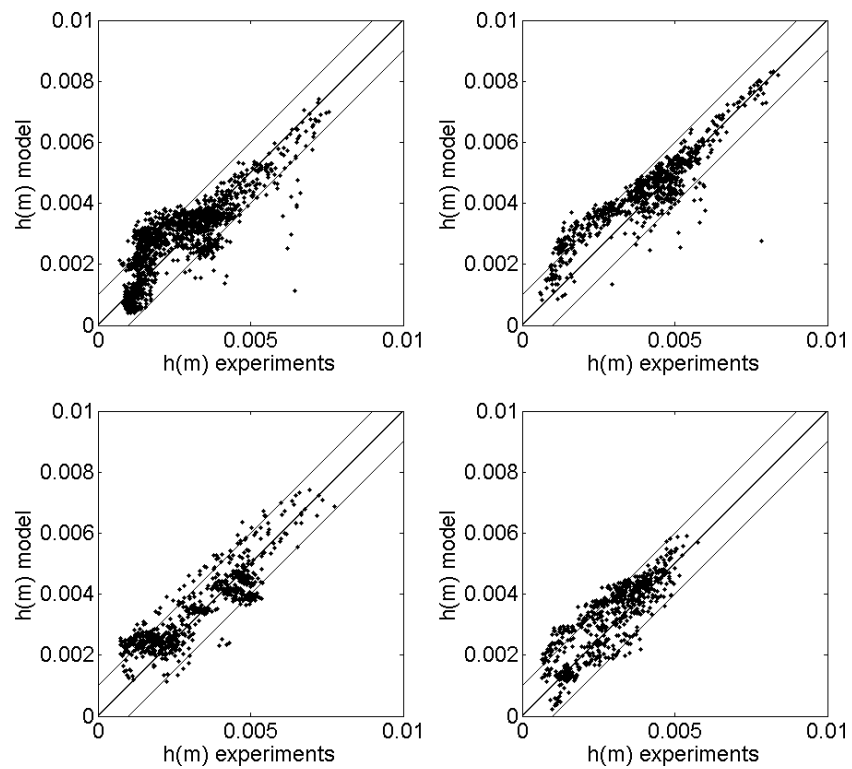


Figure 9: Computed vs. modelled water depths in the sinusoidal mould. Test cases S1 (top-left), S2 (top-right), S3 (bottom-left) and S4 (bottom-right). Lines above and below the 1:1 line correspond to the maximum experimental uncertainty of 1 mm.

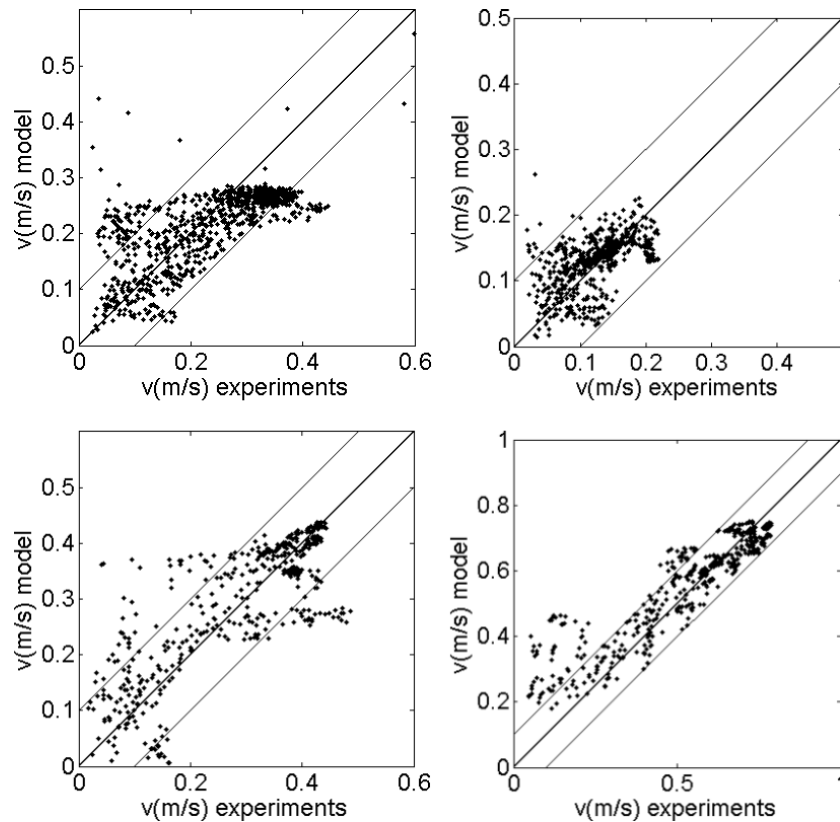


Figure 10: Computed vs. modelled velocities in the sinusoidal mould. Test cases S1 (top-left), S2 (top-right), S3 (bottom-left) and S4 (bottom-right). Lines above and below the 1:1 line correspond to the maximum experimental uncertainty of 0.10 m/s.

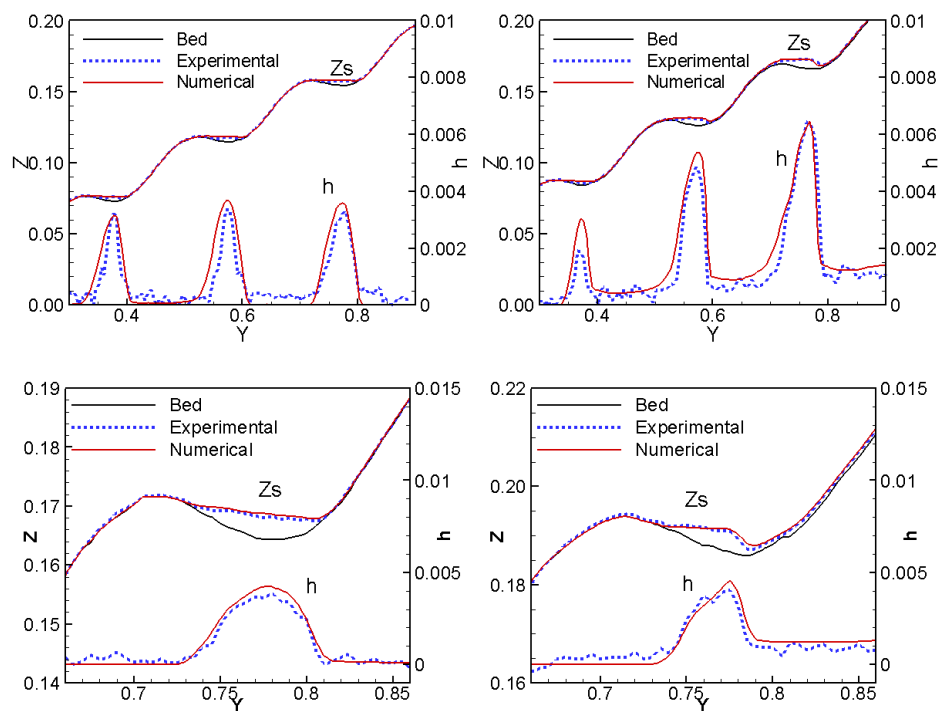


Figure 11: Experimental vs. numerical water depth (m) profiles in the sinusoidal mould. Test cases: S1 at  $x = 0.4$  m (top-left), S1 at  $x = 0.8$  m (top-right), S4 at  $x = 0.6$  m (bottom-left) and S4 at  $x = 0.8$  m (bottom-right).

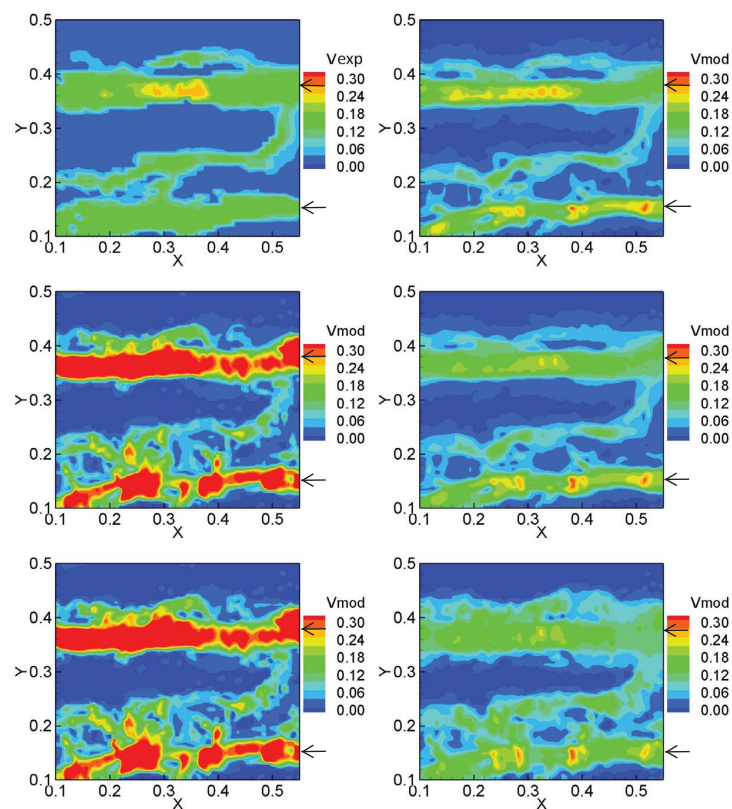


Figure 12: Velocity field (m/s) in the agricultural mould in the test case A1 using different bed roughness parameterizations. Black arrows indicate inflow locations. Experimental velocity (top-left) vs. numerical velocity computed with  $k_s = \max \Delta z$  (top-right),  $k_s = 1 \text{ mm}$  (middle-left),  $k_s = 30 \text{ mm}$  (middle-right),  $n = 0.013 \text{ s m}^{-1/3}$  (bottom-left) and  $n = 0.050 \text{ s m}^{-1/3}$  (bottom-right).

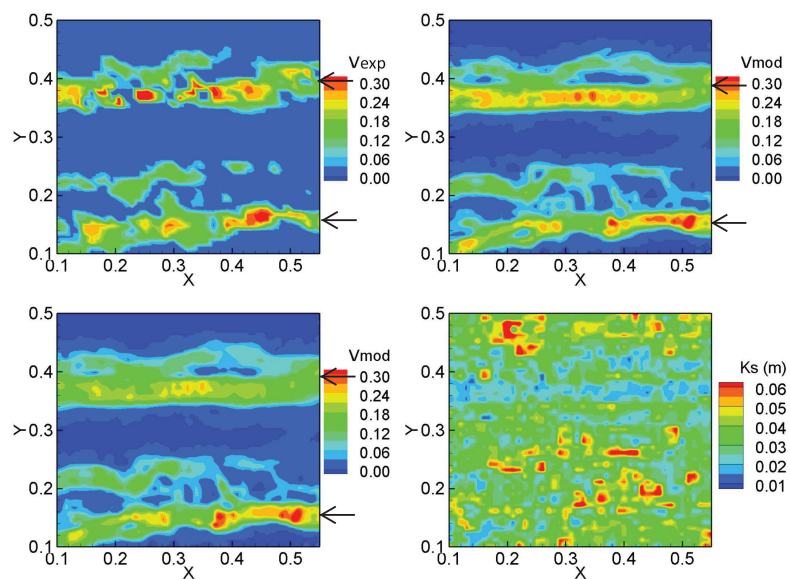


Figure 13: Velocity (m/s) field in the agricultural mould in the test case A2 using different bed roughness parameterizations. Black arrows indicate inflow locations. Experimental velocity (top-left) vs. numerical velocity computed with  $k_s = \max \Delta_z$  (top-right) and  $k_s = 30$  mm (bottom-left). The bottom-right figure shows the spatial distribution of the roughness height computed from  $k_s = \max \Delta_z$ .